

**Collaborating beyond the boundaries of citizenship:
A transcultural perspective on public participation in the development of
Swiss immigrant policy**

by

Christine Elena Fritze
B.A., University of Victoria, 2010

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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MASTER OF ARTS

In Dispute Resolution

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Switzerland's conflict around the integration of non-citizens in the context of the Swiss system of direct democracy. Through a case study on three recent referendum initiatives on immigrant policy, my research sought to answer the question: How does the use of referenda on immigrant policy impact public discourses on the social and political integration of non-citizens in German-speaking Switzerland? In exploring this question, I focused on how public discourses addressed the link between direct democracy, immigrant policy and non-citizen experiences. I analysed political advertisements, newspaper articles, and data collected in an interview with Swiss resident author Dragica Rajčić.

My research findings showed that the use of referendum initiatives to make decisions on immigrant policy has had a significant impact on integration discourses. In particular, it has provided the conservative nationalist Swiss People's Party with the opportunity to move their political agenda to the forefront of public debates. My findings also demonstrated that non-citizen perspectives were marginalized in the public discourses under examination. I therefore concluded that the process of transforming the Swiss conflict around the integration of immigrants will require Swiss governments to re-imagine how the political participation of non-citizens can be institutionalized. Granting non-citizens a more active political role would promote cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, making Switzerland's direct democracy more democratic.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Questions and Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the current Swiss approach to cultural diversity and the integration of non-citizens as it becomes evident in the realm of political participation. Despite the assumption that direct democracy embodies a collaborative means of decision-making, the Swiss case demonstrates that there are clear legal as well as conventional boundaries with regard to who is involved in the direct democratic process and who is excluded. My study will analyze the ways in which using referenda as tools for resolving public conflicts have impacted the dominant public discourses on immigrant policy. I will view the Swiss diversity challenge from an interdisciplinary perspective, linking the strategies and tools of dispute resolution with theories rooted in political science and cultural studies. My study will illustrate how Switzerland grappling with its culturally diverse identity can be seen as an escalating conflict that is carried out within the confines of the public discourses surrounding the implementation of immigrant policy.

In my thesis, I will deconstruct the representation of Swiss immigrant policy in six German-language newspapers, focusing on the three most recent referendum initiatives on immigrant policy. My analysis aims to uncover subversive structures of exclusion in political discourses and public debates, and reveal who is actually participating in the process of forming immigrant policy. I will explore the ways in which political ideology has fuelled the development of restrictive immigrant policy in the past five years. Thus, I will show how political actors have portrayed the policy development process as being collaborative without staying true to the principles of collaborative decision-making.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the structural challenges to the social and political integration of non-citizens in Switzerland. Based on my findings, I will present recommendations on how collaboration in the development of immigrant policy could become more inclusive and could move beyond the boundaries of citizenship.

1.2 Importance and Contribution of Research

In the past five years, the German-language media in Switzerland has treated the shaping of immigrant policy as a topic of national concern and collective relevance. According to the Swiss Federal Agency of Statistics, in this current year (2012) there are three referendum initiatives underway that aim to put a legislative stop to “over-foreignization” (*Überfremdung*) in Switzerland (Bundesamt für Statistik [BfS], 2012). The success of any of these initiatives could mean a substantial reduction of rights for non-citizens in Switzerland, particularly in regard to residency and naturalization. In light of the urgency of this topic, I hope my research will offer a new perspective on immigrant policy in Switzerland, one that is focused on transcultural understanding rather than cultural polarization. In addition, I hope that my analysis of the Swiss case will illuminate some of the difficulties in protecting minority rights in direct democratic settings. Thereby, I aim to contribute to the Canadian debate on the need for democratic reform and the possible value of using referenda as a means of collaborative decision-making.

1.3 Definition of Key Terms

There are a number of key terms used throughout my study that need to be clearly defined. One of the central concerns of my inquiry is cultural difference. The meaning of the term ‘culture’ has changed significantly over the last centuries, and although predominant

academic understandings of ‘culture’ can be pinpointed through time, personal interpretations of what culture means cannot be generalized. LeBaron and Pillay (2006) define culture as “shared, often unspoken, understandings of a group” (p. 14). Cultural groups may feel connected based on markers such as race, ethnicity, age, nationality, geographical setting, socio-economic class, differing abilities, sexual orientation, gender, language, political or religious affiliation and profession (LeBaron & Pillay, 2006, p. 14). This means that all of us belong to a wide range of cultural groups and transition cultural boundaries frequently from a young age. In my thesis, I subscribe to the understanding of culture that LeBaron and Pillay propose:

[Culture] is a series of lenses that shape what we see and don’t see, how we perceive and interpret, and where we draw boundaries. Often invisible even to us, culture shapes our ideas of what is important, influences our attitudes and values, and animates our behaviors. Operating largely below the surface, cultures are a shifting dynamic set of starting points that orient us in particular ways, pointing towards some things and away from others. (p. 14).

This understanding of culture is closely tied to the theory of transculturality that was proposed by the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch (1999). The concept of transculturality is central to my understanding of cultural diversity, as it symbolizes a move away from homogenous, static conceptualization of cultures. It is based on the premise that “in a culture’s internal relations – among its different ways of life – there exists as much foreignness as in its external relations with other cultures” (p. 198). Transculturality does not suggest the emergence of a uniform global culture, but instead proposes that individuals, as well as societies carry transcultural elements within them that are constantly shifting and re-aligning themselves. When cultures meet, boundaries between them blur and cultures are changed forever. This is the key element

that discerns transcultural theory from multiculturalism, which is founded on concept of clearly distinguished, homogenous cultures that exist within the same community. In Welsch's words, "[t]he concept of transculturality sketches a different picture of the relation between cultures. Not one of isolation and of conflict, but one of entanglement, intermixing and commonness. It promotes not separation, but exchange and interaction" (p. 205).

Another key term I will use throughout my study is 'discourse.' In particular, I will be referring to the 'dominant public discourses' on the inclusion or exclusion of foreign nationals in Switzerland. It is important to note that Switzerland is a federal state that is divided into three major language groups. My analysis will be restricted to the area of German-speaking Switzerland, which is home to 72.5 per cent of Swiss citizens and is thus the largest of the linguistic communities (BfS, 2012). My choice to focus on German-speaking Switzerland was motivated by the limitations of my linguistic abilities on the one hand, and the consistently high levels of voter support for restrictive immigrant policy on the other. Within German-speaking Switzerland, there are a variety of competing discourses on immigrant policy and it is impossible to make a definitive claim on which resonates with the majority of the population. Therefore, I understand the 'dominant public discourses' to be those that are frequently reoccurring in the mainstream Swiss-German news media. The question whether or not the majority of people in German-speaking Switzerland subscribe to these particular discourses is beyond the scope of my study.

I also feel the need to clarify what I mean when I refer to Swiss 'immigrant policy.' The German term *Ausländerpolitik* does not have a direct English translation. Literally, it means politics concerning foreigners. For the purpose of this study, I will translate this term as immigrant policy. This translation has been used previously, for example by Mahnig and

Wimmer (1999) in their working paper “Integration without immigrant policy: The case of Switzerland.” It is important to note that *Ausländerpolitik* not only encompasses the regulation of the immigration process but also the rights and obligations of immigrant residents.¹ Immigrant policy, in the context of this study, should therefore be understood as policy about non-citizen immigrants in a broad sense.

The final term, which calls to be defined is ‘conflict.’ The traditional definition of conflict in the field of dispute resolution is that of a material difference in interests, values or needs between two or more actors (Fisher & Ury, 1991). This interest-based definition of conflict remains dominant throughout the field of dispute resolution and guides my personal understanding of conflict. While a conflict is seen as a divergence or difference amongst people, disputes are understood as specific disagreements or manifestations of conflict. One of the key questions in conflict studies is if conflict in its essence can be resolved and whether resolution can only take place in cases of manifest disagreements or disputes. Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) argue that if conflict is understood as difference, it cannot and in fact should not be resolved. Difference itself is not problematic; it is what defines us as human beings. It is the manifested behaviour resulting from difference that can be negative. Any intervention should therefore be geared towards those potentially harmful manifestations.

Another definition of conflict that has emerged in the field of cross-cultural conflict is based on LeBaron and Pillay’s (2006) approach. In their book *Conflict Across Cultures*, they define conflict as “a difference within a person or between two or more people that touches them in a significant way” (p. 12). Conflict, from LeBaron and Pillay’s perspective, must be recognized for its constructive potential. Difference must not necessarily result in conflict and, in

¹ Throughout my study, the term ‘immigration’ is understood as “the entrance into a country for the purpose of settling there” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012). My use of this term does not presuppose the official recognition of the immigrant’s permanent resident status by the destination country.

fact, provides the foundation for co-operation. There is no question that the Swiss conflict around the integration of immigrants and the design of immigrant policy has affected Swiss-German society in a significant way. However, the focus of my study will not be on internal dissonance within the Swiss or immigrant consciousness, but rather on the external conflict as it manifests itself in public discourses. I strongly believe that the public conflict around immigrant policy and the integration of foreign citizens is in many ways a conflict between seemingly incompatible worldviews. As such, it is heavily based on core values and beliefs, which in themselves cannot be negotiated (LeBaron, 2003). This does not mean, however, that no measures can and should be taken to address the manifestations of this conflict, which has so far been labelled as *das Ausländerproblem*, the “foreigner problem.”

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Citizenship and Belonging in the Current Swiss Context

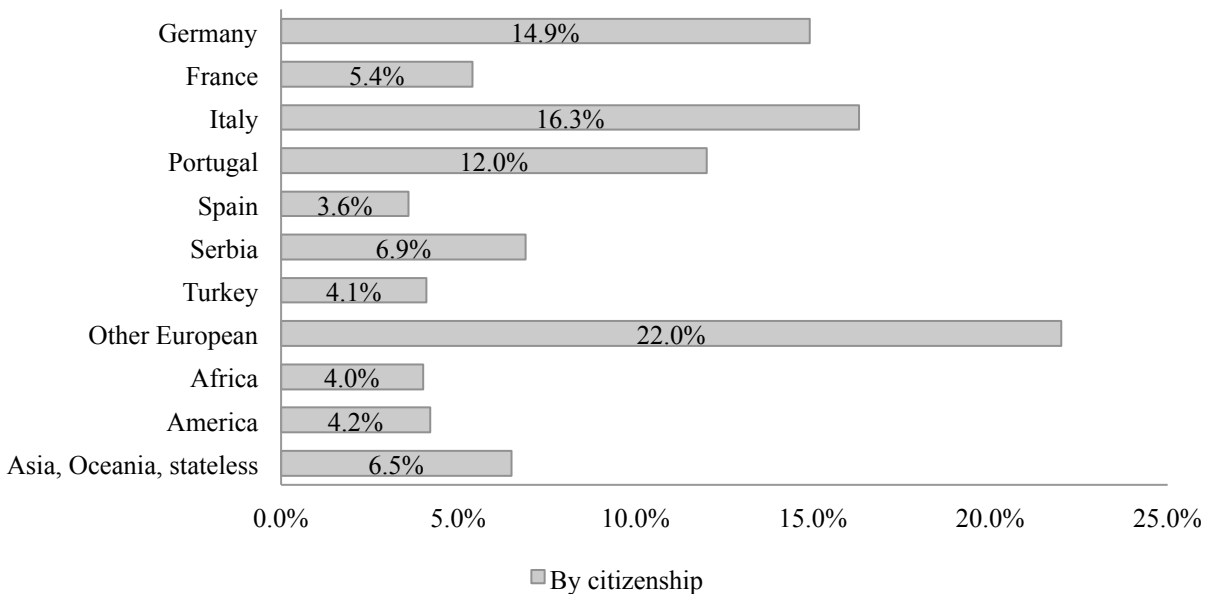
With its four official languages and ethno-culturally diverse population, Switzerland, in theory, provides the blueprint for a multicultural nation (Schallié & Fritze, 2010). A closer look at Switzerland's political climate, however, shows that many Swiss people are sceptical about the success of the multicultural concept and reluctant to accept Switzerland's move towards becoming an immigration country. In this regard it is essential to note that Switzerland lacks a multiculturalism policy, as it is known in countries with similarly high immigration rates, such as Canada. Switzerland's cultural diversity is therefore not reflected in any written policy or in the self-perception of many Swiss people (Wiedmer, 2010). Throughout the twentieth century, the public discourses around immigration in German-speaking Switzerland were very much dominated by the concept of *Überfremdung*, "over-foreignization," which has been directly and indirectly propagated by political actors. The "over-foreignization" discourse suggests that Switzerland has arrived at a situation where people feel alienated from their society due to immigration. It also establishes a causal link between the number of foreigners and the threat to a national Swiss identity (Misteli & Gisler, 1999).

Switzerland's current immigration policy was built on the need for foreign workers. Ever since the end of the Second World War and the roaring post-war economy, the Swiss government employed a laissez-faire approach to immigration, making it as easy as possible for businesses to recruit foreign labour. Along with the *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers), came a "rotation theory," which suggested that workers would only stay for a limited time and then return home (Niederberger, 2004). Since immigration was seen as temporary and transitional, the incorporation of immigrants into the social structure of Switzerland was initially of little to no

interest (Studer, Arlettaz & Argast, 2008). This position shifted significantly in the 1980s, once it became clear that many of the *Gastarbeiter* intended to stay and bring their families along.

Given the historical linguistic and cultural diversity among Swiss citizens, the large number of immigrants entering Switzerland since the 1950s has only increased fears among some Swiss about the loss of traditional values and culture. This is particularly obvious in the resilience of the “over-foreignization” discourse (Misteli & Gisler, 1999) and in the continual attempts by Switzerland’s political right to put a cap on immigration. According to the Swiss Federal Agency of Statistics, in 2010, around 1.5 million foreigners lived and worked in Switzerland, making up 22.4 percent of the population. It is notable that 85.2 percent of the permanent foreign population in Switzerland are citizens of another European state. Counting the immigrants who have been naturalized over the past decades, estimates suggest that today over 30 percent of all people living within Swiss borders have *Migrationshintergrund*, an ethnic background that ties them to other cultures (BfS, 2012).

Figure 1 – Permanent non-citizen population in Switzerland (2010)



Source: BfS, 2012.

While the immigrant population was predominantly Italian during the 1950s and 1960s, its ethnic composition diversified due extended labour immigration and immigration through the asylum procedure during the 1980s and 1990s (Mahnig & Wimmer, 1999). Along with this demographic change, there has been a recognizable shift in popular xenophobia. In his study based on public surveys, Hoffman-Nowotny (2001) found that Italians are no longer perceived negatively by the general Swiss population; instead, Turks, Tamils, Africans and persons from former Yugoslavia have become the objects of prejudice.

Defining the new Switzerland as a unified national community brings many challenges. In her article on “Switzerland as Cultural Nation,” Kym (2010) characterizes Switzerland as a *Willensnation*, a nation based on voluntary participation. She writes, “it has neither a national language nor a standard cultural or ethnic tradition at its core. This state is built on consensus, on reason, and tolerance” (p. 22). In her reasoning, Kym refers back to the founding principles of the Swiss nation: Federalism, direct democracy and concordance; all three of which ensure the functioning of Swiss consociationalism. Consociationalism can be defined as “a power-sharing arrangement among ideologically opposed groups competing for control over the same territory” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012). In other words, consociational decision-making means that through power sharing, all important political forces are included in governing. In his text on minority politics in the European Union, Opitz (2007) defines *Willensnation* as follows:

The starting point of the *Willensnation* is the free human being, who can become part of the nation through self-determination. [...] The determining characteristic of the *Willensnation* is not ethnic lineage, but electoral agency. (p. 47).²

² Translation by Christine Fritze.

Here, Opitz emphasizes the key characteristic of a *Willensnation*, which is the freedom for people to choose their own nation and actively participate in its shaping, not based on ethnic roots, but on a commitment to a specific set of values.

As Richter (2005) illustrates in her extensive work on the protection of Swiss linguistic minorities, the Swiss self-perception as *Willensnation* is rooted in the historic struggle of Helvetic peoples against appropriation by outside forces, such as the Habsburg Empire in the late Middle Ages. The term *Willensnation* did not, however, come into common usage in Switzerland until after the First World War, when the Swiss began to characterize themselves as such in opposition to the increasing pan-European phenomenon of ethnic nationalism.

Whereas some scholars, like Kym, believe in the power of the concept of Switzerland as a *Willensnation* in the contemporary context, others have begun to seriously question the validity of this concept and its use in understanding the Swiss approach to diversity. Collet (2011), for example, calls the validity of the concept of *Willensnation* in the Swiss context into question. Instead he proposes that Switzerland can be described “as a ‘fractured’ nation, meaning that, even though the Swiss nation has been undeniably manifest throughout its history, everyone recognizes its artificiality” (p. 739). According to Chollet, the biggest shortcoming of the notion of *Willensnation* is that it does not define who the members of this voluntary nation are. Chollet argues that Switzerland exemplifies the ductility and inherent ambiguity of the idea of ‘nation’ in general. He argues that the foundational principles of Swiss nationalism are primarily defined by absence: Consensus is the absence of conflict, neutrality the absence of political stand, and federalism the absence of cross-jurisdictional involvement. According to Chollet, one consequence of this particular definition of nationalism is the constant reference to ‘the other,’

which is viewed as non-Swiss. He writes: “What is Swiss or what constitutes the Swiss nation can be defined by a complete tautology, as ‘not being what is not Swiss’” (p. 749).

One key component of understanding the Swiss concept of nationhood becomes apparent in examining who has access to citizenship. In 2010 Switzerland naturalized 3% of its resident non-citizen population, a percentage that is very low compared to other nations with similarly high immigration rates (BfS, 2012). Swiss citizenship is based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*, which means that a child attains the citizenship of one or both of his/her parents, regardless of the place of birth (Studer, Arlettaz & Argast, 2008). Citizenship is therefore passed on through lineage, making the place of residence a secondary factor. Many countries with immigration rates as high as those in Switzerland base their citizenship law on the principle of *ius soli* (or variations thereof), according to which citizenship is a birthright tied to the territory on which a child is born (for example Canada and the USA).

Swiss citizenship is three-tiered, which means that the Swiss are not only national citizens, but are also citizens of one of the 26 cantons as well as a specific local municipality. Since the beginning of the Swiss federation in 1848, the political power of the central authority has been limited by the cantons’ claims to autonomy (Linder, 2010). Unlike the Canadian constitution, the Swiss constitution grants all residual (future) powers to the cantons, a principle which has guaranteed extensive cantonal and local autonomy at the expense of centralization. In the context of this study, it is important to note that the constitutional authority to naturalize non-citizen residents lies primarily with the individual municipalities (Linder, 2010). Municipalities can make decisions on citizenship applications either through an elected council of citizen representatives or through a public vote. According to Swiss citizenship legislation, which has essentially stayed the same since 1952, any applicant for citizenship must have lived in the

country for at least 12 years.³ Further, there are four qualifying conditions, by which applicants are measured: A) integration into Swiss society; B) familiarity with the Swiss lifestyle, customs and traditions; C) compliance to Swiss law; D) posing no danger to Swiss inner and outer state security (Bürgerrechtsgesetz [BüG], 1952).

The vague language of this legislation has prompted numerous inquiries into the ways in which decisions on citizenship applications are reached. Some of these studies have indicated that the naturalization procedure can easily be influenced by prejudice, which makes it harder for some applicants to acquire citizenship, particularly immigrants from Turkey and former Yugoslavia (Mahnig & Wimmer, 1999). A study conducted by Helbling (2010), in which he collected data in 14 municipalities and conducted 180 semi-structured interviews with municipal politicians, revealed that citizenship politics depend to a great extent on local actors, who use ambiguities in the legislation to implement their own visions of what it means to be a Swiss citizen. Helbling argues that “local political struggles lead to specific local understandings of citizenship, [which] influence naturalization policies” (p. 793). This theory is based on his findings that those municipalities with the strictest naturalization policies also have a political leadership with restrictive understandings of citizenship.

The future direction of citizenship legislation remains a highly contested issue in Switzerland. In 1983, 1995 and 2004 Swiss voters rejected federal bills aimed at easing the access to Swiss citizenship for second and third generation immigrants, who were either born or grew up in Switzerland (BfS, 2012).

³ There are some exceptions to this rule. For example, time spent in Switzerland between the ages of 10 and 20 counts double. Also, if spouses apply together and one of them has fulfilled the minimum residency requirement of 12 years, the other’s minimum residency requirement is only five years. A similar exception applies to spouses of Swiss citizens (BüG, 1952).

Although there has been little progress on easing naturalization requirements, some strides have been made in granting immigrants limited access to means of political participation despite their citizenship status. So far, five cantons have already recognized the right of foreigners to vote on municipal and/or cantonal issues (Neuchâtel, Jura, Vaud in 2003, Fribourg in 2004, Genève in 2005). Three, Appenzell Ausserrhoden (1995), Graubünden (2003) and Basel-Stadt (2005) have accorded to each municipality the authority to decide on the subject of local non-citizen franchise (Mariani, 2005). Overall, German-speaking Switzerland has shown very little interest in implementing non-citizen suffrage. During a recent forum discussion in Basel on the canton's decision to reject increased political participation of foreign citizens, panellists came to the conclusion that German-speaking Switzerland was simply not ready to take this step. One panellist explicitly cited negative reportage on foreigners in the media and a heightened fear of the unknown as possible reasons (Weissmann, 2011).

Basel is not the only example for a failed attempt at implementing the right to vote for non-citizens. In 2002, the Swiss parliamentary commission on state policy published a report recommending the rejection of a petition for federal legislation forcing cantons to extend suffrage to non-citizens in order to promote municipal and cantonal integration (Bundesversammlung, 2003). More recently, the predominantly non-citizen association *Second@s Plus* started a cantonal initiative in Lucerne, aimed at easing the canton's transition to granting non-citizens local franchise. Despite the fact that this initiative did not require the mandatory implementation of non-citizen suffrage, it was rejected in November 2011 ("Kein Ausländerstimmrecht," 2011). *Second@s Plus* was founded in 2002 through an initiative of the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP). Today the organization counts 500 members and remains committed to fulfilling its mission to achieve increased political participation of immigrants

(Second@s Plus, 2012a). In 2011, for example, *Second@s Plus* initiated a countrywide competition for the most immigrant friendly municipality, basing its selection on efforts in the areas of participation and integration. Among a total of 50 applications, the municipality of Wald in the canton Aargau emerged as the winner, closely followed by the city of Zürich (*Second@s Plus*, 2012b).

In the past few years, a number of other projects have been aimed at encouraging the political participation of non-citizens, without having to formally grant them the right to vote. The city of Winterthur, for example, established an *Ausländerbeirat*, a non-citizen consultative committee to the city council. Members of this committee are nominated by non-citizen associations and approved by city council (Stadt Winterthur, 2011). The city of St. Gallen added a *Partizipationsartikel*, a participation article, in its city charter. This article ensures that the local non-citizen population can submit their concerns to the city council in the form of a so-called “political advance.” So far, the participation article has yielded very few “political advances,” leading to the recognition that there are structural barriers to the political involvement of non-citizens (Schweiz Magazin, 2011). One factor that may discourage non-citizens from making use of the participation article is that although it requires city council to consider non-citizen perspectives, it comes without any obligation to accept those views (Stadt St. Gallen, 2012).

Another promising opportunity in regard to increasing political participation of non-citizens is the use of web-based voting platforms. One example of this is the project *baloti.ch*, which was initiated by the Centre for Research on Direct Democracy in Aarau in collaboration with the Universities of Zurich and Neuenburg (Centre for Research on Direct Democracy, 2011). The aim of *baloti.ch* is to encourage political interest among non-citizens and Swiss youth through a multi-lingual online voting platform. It is one of the 30 projects endorsed by the

Eidgenössische Kommission für Migrationsfragen, the Swiss federal commission on questions concerning migration (EKM), as part of its 2011 pilot project *citoyenneté*. With *citoyenneté*, the EKM showed its commitment to provide funds and support for Swiss projects aimed at exploring new modes of political participation, independent of citizenship status (EKM, 2011).

2.2 Direct Democracy and Minority Rights

The Swiss political system is characterized by a strong federalist structure, a multi-party legislative branch, and the reliance on direct democratic processes. All of these characteristics have had a great impact on how questions of immigrant policy are addressed. The Swiss federation was created in 1848 and became the first continuously functioning democracy in Europe. Its constitution closely resembles that of the US, although its structure is based on three rather than on two levels of governance: The federal government, the cantons and the municipalities. On the federal level, Switzerland has a bicameral legislature made up of the National Council and the Council of States. Members of the National Council are voted in directly by the citizens of the 26 cantons based on the democratic principle of “one person, one vote,” whereas the Council of the States seats two representatives from each canton, supporting the federal principle of equal representation (Linder, 2010).

Within this system, all constitutional amendments and some international treaties proposed by the Federal Assembly, and all popular initiatives proposing constitutional change, have to be approved by popular vote. In addition, Swiss citizens are able bring popular initiatives to a vote by collecting 100,000 signatures supporting a formal proposition (Linder, 2010). Before a popular initiative can come to a vote, the Council of States and the National Council decide on whether or not the proposal is compatible with constitutional law, and with the principles of

international law. If popular initiatives are accepted in a federal vote, changes must be made in the Swiss constitution to reflect the decision made by the voting public. Linder (2010) sees the popular initiative as “a promoter of political innovation” (p. 107). He also considers the mobilization of new issues and political tendencies as key objectives in this regard.

As Skenderovic (2009) points out in the introduction to his recent book on the Swiss radical right, Switzerland is commonly perceived in the English-speaking world as a country characterized by neutrality, wealth, diversity and a stable democratic system (p. 1). Moreover, there has been a tendency by western democracies to idealize the Swiss democratic process as one that inherently encourages shared decision-making. Like Canada, Switzerland is a very diverse country with a high immigration rate. Other similarities between the two nations include the presence of different linguistic groups, a foundational belief in federalism, a neo-liberal leadership with strong conservative elements and a comparatively resilient economic system, based on the principles of capitalism.

In a time where Canadian governments struggle with low voter participation and questions surrounding legitimacy, more attention is paid to how Canadian governments may have to reform their democratic processes to attract more people to the polls. Hunt (2004) writes, “we are now on the cusp of the third phase in the democratic revolution – the postmodern. In this phase people demand more meaningful participation. [...] The days of passive deference to elites have ended” (p. 44). This idea represents a general Western movement towards questioning democratic traditions (Smith, 2009). Some political scientist have come to see the implementation of a system of direct democracy as the most promising opportunity for increased political participation, and a possible remedy against voter apathy (Mendelson & Parkin, 2001).

On the other hand, when the Canadian Alliance called for the institutionalization of citizen-initiated binding referenda in Canada's federal election of 2000, their proposition was shot down immediately by political opponents. The reasoning for rejecting the proposition was that such a system would have negative effects on minorities and disadvantaged groups, including women (Mendelson & Parkin).

The author of a recent article published through the Fraser Institute points to Switzerland as an example for possible reform in Canada (Milke, 2009). After praising the "almost unparalleled power" of Swiss voters to set public policy, Milke concludes that

no one could argue that Switzerland has become unstable as a result of referenda. Nor is the alpine country somehow a less desirable place to live as a result of its referendum system which gives voters an incentive to vote – because their votes actually count – and serves as a real check on parliamentary power. (p. 12)

Conversely, a study by Donovan and Karp (2006) suggests that direct democracy is not necessarily a useful vehicle for hearing the voices of those who are at the periphery of political processes. Instead, they suggest that direct democracy is most appealing to those who are already politically active or have an established interest in politics. Another more recent article by Anderson and Goodyear-Grant (2010) suggests that those citizens who are most politically informed are, in fact, more sceptical of the use of referenda than their less informed counterparts.

Contrary to the common belief that direct democracy acts as an incentive for increased voter participation in political processes, the referendum participation levels in Switzerland have consistently dropped over the 1960s and 1970s. Since 2008, participation levels for federal referenda have plateaued at around 43 to 49 percent. The participation in Swiss federal elections

is only minimally higher than in referenda (BfS, 2012). According to Kobach (2001), one of the biggest problems with low voter participation is that the legitimacy of referenda is based on the assumption that their results reflect the will of the majority of the people. Low participation levels therefore lead to a greater possibility of distortion. He writes, “in these instances of high voter apathy, a mobilized interest may be well poised to take advantage of the situation” (p. 138).

In broad terms, there are two different perspectives on direct democratic referenda. According to an individualist worldview, referenda provide people with the opportunity to express their personal values on specific issues without having to openly admit to them. In other words, this perspective views participation in direct democracy as intrinsically self-serving. Referenda allow citizens to make their individual opinions on an issue count without clearly identifying accountability for controversial decisions (Mendelsohn & Parkin, 2001). In opposition to this stands a relational worldview, in which referenda are considered a form of community rule, where the responsibility for decisions is shared by many instead of being delegated to few.

Another interesting question in relation to these concerns is the debate over whether common voters can make sensible political decisions. People who approach this debate from a paternalistic perspective argue that ordinary people are too busy to gain enough insight into political issues to make knowledgeable decisions. This, of course, is based on the assumption that access to information and time to process it will lead to reasonable decisions. One example of this view can be found in the writings of Italian political theorist Sartori. He argues that subscribing to a system of direct democracy would cause a country to “quickly and disastrously founder on the reefs of cognitive incompetence” (Linder, 2010, p. 121). On the other end of the spectrum Mendelsohn and Parkin (2001) argue that “[i]t is no more legitimate to condemn

referenda because voters might make the ‘wrong’ choice than it is to condemn elections because voters might elect the ‘wrong’ party” (p. 18).

The most prevalent contemporary concern about direct democracy is centred on the impact of direct democratic decision-making processes on minority rights. There has been much scholarly disagreement about the question if direct democracy offers an opportunity to promote integration and prevent animosities among diverse groups, or poses a danger to minorities (Stojanović, 2006). The tendency of referenda to serve as a convenient vehicle for right-wing political interests has been the main reason why some have come to see direct democracy as facilitating the tyranny of the majority through the quashing of minority voices. Even though much has been written on the challenges to minority rights in direct democratic settings in general and the Swiss case in particular, there is a clear gap in the literature in regards to minorities that are not Swiss citizens (Kobach, 2001; Mendelsohn & Parkin, 2001; Donovan and Karp, 2006; Milke, 2009; Linder, 2010). Stojanović (2006), for example, presents a comprehensive study on direct democracy and the tensions between linguistic minorities in Switzerland. However, he fails to address the experience of those outside Switzerland’s traditional language groups, those who are minorities within minorities.

Similarly, in his comprehensive analysis of Swiss democracy as an approach to resolving conflicts in multicultural societies, Linder (2010) discusses political integration at length, but only addresses the “question of foreign residents” in one brief paragraph on “new challenges for integration” (p. 37). Counting only those minorities who are already Swiss citizens and ignoring the lived experiences of all those who have made Switzerland their home, but are denied formal acceptance into the state, prevents scholars from gaining a well-balanced insight into minority rights and diversity in Switzerland. Although overt violence against immigrants is not as

common in Switzerland as in other Western European countries (such as France or Britain), this is by no means an indication of successful integration (Dancygier. 2010). Closer attention must be paid to signs of deeply embedded structural violence towards immigrant minorities. The most striking of these signs is that even though 22.4 percent of Swiss residents pay taxes and contribute to the social security system, they have no political rights as non-citizens.

2.3 Collaboration and Political Participation

Although the Swiss struggle with cultural diversity is not primarily characterized by overt violence, it is nevertheless a conflict. The question of how cultural and ethnic diversity within Switzerland should be approached is highly contested. Groups on both the left and the right end of the political spectrum are continually demonstrating their desire to reshape Swiss citizenship legislation as well as immigrant policy. This last section of my literature review outlines the scholarly contributions marking the rise of the collaborative paradigm. It also illustrates how the collaborative paradigm relates to the Swiss principle of consociationalism.

The move away from adversarial approaches to conflict that pit one conflict party against the other, was spearheaded by Fisher and Ury (1991) as part of the Harvard Negotiation Project. Their interest-based dispute resolution model illustrates how disputes can be resolved with parties working together, rather than against each other. With their seminal text *Getting to Yes*, Fisher and Ury sparked a shift in how disputes were perceived by conflict professionals. Susskind and Cruikshank's (1987) exploration of negotiated approaches to consensus building was one of the most influential offshoots of Ury and Fisher's model. In *Breaking the Impasse* they argue that adversarial processes often fail to protect the interests of the disadvantaged, whereas consensus-building approaches require interaction between all stakeholder groups

providing a better chance for “‘all gain’ rather than ‘win-lose’ solutions or watered-down political compromise” (p. 11). Susskind and Cruikshank emphasize the inherent and foundational link between collaboration and meaningful dialogue, which remains at the core of much of today’s literature on collaborative approaches.

Innes and Booher (2010) highlight this element of dialogue by basing their theory of collaborative rationality on Habermas’ notion of communicative rationality. Habermas (1981) argues that communication means to translate knowledge into language, thereby enabling both criticism and a deeper understanding, making conflict transformation possible. Another key element of Habermas’ theory that Innes and Booher (2010) adopt is the requirement for inclusion of all perspectives. They define collaborative rationality as follows:

A process is collaboratively rational to the extent that all the affected interests jointly engage in face-to-face dialogue, bringing their various perspectives to the table to deliberate on the problems they face together. For the process to be collaboratively rational, all participants must also be fully informed and able to express their views and be listened to, whether they are powerful or not. Techniques must be used to mutually assure the legitimacy, comprehensibility, sincerity, and accuracy of what they say. Nothing can be off the table. They have to seek consensus. (p. 6).

Innes and Booher argue that collaborative processes are valuable not only because they provide effective options to manage certain issues, but also because they offer the opportunity for making connections that go far beyond any particular dispute. The intrinsic value of collaborative processes is therefore independent of their specific outcomes. Moreover, Innes and Booher emphasize that collaborative processes can lead to changes in the larger system, as “participants’

experiences with [these processes] often lead them to extend collaboration to other contexts” (p. 10). This last point highlights the potential transformative element of collaborative processes.

Taking a look at the Swiss governance structure shows that many of the fundamental principles of collaboration are deeply embedded in the Swiss consociationalist power-sharing model. Linder (2010) presents consociationalism as the token element of Swiss democracy that is the basis of Switzerland’s ability to resolve conflicts successfully. He sees one of the strongest opportunities for conflict resolution in direct democracy in the negotiations between the people, interest groups and the government after a referendum has taken place, regardless of its success. Linder claims optimistically that in Switzerland, “[p]eaceful conflict-resolution is not only a pattern of political, but also of social life” (p. 37). He also argues that Switzerland’s modes of power sharing and consensus democracy are the foundation for successful conflict resolution. According to Linder, the Swiss governance structure has the clear objective “to let [...] all important political forces [participate] in governmental politics, and to share political responsibilities with all these forces” (p. 197). In theory, consensus democracy gives minorities within a society the chance to participate in political processes. As such, it promotes mutual agreements in which minority voices cannot be overheard.

Moving outside of the Swiss context, a foundational theory by Lijphart (1969) suggests that power sharing will lead to the development of common values and attitudes. Based on Lijphart’s theory, consociationalism can be understood as a form of consensus-building that forces political elites to develop common understandings and move beyond individual interests. He further argues that consociationalism works best in diverse multicultural societies, as it gives societal minorities a means to participate in political processes. In a more recent study, Lijphart (1999) examined the political structures of 36 countries and situated them on a continuum from

majoritarian to consensus democracy. Not surprisingly, he positioned Switzerland at the very high end of consensus. However, his findings also demonstrate that over time, countries may change their consensual or majoritarian character. This possibility of moving along the continuum from consensus agreement to majority rule should remind us that Switzerland's consociationalism must not be taken for granted.

Although Swiss consociationalism has received extensive academic attention, not enough has been written on how the practical application of consociationalism aligns with the core principles of this approach to power sharing. In terms of the Swiss conflict around the integration of immigrants, the roles of key stakeholders in the area of immigrant policy must be re-examined if the practice of consociationalism is to stay true to its principles. It seems although Switzerland has the *de jure* constitutional basis for collaborative decision-making, in its most inclusive sense, the *de facto* application of consociationalism does not meet its full potential.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Foundations

My choice in research design is based on my personal experiences and the beliefs I hold about the nature of social reality, or in other words, my ontological position. The way I see the world has very much been shaped by my undergraduate education in humanities. My study of German-language literature has instilled in me a poststructuralist understanding of text, particularly in my desire to uncover the binary opposition between the self and the other. My ontology is also tied to a constructionist understanding of social reality, shaping the way I look at the Swiss approach to immigrant policy and the public responses to referenda. One of the key concepts of social constructionism is the need to question the sources of conventional knowledge, which is time-bound as well as culture-bound, and can never be absolute (Burr, 1995).

Another key element of constructionist theory is that knowledge is created through social interactions, which means that the truths and meanings we find in life are socially negotiated (Burr, 1995). To me, this is closely linked to the collectivist underpinnings of collaborative principles in the field of dispute resolution. My belief in the powerful impact of social interactions also relates to my interest in transformative theory over more traditional and formal approaches to conflict. Conflict literature today differentiates clearly between three main strategies to address conflict: Resolution, management and transformation. According to Rubin, Pruitt and Kim (2004), conflict resolution refers to “an agreement in which most or all of the issues are cleared up,” whereas conflict management means that “parties work out ways of deescalating and avoiding future escalation” (p. 190-1). Conflict transformation, in turn, emphasizes the constructive characteristics of conflict, seeking positive change that goes beyond

the resolution of a particular problem, focusing on the building of healthy relationships (Lederach, 2003; Saunders, 2009).

Studying women's history has taught me to be critical of taken-for-granted power structures in our society. It has also led me to the postmodern understanding that reality lies in the eye of the beholder and, therefore, there cannot be an ultimate truth (White, 1987). My study falls within the critical paradigm, which was first developed in an interdisciplinary context (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy, 2011). According to Hesse-Bieber and Leavy, "critical approaches assert that we live in a power-laden context" that shapes the way social reality is constructed (p. 20). In addition, critical approaches can be characterized by their primary goal to transform oppressive situations. In my own research, I see the need for social change, particularly in terms of broadening the discourses on Swiss immigrant policy. I believe this to be the first step towards re-conceptualizing cultural difference and making political decision-making processes more inclusive.

The public discourse of "over-foreignization" illustrates deeply engrained power structures that promote hierarchical thinking based on cultural markers, and thereby inhibit Switzerland's path towards more inclusive decision-making processes. The dominance of the "over-foreignization" discourse leaves very little room for alternate discourses on how Swiss diversity can be conceptualized. Gaining insights into different understandings of what the experience of being foreign in Switzerland entails is important to my approach. From my academic work on Swiss transnational literature I am aware of alternate discourses on cultural identity and immigrant experience. These discourses struggle to be heard within the power structures supporting dominant public discourses on immigrant policy. I believe that listening to

individual voices will lead us to a deeper understanding and knowledge of lived experiences, based on the interpersonal bond that is forged by engaging with one another.

3.2 Research Design: Case Study

My methodology is based on an instrumental case study. Stake (2005) defines this type of case study as one in which “a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization” (p. 445). To me, this means challenging taken-for-granted generalizations about the allegedly collaborative and inclusive nature of Swiss consociationalism. It also means questioning how the national self and the foreign are constructed. Rather than drawing new boundaries, I aim to illustrate the fluidity of boundaries in the context of my study. Using a case study framework allows me to utilize a wide variety of sources and research methods to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of what Swiss decision-making processes on immigrant policy entail and how the boundaries between national insiders and outsiders are constructed in public discourses.

Some scholars have argued that designing a case study cannot be understood as a methodology in itself, because a case study simply represents a decision on what is to be studied, rather than how it will be studied (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy, 2011). My personal impression is that although there may not be a specific paradigm attached to case study research, the decision to conduct a case study does include some intrinsically methodological elements. Druckman (2005), for example, points out that “case studies are typically less structured projects. They are usually conducted in an inductive tradition that seeks insights rather than test hypotheses” (p. 44). Yin (2009) argues that case studies feature distinctive characteristics, such as for example, a

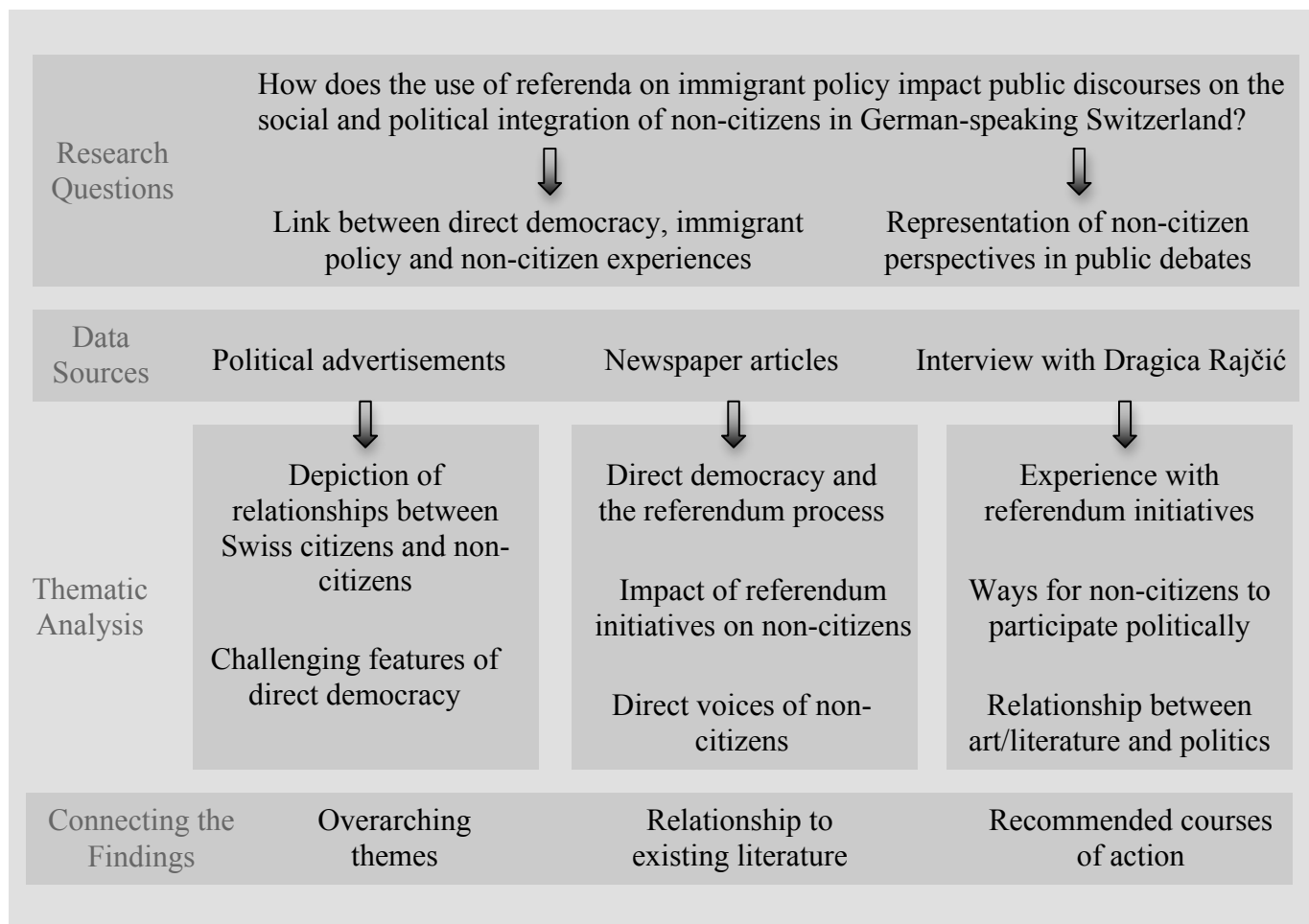
non-hierarchical perspective on types of data that allows for the exploration of multiple sources of evidence and the triangulation of data (p. 18).

What speaks to me the most about case studies is that they seek a holistic understanding of a specific phenomenon, taking its unique and complex context into account. Based on my particular research questions and my theoretical background, a case study methodology appears to be the most suitable approach. Designing my research as a case study provides the methodological breadth necessary for me to explore my research questions in a way that is meaningful to my research focus. In viewing Swiss immigrant policy from an interdisciplinary perspective, a case study methodology seemed the most conducive way to illuminate the multidimensionality of the Swiss conflict around immigrant policy.

There are various reasons that make Switzerland the ideal case study for an inquiry into the link between direct democracy and the discourses surrounding immigrant policy. For one, the vast majority of all national referenda of the past fifty years worldwide were held in Switzerland (Kobach, 2001). More importantly, however, the referendum initiatives promoted by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) illustrate particularly well how a direct democratic system can be used to promote exclusionist ideologies in very effective ways. With the help of referenda, the SVP found ways to be governing and opposition party at the same time; the party has been proactive by starting popular initiatives to lead to policy changes, and reactive by vetoing changes and calling for referenda. My case study on Switzerland's recent referendum initiatives on immigrant policy is not geared towards exploring the exact means by which referenda have translated into policy and law. Instead, I am interested in how SVP initiatives are popularized through the process of referenda and how the rhetoric that accompanies these initiatives has impacted public opinion and non-citizen experience in Switzerland.

My overarching research question addresses how the use of referendum initiatives has impacted public discourses on the social and political integration of non-citizen in German-speaking Switzerland. In analysing public discourses surrounding referendum initiatives on immigrant policy, I focused on two sub-questions: How is the relationship between direct democracy, immigrant policy and non-citizen experiences portrayed in these discourses? To what extent are the voices of non-citizens incorporated? Throughout my research, I took an inductive approach, allowing me to develop and clarify my research questions as I collected the data.

Figure 2 – Methodology Chart



3.3 Data Selection and Analysis

In terms of data selection and analysis, my study comprises several parts. The first element of my case study is a discourse analysis exploring public discourses on immigrant policy in German-speaking Switzerland (a). In this section, I focus on the three most recent referendum initiatives on immigrant policy and how they were presented through political advertisements and the Swiss-German news media. The second element of my case study is an analysis of data I collected in an in-depth interview with Dragica Rajčić, a non-citizen Swiss resident, renowned author and member of the Swiss federal commission for questions concerning migration (b).

a) Discourse analysis

My study relies primarily on the tools and strategies of discourse analysis. In particular, my approach is based on the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA), as described by van Dijk (1993). The central aim of CDA is to study the relations between discourse, power and inequality, focusing mainly on “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249). The foundational assumption of CDA is that all language forms, texts and discourses are inherently embedded within power relations, which have a great impact on the social injustices in a community. Uncovering these power relations has the potential to lead to social change. I believe CDA lends itself well to provide insights into how Switzerland’s professed ‘negotiated democracy’ is constructed. It also allows me to shed light on where power lies in the shaping of public discourses on immigrant policy. To answer my research questions, I take into account both ‘top-down’ structures of dominance and ‘bottom-up’ mechanisms of resistance.

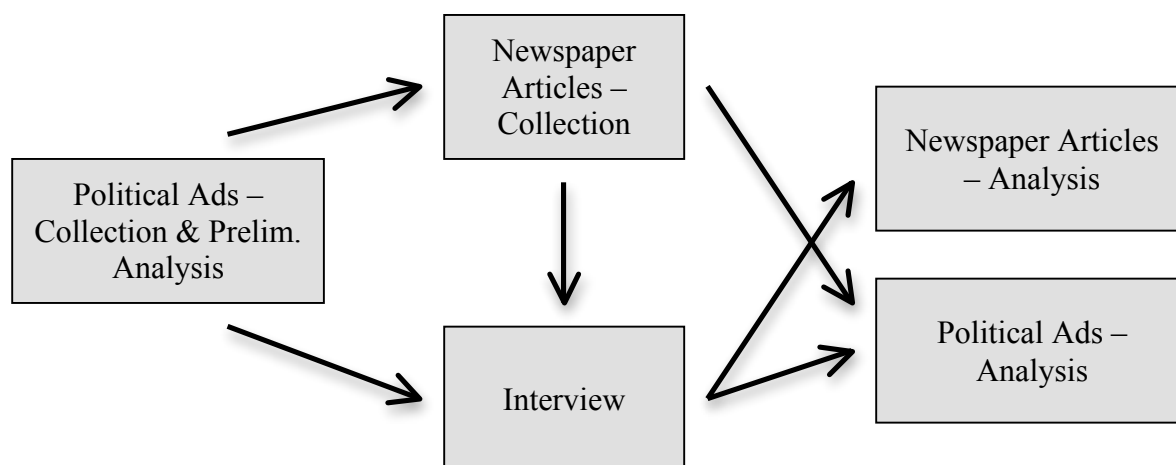
I divided my discourse analysis into two strands, political advertisements and newspaper articles. In both strands, I focused on three particular Swiss referendum initiatives of the early twenty-first century, the *Eidgenössische Volksinitiative für demokratische Einbürgerungen* (Confederate People's Initiative for Democratic Naturalizations) of 2008, the *Eidgenössische Volksinitiative gegen den Bau von Minaretten* (Confederate People's Initiative against the Building of Minarets) of 2009, and the *Eidgenössische Volksinitiative für die Ausschaffung krimineller Ausländer* (Confederate People's Initiative for the Deportation of Criminal Foreigners) of 2010. All three initiatives were conceived, developed and promoted by the Swiss People's Party (SVP), either on the cantonal or the federal level.

The first strand of my discourse analysis is an exploration of political advertisement for the three referendum initiatives I chose for my study. This section focuses on how SVP referendum initiators used visual tools in their campaigns. I was familiar with the various SVP poster campaigns from previous research projects and therefore knew they played an important role in informing the public understanding of the referendum questions. In order to get a comprehensive collection of the imagery used during the three referendum campaigns, I conducted a web search for images containing key words relating to the initiatives. I then sorted my results by referendum campaign and explored the distinct features of each campaign as well as their similarities. In order to provide context for this element of my discourse analysis, I consulted a number of secondary sources on the SVP and their use of visual tools to promote their political agenda.

My research on political advertisements for the three referendum initiatives informed both my analysis of the Swiss-German newspaper coverage and the direction of my interview with Dragica Rajčić. I collected all of my newspaper sources before conducting the interview

with Rajčić, but did not analyze them until after the interview had taken place. The results of my interview analysis therefore impacted how I approached the newspaper data, causing me to pay particular attention to overlaps between Rajčić's perspective and the dominant public discourses. Finally, both my interview with Rajčić and my analysis of newspaper coverage provided me with supplemental information on the role of political advertisements during the referendum campaigns.

Figure 3 – Data Triangulation

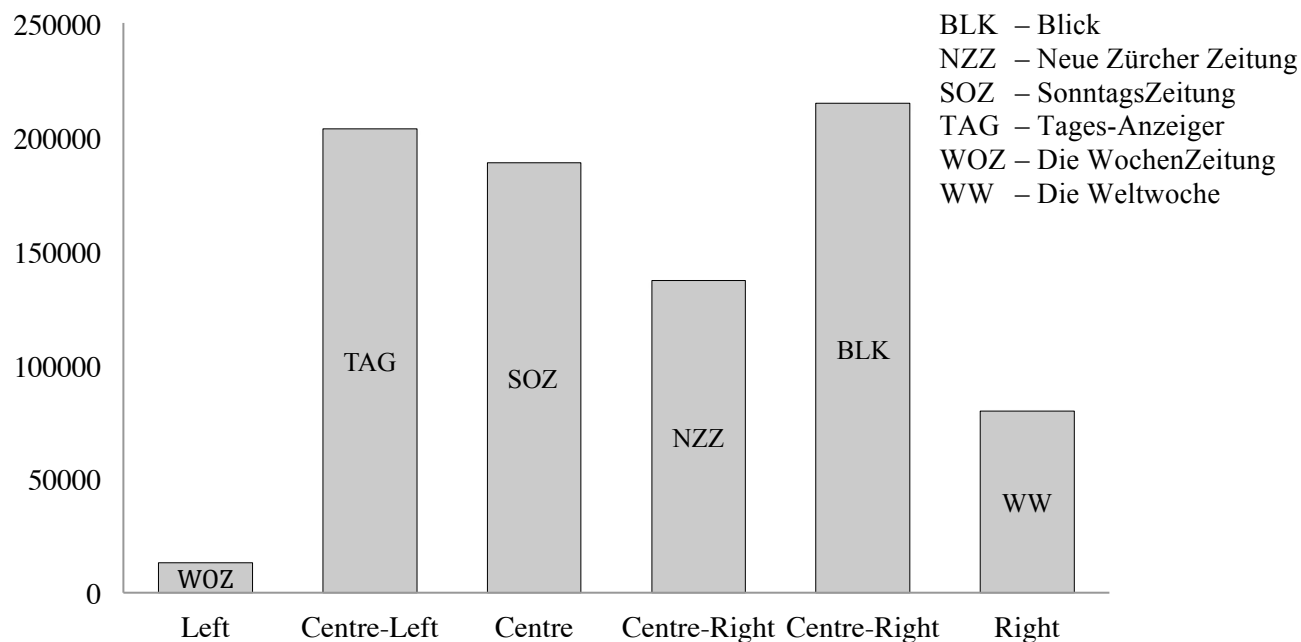


For the second strand of my discourse analysis, I collected articles from six major Swiss German-language newspapers. Three of these newspapers are daily publications (*Blick*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Tages-Anzeiger*) and three appear weekly (*SonntagsZeitung*, *Die Weltwoche* and *Die WochenZeitung*). I searched for the newspaper coverage on the Naturalization, Anti-Minaret and Deportation Initiatives in a three-week time window surrounding the votes. To be precise, I looked for articles containing key words relating to these initiatives in the two weeks before and the week after each of the three votes took place. I chose this time period in order to limit my sources and thereby enable a more detailed analysis, favouring qualitative over

quantitative methods. My source selection was also based on the assumption that in the two weeks leading up to and the week following an important referendum vote, newspapers will increase their coverage on the contents and controversies of related issues. The most important positions, arguments and the overall tenor of each newspaper would therefore emerge during this period of intense coverage.

The six newspapers I used for my study lie on a wide ideological spectrum. I decided on such a broad range of papers to represent the public discourses on immigrant policy in a multifaceted way. I also hoped to gain insight into the possible impact political ideologies may have on how these discourses are communicated to the public. I sampled the newspapers based on circulation and my personal understanding of their ideological inclination.

Figure 4 – Newspaper Sources: Ideological Spectrum & Circulation



Source: WEMF, 2010 (ideological labels added by Christine Fritze).

My initial attempt to collect articles directly from the various newspapers' websites had only limited success, due to the high fees most Swiss newspapers charge for accessing their archives. Only the newspapers *Blick* and *Die WochenZeitung* granted access free of charge. Therefore, the data I collected was mainly retrieved from various academic databases, such as WorldCat and Lexis Nexis. In total, I collected 558 newspaper articles, including published letters to the editor, on the three initiatives. I found 158 articles on the Naturalization Initiative, 177 on the Anti-Minaret Initiative and 223 on the Deportation Initiative.

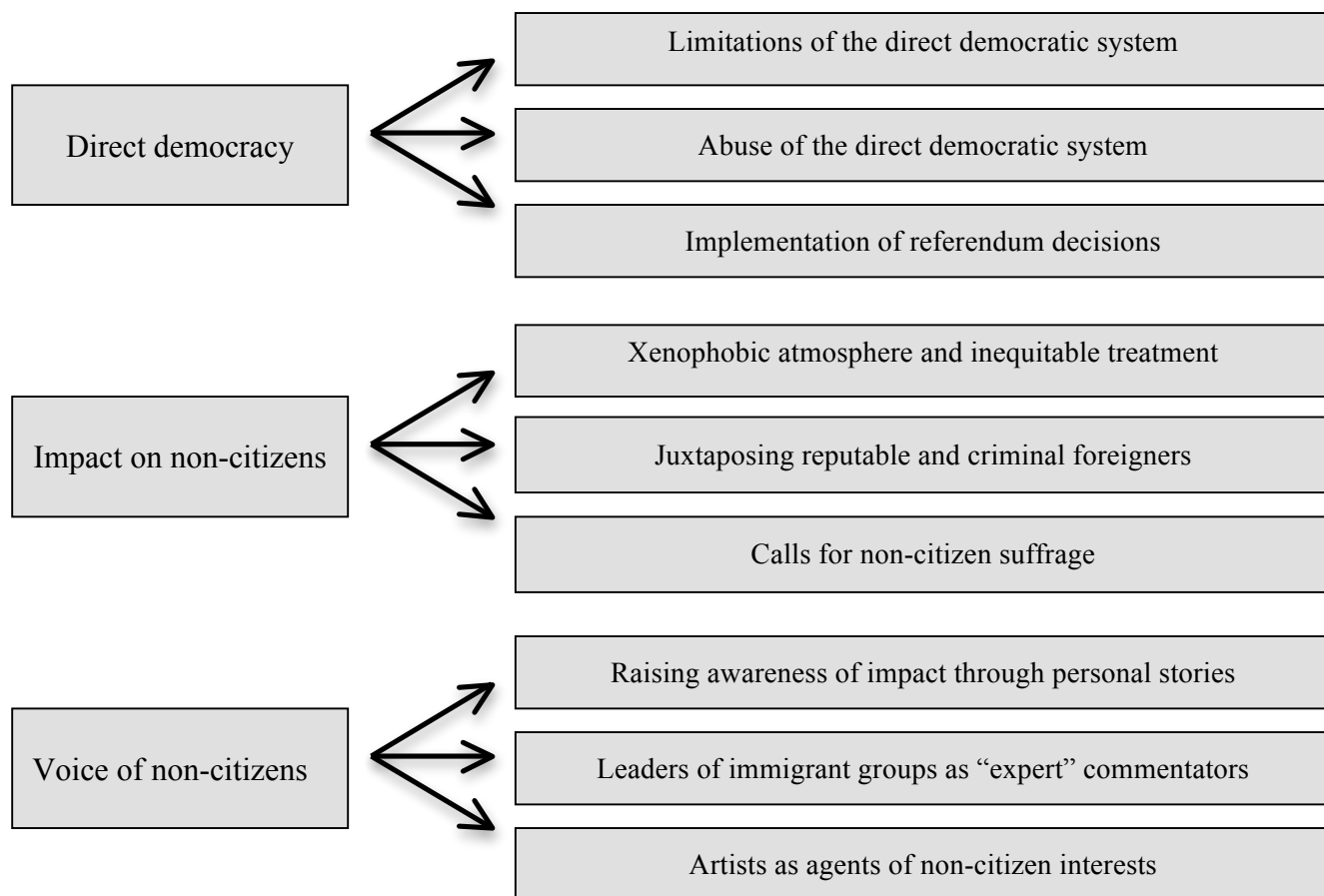
Figure 5 – Newspaper Sources: Reportage by Initiative

	Naturalization Initiative	Anti-Minaret Initiative	Deportation Initiative
<i>Blick</i>	31	57	52
<i>Neue Zürcher Zeitung</i>	36	72	76
<i>SonntagsZeitung</i>	8	7	10
<i>Tages-Anzeiger</i>	69	25	62
<i>Die Weltwoche</i>	9	12	14
<i>Die WochenZeitung</i>	5	4	9
TOTAL	158	177	223

Once my data collection was completed, I began my analysis with the Deportation Initiative, which had yielded the most articles. After having read through two of the daily newspapers (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Blick*) and one of the weekly newspapers (*SonntagsZeitung*) to get an initial idea of the main themes, I created three thematic categories that related to my research questions: “Direct democracy,” “impact on non-citizens” and “voices of non-citizens.” I

then sorted the remaining data in these three categories, placing any remarks that did not fit in either of them into a fourth category, “other observations.” After all the data was sorted, I reviewed my “other observations” and found that there was no distinct theme, but that my observations would be relevant in terms of providing context on each initiative in an introductory paragraph. I proceeded by dividing each of the thematic categories into subsections reflecting specific ideas within the three general themes.

Figure 6 – Newspaper Sources: Themes and Subsections



Only after this final methodological step was completed, did I begin to write up my findings for the discourse analysis section of my study.

b) In-depth interview

In trying to gain a balanced understanding of my topic, it was important for me to try and capture a variety of perspectives, some of which were easily found in the public domain and some of which were not. I therefore moved beyond dominant public discourses and included the voice of someone who has experienced the Swiss debates around immigrant policy as a non-citizen and has contributed in a significant way to the promotion of alternative discourses. To achieve this, I conducted an in-depth semi-structured interview with Swiss-Croatian writer Dragica Rajčić. Rajčić has lived permanently in Switzerland since the early 1990s, when she fled Croatia during the Balkan Wars. She writes on a wide variety of topics, but most interesting for my study are her works on the experience of being a foreigner in Switzerland. Rajčić creates an alternative narrative on Swiss immigration, challenging dominant discourses on inclusion and exclusion. To me, her works manifest lived transculturality, which is an important factor in why I was drawn to her as a participant of my study.

Among the non-citizen authors in Switzerland, Rajčić stands out not only due to her writing style, but also due to her active engagement in social and political organizations concerned with the integration of immigrants into Swiss society. In 2011, Rajčić was selected as a member of the EKM. She is also a member of the Swiss association of politically engaged artists *Kunst+Kultur*, which supports artistic activities on socio-political topics in Switzerland and beyond.⁴

Another reason why I chose to approach Rajčić to be my research participant is that I have worked with her on research projects in the past, which eased the process of establishing the rapport necessary for a supportive and comfortable research environment. Selecting her as a

⁴ Throughout my analysis, I will use the term ‘artists’ in a broad sense, reflecting the German term *Kulturschaffende*, which can be translated loosely as ‘creators/producers of culture’. The term ‘artists’ should be understood to encompass a wide range of creatively engaged public figures, including writers, musicians, actors, etc.

participant could, therefore, be considered a convenience sample. I also view my choice as a purposive sample, since I chose Rajčić based on particular characteristics that are conducive to the goals of my research (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy 2011, p. 45). Prior to undertaking my research, I was already familiar with Rajčić's works and have experienced the power of the language she employs both in writing and in person. Having transcribed, edited and translated an interview with her during my undergraduate degree, gave me confidence that her perspectives on my research questions would give me meaningful insights I could not arrive at without adding this interview component to my case-study.

As mentioned earlier, my interview questions were drafted and the interview was conducted before I began with the analysis of my newspaper sources. Thus, my interview questions were informed by my preliminary analysis of political advertisements and my previous knowledge about the author's work, as well as the subject matter in general terms. The interview was conducted on February 5, 2012 at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. It took place in the context of a conference on German-speaking transnational writers from the Balkans Rajčić had been invited to (*Dream of the Other Europe: Rethinking Germanistik through the Balkans*).

Our conversation lasted approximately one hour and was recorded for transcription. The intent behind my interview questions (see Appendix) was to explore areas that I was unsure my analysis of newspaper articles would cover. Staying true to the principles of a semi-structured interview, I allowed our conversation to develop organically and encouraged Rajčić to expand on those areas, which seemed most important to her. After transcribing the interview, I analysed its content for reoccurring themes and moved sections from the interview into corresponding categories. The most frequently occurring themes were the relationship between politics and the arts, Rajčić's experience as a foreigner in Switzerland and the challenges of making one's voice

heard as a non-citizen. I supplemented my interview data with a selection of Rajčić's poetry and prose.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

There are a number of ethical considerations that influenced how I designed and conducted my research project. My choice in topic and my rationale for approaching my research questions was very much influenced by my personal experiences of growing up on the border between Germany and Switzerland and immigrating to Canada at the age of 19. As a researcher, I inevitably bring my own perspectives, biases and interpretations to my work, making it important for me to reflect on the impact of my ontological and epistemological beliefs throughout the research process. Not only did my personal experiences and beliefs influence the way in which I interpreted my data, they also contributed significantly to how I designed my study. I am, for example, aware that my own immigrant identity leads me to empathize with some of the feelings and experiences Rajčić describes in her poetry.

While conducting my research, I remained aware of my primary responsibility to ensure that no harm to society, my participant or myself will result from my study. I also considered it to be my responsibility to design a study that would be beneficial for my research participant. I envisioned Rajčić as a co-creator of meaning throughout the research process and therefore presented the research data in a way that reflects my "give-and-take" approach (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy 2011, p. 112). Viewing my research as a co-production also meant that I had to do my due diligence in thoroughly informing Rajčić about the research process and its outcome. To achieve this, I provided her with a detailed consent form and submitted my work to her for approval before making it available to the public. This last step was particularly important because a)

Rajčić is referred to by name throughout my work, and b) my work is critical of the dominant power structures she depends on as a Swiss resident.

The fact that my research participant and I have had a professional relationship in the past (foremost in my capacity as translator of her poetry), also made it crucially important to consider the possibility of her feeling obligated to take part in my study. Therefore, I added a disclaimer to both my invitation email and my consent form, alerting Rajčić not to feel any obligation to participate. Another consideration of mine was that by choosing Rajčić as my sole participant, I focused on one individual's subjective experience – the experience of an educated and highly articulate woman who, in my experience, feels strongly and critically about Swiss immigrant policy. Ultimately, I believe placing my critical examination of the dominant, official discourses on Swiss immigrant policy at the core of my study, warrants my attention to a particular subjective voice that is actively engaged in constructing alternative narratives on Swiss immigration.

My largest concern in terms of research ethics revolved around translation. The majority of the sources for my study were in German, which meant that I acted as both translator and interpreter of the data. Throughout my analysis, I remained particularly aware of the cultural nuances embedded in language. Translation moved into focus especially in terms of my work with Rajčić. Since our interview was conducted in German, part of my analytical work entailed translating her words into English. This added an additional interpretive layer to my research that would not have been present had the interview language been the same as the language of publication. Having translated Rajčić's works in the past and having received her approval of my translations, gave me confidence in my ability to linguistically represent her words in a way that she supports.

3.5 Validity, Transferability and Limitations

When considering the validity, transferability and limitations of my research, it is important to keep in mind that I conducted a qualitative research study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a method of inquiry that transcends the boundaries of academic disciplines. A qualitative research question investigates the reasons and objectives behind experiences and decision-making processes. To do this, qualitative researchers rely on smaller data samples than quantitative researchers, but go more in-depth in their analysis of the data. Although this approach enables a more profound, holistic understanding of the issues under investigation, it limits the ability of researchers to come to generalized conclusions. In my study, I stayed committed to the foundational principles of qualitative research, while remaining aware of the limitations of my project.

As the integration of immigrants is an important topic in Swiss (and international) scholarship and the media, there was an extensive amount of information to process. The sources I chose were largely textual, which offered benefits, but also set limitations to my study. While Yin (2009) sees the strengths of textual sources in the unobtrusive means by which they can be acquired and the broad information they provide, he points out that there is a risk of “biased selectivity” if the collection of documentation is incomplete (p. 14). Source selection bias unquestionably played a role in how I collected my data. Although I aimed for a holistic understanding of how immigrant policy is debated in German-speaking Switzerland, limitations in time and access constrained my ability to include a complete collection of documents on the issues I am exploring. Rather than attempting to avoid selection bias, I tried to be as transparent as possible in regards to my motivation to select certain documents over others.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction of Findings

As described in the previous chapter of this study, my research process involved a wide variety of data sources, as is common in case study methodologies. The presentation of my findings will be divided into three main sections, corresponding to my data sets. The political advertisements disseminated by the SVP in the lead up to the three referendum initiative votes represent an exclusionist discourse that reached a very broad range of Swiss residents. Although SVP advertisements have been widely criticized in Swiss and international media, they aided the party in garnering the support of the majority of Swiss voters in two out of the three referendum initiatives under examination in this study. The newspaper coverage on these initiatives presents issues around immigrant policy in more complexity than the SVP advertisements. Many of the articles focus on the merits of the direct democratic system specifically relating to referendum initiatives aimed at limiting minority rights. Very few questions were raised around the exclusion of non-citizens from political decision-making processes. Representations of the direct voices of non-citizens were equally sparse and calls for the consideration of non-citizen perspectives and the diversification of public discourses were marginal, if at all present.

Unlike in the news coverage, the issues of voice and non-citizen political participation were central themes in my interview with Dragica Rajčić. She openly addressed the challenges of making one's voice heard as a non-citizen in German-speaking Switzerland and described the impact of the recent immigrant policy referendum initiatives from a non-citizen perspective. Thereby, Rajčić broadened my understanding of my research questions and allowed me to glance at an alternative discourse on immigrant policy that is not reflected in the mainstream media.

Both data sets I consulted for the discourse analysis section of my study focused on the three most recent Swiss federal referendum initiatives on Swiss immigrant policy: The Naturalization Initiative (2008), the Anti-Minaret Initiative (2009) and the Deportation Initiative (2010). I will provide basic context for each of the three initiatives before moving into a detailed discussion of my research findings.

a) Naturalization Initiative

The Naturalization Initiative was launched by the SVP in 2004 as a response to the 2003 decision of the Swiss Supreme Court to ban the naturalization of non-citizens by secret ballot. This decision was the result of an appeal made by applicants for Swiss citizenship in the municipality of Emmen. An inquiry by the Swiss Supreme Court found that 46 out of 56 applicants were rejected in a secret ballot without being provided with a reason. All of the rejected applicants were from former Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary (Ley, 2008). The Naturalization Initiative was aimed at giving municipalities the ability to design their own naturalization procedures and make unimpeded choices on which applications to accept. Supporters of the initiative argued that a municipality's decision on a citizenship application constitutes a political decision-making process and therefore does not require a rationale ("Einbürgern," 2008). In addition, the initiative required that municipal decisions on naturalizations could no longer be appealed. Despite the Federal Assembly's decision to allow the SVP to proceed, the National Council opposed the initiative. The Council argued that it undermined the competencies and responsibilities of the cantons, promoted arbitrary decision-making and put non-citizens at risk of discrimination ("Widmer-Schlumpf," 2008; "Eitel Einigkeit," 2008).

Despite a relatively expensive SVP advertising campaign, the Naturalization Initiative was rejected by 63.8 percent of the voters. In retrospect, political commentators seemed to agree that there was a strong connection between the rejection of the Naturalization Initiative and the internal divisions troubling the SVP, which may have led the party to appear unreliable. Some commentators even suggested that the party might have lost some of its traditional voter base due to its controversial decision to oust the Federal Councillor and party member Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf for not towing the party line on the Naturalization Initiative (“Positionsbezüge,” 2008; “Drei klare Nein,” 2008).

b) Anti-Minaret Initiative

In 2009, the SVP launched its Anti-Minaret Initiative, which focused on the perceived threat represented by the Islamic religion on Swiss cultural values. The SVP argued that there should be a ban on building minarets in Switzerland, as they represented symbols of Islamic power and victory (Soukup, 2009). The Anti-Minaret Initiative was presented as a necessity in protecting Switzerland from Islamic influences. According to the SVP’s leading initiator Uli Schüler, minarets represent “spearheads” of the assertion of Sharia Law. Thus, he claimed, “[the initiative] is about the rule of law, not about racism” (“Die Initiative,” 2009).⁵ Supporters of the Anti-Minaret Initiative further argued that since minarets are supposedly unnecessary for worship in traditional Islamic religious practice, the SVP initiative would not restrict the religious freedom of Muslims in Switzerland. The request for the Anti-Minaret Initiative was submitted in July 2008 and was brought to a vote in November 2009. With a voter turnout of 53.4 percent, 57.5 percent voted in favour of prohibiting the building of new minarets in Switzerland (BfS, 2012).

⁵ Translation by Christine Fritze.

Even though the Swiss electorate supported the ban of the building of new minarets, the Swiss National Council rejected the Anti-Minaret Initiative with a vast majority of votes. Since then, the Council has made it very clear that it considers the initiative not only as disturbance to religious peace in Switzerland, but also as a violation of the principles of religious freedom and equality before the law. The fact that only three minarets existed in all of Switzerland previous to the initiative and there was no indication of a significant increase, illustrates the symbolic character of the Anti-Minaret Initiative. The Muslim community in Switzerland has traditionally been depicted as particularly incapable of integrating by right-wing political forces (Linder, 2010; Skenderovic, 2007; Köppel, 2009). Just over ten percent of the approximately 310,000 Muslims currently living in Switzerland are Swiss citizens, making the Anti-Minaret Initiative distinct from the two other initiatives under examination, which were directed solely at non-citizens (BfS, 2012). The Anti-Minaret Initiative therefore represented a particularly complex spectrum of social concerns, as it attempted to manage both ethnic and religious difference.

c) Deportation Initiative

The People's Initiative for the Deportation of Criminal Foreigners was initiated by the SVP in July 2007, during the lead-up to the October 2007 general election (BfS, 2012). The initiative demanded that foreign residents of Switzerland should lose their right to live in the country if they were found guilty of a serious offence (such as violent crime, drug trafficking, or house breaking), or if they were found guilty of having made use of social services or social insurance they were not entitled to. The initiative was also fuelled by a fear of *Zuwanderung ins Sozialsystem*, immigration into the social system, based on the idea promoted by the SVP that

mostly foreigners “waste” tax money by requiring social services and welfare (Stutz, 2008 ; “Ich wollte einfach helfen,” 2010).

After extensive campaigning by the SVP as well as initiative opponents, the Deportation Initiative came to a vote on November 28, 2010 and passed with 52.9 percent of the popular vote. The initiative found the most support in German-speaking Switzerland, particularly in rural areas with small non-citizen populations (“Die Stadt Zürich,” 2010). In the days following the vote, Swiss-German newspapers reported at length on demonstrations and acts of vandalism initiated by the political left to show discontent with the election outcome. Despite SVP pressure to implement the Deportation Initiative speedily, the Swiss government has thus far failed to do so. In April 2012, the SVP officially proclaimed its intention to launch a second referendum initiative on the deportation issue, forcing the Swiss government to immediately implement the decision made by the voting public (“Ausschaffungsinitiative,” 2012).

The newspaper coverage on the Deportation Initiative was extensive and illustrated the extent to which this issue was at the forefront of the Swiss-German political consciousness of the time. My analysis of the newspaper articles showed that commentators viewed the sentiments leading up to the Deportation Initiative and its speculated repercussions very much within the context of the success of the Anti-Minaret Initiative during the previous year and the larger ideological context of SVP politics. The coverage on the Deportation Initiative, even more so than the others, illustrated that the conflict over immigrant policy was publicly constructed as a struggle between intellectual elites and the common man, between the progressive left and the conservative right, and between Switzerland as an independent nation and the EU. Just like the term *Minarettverbot* (minaret-prohibition) in 2009, a jury of five public figures representing the Swiss Radio DRS voted the term *Ausschaffung* (deportation) as the “Word of the Year” in 2010.

The jury's rationale for choosing SVP parlance was that, "one single political succeeded at raising themes, determining the public discourse and anchoring new colloquialisms" ("Ausschaffung," 2010).⁶

4.2 Discourse Analysis - Political Advertisements

All three referendum initiatives discussed in this study were introduced by Switzerland's most powerful political party, the populist, right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP). In their campaigns, the SVP made extensive use of visual advertisements. The highly controversial images were distributed and billed across the country, attracting national and international media attention. In analysing the SVP campaign imagery, I posed two key questions: How is the relationship between Swiss citizens and non-citizens depicted in these images? To what extent do the challenging features of direct democracy become evident? My examination of the various campaign images will be framed by an exploration of secondary literature on the SVP's political agenda and the impact of propaganda on the debates surrounding immigrant policy.

I. The Swiss People's Party

The SVP is a nationalistic, conservative political party in Switzerland, which has grown from a "farmer's party" to become the largest fraction of the federal assembly with the strongest federal electorate (Linder, 2010; BfS, 2012). Linder (2010) identifies the main reasons for the sweeping SVP success as the "[t]ake-over of smaller right-wing parties, strong mobilization of anti-European, anti-immigration oriented parts of the electorate, [...] populist strategies, stronger professional organization, [and] charismatic and authoritative party leadership" (p. 13). The

⁶ Translation by Christine Fritze.

development of large-scale, radical right-wing politics in Switzerland originated in the 1960s, parallel to the *Anti-Überfremdungsbewegung*, the movement against “over-foreignization.”

In the past fifty years, there has been significant fluctuation in the political right, but since the 1990s, the SVP has provided stability for right-wing voters, developing into the strongest national party under guidance of the billionaire businessman Christoph Blocher (Skenderovic, 2009). According to its party platform, the SVP stands for

- ... the maintenance of Switzerland’s unique system (*Sonderfall*), founded on sovereignty, direct democracy, permanent neutrality, federalism and subsidiarity;⁷
- ... an immigration policy tailored to the needs of Switzerland instead of unlimited mass immigration;
- ... tougher penalties rather than feather-bedding for lawbreakers, and the deportation of foreign criminals;
- ... the fundamental values of our western, Christian culture without violence, fanaticism and contempt for freedom and the rule of law. (SVP, 2012).

Another important SVP interest is the preservation of Swiss independence to protect national identity and sovereignty (SVP, 2012). The SVP therefore strongly opposes joining the European Union (EU) or getting involved in foreign military engagements. The Swiss accession to the EU would mean the delegation of decision-making powers to an international body. It would also mean that those areas falling under EU jurisdiction would automatically be removed from direct democratic control, unless the EU would find a way to incorporate principles of direct democracy (Kaufman & Waters, 2004).

⁷ Although the SVP translates the German term *Sonderfall* as “unique system,” the more common translation of the term is “exception” or “special case” (Duden, 2012). The connotation of defining Switzerland as a *Sonderfall* is that Switzerland is not only unique, but somehow more special than other nations.

Upholding direct democracy and the principles of federalism is a key tenet of the SVP agenda. One of the first paragraphs in their detailed party program states:

Our federal state – a union of minorities – would be inconceivable without extensive federal rights being granted to the cantons and municipalities. In a nation created by the voluntary association of different communities, federalism is the only way to secure unity. Only federalism gives citizens the highest possible degree of democratic co-determination within a manageable framework. Centralist decisions taken over the heads of the people lead to resignation, disillusionment with politics and, not least, maladministration. The closer to the people the decisions are taken, the more efficient and sensible is the use made of public funds. The smaller the political unit, the more prudently it manages its resources. For all these reasons, increasing numbers of people in many countries are demanding more federalism and co-determination and have had enough of remote decision making and democratic deficits. (SVP, 2012).

To the SVP, this “union of minorities,” which is based on voluntary association and is entitled to co-determination does not include Switzerland’s immigrant population. It is particularly revealing to note that although the party recognizes the detrimental effects of being excluded from decision-making processes (resignation, disillusionment, maladministration), it does not recognize these effects to be true for politically excluded non-citizens.

In the past decade, the SVP has become known for its political rhetoric characterized by simplifications and the polarization of political and social issues. Skenderovic (2009) expresses his concern with the rise of right-wing political rhetoric in Europe, noting that anti-immigration rhetoric similar to the SVP has been successful in attracting votes in countries like Denmark,

Norway, and France. He further argues that immigration policy is a central issue for extreme right-wing parties, since it provides the best opportunity to promote an exclusionist worldview. Instead of trying to find a correlation between the number of immigrants and the strength of right-wing political parties, Skenderovic (2009) suggests to consider how the immigration problem is constructed and politicised. He argues that in order to promote their agenda, the political right in Switzerland focuses on nationalism and the protection of the Swiss culture. The supposed “over-foreignization” of Swiss society is seen as a direct threat to national identity, which is understood to be internally unified and unique (Calhoun, 1998).

The political right in Switzerland exemplified by the Swiss People’s Party (SVP), views culture as homogenous and static, arguing that the Swiss values and traditions are incompatible with many foreign cultures, particularly with Islamic cultures. This perspective represents a lack of understanding of the fluidity of cultural identities, which renders it impossible to draw definite borders around specific cultures. In the globalized world of the twenty-first century, any attempt to isolate one culture from another or shield it from outside influence has a high potential to escalate differences into manifest and potentially harmful symptoms of conflict. The SVP’s political agenda shows that in a time where overt racism is no longer acceptable in the mainstream discourses, a new threat becomes evident in “neo-racism.” Skenderovic (2009) defines this as a movement, which emphasizes the “right to be different,” feigning egalitarian values while arguing for inherent differences among cultural groups, which ultimately privilege their own over the culture of others.

II. The Visual Language of SVP Initiative Campaigns

In their referendum initiative campaigns, the SVP made use of a wide variety of advertisement techniques and mediums. All three initiatives under examination in this study illustrate that the SVP did not restrict its advertising efforts to the months right before an initiative. Instead the party used initiative campaigns to promote referendum petitions as well as its broad political agenda before general elections. The main campaign poster used by the SVP to promote its Naturalization Initiative was first publicized in 2004, as a counter campaign to an initiative endorsed by the Social-Democratic Party (SP), aimed at easing naturalization criteria. Simultaneously to this SP initiative, the SVP began collecting signatures for its own Naturalization Initiative. Based on the success of the SVP counter-campaign, the naturalization poster continued to be used in the lead-up to the 2008 national vote.

Like most SVP advertisement tools, the naturalization poster was developed by the Swiss advertising and public relations agency *Goal*, which is led by SVP supporter and German citizen Alexander Segert. Segert himself has described his recipe of success as follows: “Our goal is reduction. This is primarily a question of courage. Are you courageous enough to focus all your budget and your entire campaign on one single, central argument?” (Nussbaumer, 2010).⁸ Following Segert’s concept of simplification and reductionism, the naturalization poster shows five hands in various shades of brown grabbing for a pile of Swiss passports.

⁸ Translation by Christine Fritze.

Figure 7 – SVP Poster: Naturalization



Source: <http://www.20min.ch/schweiz/news/story/13766757>

The naturalization poster prominently features the term *Masseneinbürgerung* in bold black print; Swiss voters are encouraged to say no to “mass-naturalizations.” The idea that Switzerland’s immigration law encourages mass-naturalization of foreign citizens has been persistent in SVP campaigning. Although emotionally appealing to many Swiss, this idea is not based on a rational argument. As mentioned previously, the Swiss naturalization rate is very low in comparison and the requirements for acquiring citizenship are strict. The SVP poster depicts the Swiss passports in an open crate, as if they were as easily accessible as vegetables at the market. It is also notable that the skin colour of the “new Swiss” as depicted does not accurately reflect the statistical data of citizenship applicants. According to the Swiss Agency for Statistics, most newly naturalized Swiss stem from other European countries (BfS, 2012). Choosing to portray citizenship applicants as dark-skinned visually emphasizes the SVP’s key message: These people are inherently different from us and should not become Swiss.

The advertising style of Segert's PR agency is also reflected in the SVP poster used for the Anti-Minaret Initiative campaign. The anti-minaret poster depicts a dangerous-looking Muslim woman in a black headscarf. Behind her lies the Swiss flag, pierced by minarets that look more like rockets or missiles than actual minarets. Similar to the SVP's naturalization campaign, German-language newspapers reported consistently on the Anti-Minaret Initiative campaign poster, drawing media attention to the SVP agenda. Many city governments, including Basel and Lausanne, banned the poster immediately after its release (Soukup, 2009).

Figure 8 – SVP Poster: Anti-Minaret



Source: <http://www.blick.ch/news/schweiz/minarett-gegner-ruesten-auf-id31798.html>

The anti-minaret poster encourages voters to stop the threatening impact of symbols of Islam on Swiss society. Despite the fact that there are only three minarets in all of Switzerland, the poster suggests that Swiss landscape is overwhelmed by them. The allegedly threatening features of Islam were the overall focus of the campaign. The missile minarets throw dark shadows and the style of the depicted burka alludes to a hidden danger on one hand, and the

suppression of Muslim women on the other. The clear message of the anti-minaret poster is: What you see here is a concern of national security and incompatible with who we are as Swiss. With the anti-minaret poster, the SVP also reaffirmed its signature colour scheme, which was publicly recognized as being reminiscent of the Nazi Era in Germany (“Berechtigte Angst,” 2008). Despite the fact that the poster was part of a successful campaign, it caused widespread outrage, fuelled public discussions and attracted extensive media attention. One commentator in *Blick* notes that even people who objected the poster for being too extreme became interested in the topic and ended up voting in favour of the initiative (Hehli, 2009a).

The SVP colour scheme re-emerged in the advertising for the Deportation Initiative. The most prominent advertising tool used by the SVP during this initiative campaign was the so-called *Schäfchenplakat*, commonly translated as “Black-Sheep Campaign.” This poster portrays three white sheep pushing a fellow black sheep off of their pasture, the Swiss flag.

Figure 9 – SVP Poster: “Black Sheep Campaign”



Source: <http://www.blick.ch/news/politik/jetzt-kommt-das-schwarze-schaf-id137148.html>

Similar to previous campaigns, the simplistic, animated imagery crafted by Segert's PR agency could be understood by a wide audience. The picture speaks for itself, even without the printed message *Sicherheit schaffen*, creating security. Not unlike the Muslim woman on the Anti-Minaret Initiative poster, the black sheep portrays a sense of imminent danger.

A biblical proverb suggests that the eyes are windows to the soul. Segert's agency *Goal* used this concept to the SVP's advantage, communicating the dangerous character of "foreigners" through the eyes of the woman on the anti-minaret poster and through the eyes of the sheep in the "Black-Sheep Campaign." Here, the eyes of white sheep are noticeably different from eyes of the black sheep, juxtaposing honest openness with malicious secrecy. In addition, the poster proposes that kicking out black sheep would create national security, but no part of the imagery addresses the issue of criminality, which was central to the referendum initiative. Again, the message is clear: These foreigners look different and are different. They are a threat to our security and we have every right to *kick* them out.

The "Black-Sheep Campaign" was disseminated in a mass mailing to Swiss households. It was also printed in magazines and newspapers, and displayed on billboards across the country (Sciolino, 2007). According to an article in the *New York Times*, one of the SVP's parliamentary candidates stated in 2008: "The black sheep is not any black sheep that doesn't fit into the family. It's the foreign criminal who doesn't belong here, the one that doesn't obey Swiss law. We don't want him" (Sciolino, 2007). It is clear that the metaphor of the black sheep was used very deliberately in this case, allowing the SVP to convey specific sentiments through their choice of words and imagery.

As with previous referendum initiative advertisements, the SVP attracted a lot of media attention with the "Black-Sheep Campaign" and was criticized by the political left for its

potentially racist connotations, as well as the lack of any direct link to the Deportation Initiative, which suggested that it went beyond the concrete political demands advocated by the initiative. The party claimed that the image of the black sheep is understood in every culture, and that any questions of race are irrelevant (Stavrou, 2007). In the past five years, the black-sheep imagery has been reused by other political parties, such as the German right-wing NPD in Hessen, the Spanish radical group Democracia Nacional, the Italian Lega Nord and the Czech National Party.⁹

The Deportation Initiative is also a telling example in terms of how the SVP communicated its political agenda other than through campaign posters. Along with the “Black-Sheep Campaign,” the SVP distributed a short campaign film, “Heaven or Hell.” In the first segment of the film, young foreign looking men inject heroin, steal handbags, beat up schoolboys, wield knives and carry off a young woman. The second segment shows Muslims living in Switzerland; women are wearing headscarves and men are sitting around lazily. The third segment shows the “heavenly” Switzerland, characterized by beautiful landscapes, traditional wrestlers and wealthy bankers. The film was withdrawn from the party’s website after the men who acted in it sued the SVP, arguing they were misled about its purpose (Stavrou, 2007).

In the weeks leading up to the popular vote on the Deportation Initiative, the SVP increased its efforts to move their issue to the centre of public attention. A cantonal SVP division, for example, circulated an image depicting the backsides of four naked young women walking into water. Below the image, a caption read “Lake Zürich 2010.” This image was then juxtaposed with a picture of several elderly women, dressed in rags, bathing in a dirty river. Below, a caption read “Lake Zürich 2030” (“Die SVP-Füdlis,” 2010). With the Deportation

⁹ The reuse of the “Black-Sheep Campaign” became evident to me through my image search on Google.

Initiative, as with previous referendum initiatives, the SVP succeeded in garnering media attention with images that aimed to frighten and irritate the public, but had no rational connection to the actual initiative content.

V. The Role of Propaganda

In my analysis of the SVP posters for referendum initiatives, the problematic features of how the relationship between citizens and non-citizens is depicted became evident. In light of my findings, I wondered, how do the SVP advertising strategies challenge the Swiss system of direct democracy? One of the most interesting elements in both the Anti-Minaret and the Deportation Initiatives is that in the weeks leading up to the vote, the referendum polls clearly suggested that a majority of Swiss people would reject them (Hehli, 2010a). What caused their change of mind? Could the advertisements disseminated during SVP referendum campaigns have actually led Swiss citizens to vote in ways that did not reflect their general values, but in response to perceived threats to their physical and economic security?

Stojanović (2006) points to the role of the media, stating that “the risk of populist manipulations is, indeed, one of the classical critiques of direct democratic procedures” (p. 199). Although it was the Swiss voting public that made the controversial choice to ban the building of minarets, it is unclear whether and how this choice was informed. Skenderovic (2007) claims that past Swiss referenda on immigration issues were less about particular policy changes and more about voicing discontent with the presence of immigrants and asylum seekers. He points to surveys that have shown that many voters are unaware of the particulars of the debate, but generally agree with the exclusionist world-view that is being propagated in SVP campaigns.

In his book on direct democracy and multiculturalism in Switzerland Linder (2010)

writes about the presence of intensive campaigning for and against the referendum initiative proposals, which include controversial public meetings, party recommendations, lobbies, slogans and extensive coverage in newspapers and other media. He argues that this process of public deliberation may lead to changes in public opinion and individual preferences. The media, of course, is not neutral. It is highly influenced by interest groups and political leadership.

Linder also addresses a very important question: Can money and propaganda buy votes? Studies have shown that there is a correlation between the strongly one-sided propaganda and referendum results (Kriesi, 2009). Powerful private actors and unequal campaign budgets seem to have an effect on voter opinion. In the public discourses surrounding all three referendum initiatives discussed in this study, initiative opponents criticized the SVP's alleged effort to buy votes with costly campaigning strategies that could only be funded through the party's strong business ties (Mäder, 2009).

Overall, my analysis of some of the key political advertisements used by the SVP in their referendum campaigns illustrated the role visual representations played in shaping the public discourses around immigrant policy. The imagery used in SVP posters suggests that the referendum campaigns were about much more than the initiative texts themselves. The SVP succeeded in subversively communicating sentiments conducive to the party's agenda, setting an atmosphere of fear and mistrust directed at "foreigners." My findings also revealed the intention behind SVP campaigns to establish a clear dichotomy between the Swiss and "others." In the newspaper coverage on the three referendum initiatives, the idea of SVP intentionally to divide and create rifts re-surfaced. My analysis also showed that the party's efforts of creating an exclusionist atmosphere were publicly recognized and strongly opposed by a number of commentators on the left side of the political spectrum.

4.3 Discourse Analysis – Newspaper articles

I. Introduction

As mentioned in the methodology chapter of this study, for the second strand of my discourse analysis, I collected articles from six major Swiss German-language newspapers: *Blick*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *SonntagsZeitung*, *Tages-Anzeiger*, *Die Weltwoche* and *Die WochenZeitung* within three-week-periods surrounding the three referendum initiatives under examination. Throughout the course of my research, I processed the newspaper data chronologically. After an initial scan of the materials, I isolated three main themes that related to my research questions: Reflections on the link between direct democracy and immigrant policy, statements about the impact of referendum initiatives on non-citizens, and representations of non-citizen perspectives.

II. Direct Democracy

The topic of direct democracy received the most coverage out of the three thematic categories I established. In all print sources, there were extensive debates on the merits of the direct democratic system relating specifically to the difficulties presented by referendum initiatives on immigrant policy. Overall, three questions emerged that defined the Swiss-German debates around direct democracy in the field of immigrant policy: How much direct democracy is too much? Can the system of direct democracy be abused? How can the successful implementation of initiatives be ensured?

a) How much direct democracy is too much?

The perspectives of media commentators on the limitations of direct democratic processes seemed to depend on foundational ideological principles. Conservative or right-leaning columnists and readers claimed that there is a correlation between the degree of citizens' direct influence on decision-making and the success of Swiss democracy. In a letter to the editor of the *Tages-Anzeiger*, one reader expresses his relief that Switzerland's "direct democracy allows for the rectification of social grievances." He writes: "Too many foreigners disregard our hospitality. They commit serious offences, threaten our property and our lives. [...] The time has come when the citizens must take matters in their own hands" ("Wenden wir doch das Strafgesetz an," 2010).¹⁰ Similar sentiments concerning the importance of direct democracy are expressed in *Die Weltwoche*. In response to the manifestations of public and political discontent with the result of the Anti-Minaret Initiative, one article states:

After the vote in favour of the Anti-Minaret Initiative, politicians, judges and professors want to overturn the people's decision. They are teaming up with European elites to build an anti-democratic alliance. Taking the Swiss sovereign [the people] for a fool has system and tradition. [...] The *Tages-Anzeiger* reports: "Sometimes the sovereign can make the wrong decision." Really? With democracy, there is no right or wrong. There are only decisions that everyone is bound by. [...] The message [of the critics] is clear: The Swiss sovereign is stupid and dangerous; it needs leadership that steers from above. (Engeler & Gut, 2009).

A less extreme, but similar message was conveyed by National Councillor and Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey in a speech before an EU delegation in Brussels, following the

¹⁰ All translations in this analysis of newspaper sources are by Christine Fritze.

Deportation Initiative. While acknowledging that the outcome of the initiative vote bears challenges to international law, *Blick* reports that Calmy-Rey emphasized the legitimacy of direct democracy as a system which cannot be called into question: “I am convinced that the active participation of citizens in political decision-making process will remain relevant in our changing world” (“Calmy-Rey spricht sich für das Volksrecht aus,” 2010). The Councillor also stressed that participation is accompanied by a shared responsibility for the direction in which the Swiss state will move. According to the *Tages-Anzeiger*, Calmy-Rey went as far as promoting the Swiss direct democratic system, despite extensive international critique of the outcome of the Deportation Initiative. The Councillor assured her audience that the EU would benefit from a more direct democratic approach, as this would lead to increased legitimacy, a stronger sense of unity among European citizens and possibly the birth of a distinct European identity (Israel, 2010).

With the exception of *Die Weltwoche*, all newspapers examined in this study focused their coverage on a more left-leaning perspective, arguing that direct democracy must have its boundaries in order to avoid a “tyranny of the majority.” The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* reports in the context of the Naturalization Initiative that direct democracy cannot be the only tool to reach decisions: “Part of direct democracy is to limit [popular votes] to broad directive questions and to delegate specifics” (“Kein ‘Sonderfall Einbürgerung,’” 2008). In an interview with the *SonntagsZeitung*, constitutional lawyer Thomas Fleiner sees the Naturalization Initiative as an illustration for why referendum questions should not call foundational principles of human dignity into question. When asked if the decision of the sovereign should always be considered “right,” he answers:

No. If the sovereign were always right, it would have been right in rejecting women's right to vote, it would have rightfully introduced Apartheid in South Africa and it would have rightfully voted the Nazis into power in Germany. There are boundaries the sovereign has to adhere to. If it doesn't want to do so, our institutions are obligated to point out those boundaries. (Tanda & Zenger, 2008).

The idea that there are clear limitations to the system of direct democracy was also discussed in the context of the Anti-Minaret Initiative. In a letter to the editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, a reader points to the fact that direct democratic votes had a disappointing impact on minority rights in California and Maine (Kvasnak, 2009). The left-wing newspaper *Die WochenZeitung* published an interview with Samuel-Martin Behloul, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Lucerne, in which he argues that the system of direct democracy may be out-dated:

I have to emphasize: Direct democracy is a very valuable principle. Yet, we have to ask ourselves: During what time did this mechanism originate and in what time do we live today? Under certain current conditions of multiculturalism and multi-religiosity, our system may backfire. (Gross, 2009).

A similar sentiment also appeared in the media coverage on the Deportation Initiative. Several newspapers, including *Blick*, report on the wide-spread international criticism claiming that the initiative's outcome suggests direct democracy may have once again foundered on xenophobia ("Schweiz von Auslandspresse hart angegangen," 2010; "Schweizer sind schizopren!," 2010).

In a lengthy feature in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, renowned political scientist Andreas Vatter presents a theoretical examination of the concept of "tyranny of the majority." Vatter suggests that the voting public in Switzerland seems to make decisions that put a minority at a

disadvantage only if that minority is considered poorly integrated and represents values that are perceived as foreign (Vatter, 2010). He concludes that although Switzerland could succumb to a “tyranny of the majority,” a combination of constitutional safeguards, a stable democratic culture and responsible political actors and media can control this tendency.

b) Can the system of direct democracy be abused?

Vatter’s observation on the protective mechanisms that need to be in place to ensure the functioning of direct democracy leads to another idea that appeared repeatedly throughout my research. This idea revolved around the use and abuses of the direct democratic system by political actors. While the SVP and its supporters viewed their interpretation of the political system as the most effective way to give a voice to the so-called ‘common people,’ the centre and left-of-centre parties and their supporters generally argued that the SVP was manipulating an otherwise well functioning system for personal gain.

The concept of presenting the SVP as the voice of the Swiss sovereign, the common people, is a central element of the party’s political message, featuring prominently in SVP’s visual advertisements and political rhetoric. In an interview with *Blick*, SVP founding figure and key strategist Christoph Blocher stresses that the SVP, unlike all other political parties, is in touch with the concerns and needs of the Swiss people. He goes on to state that the SVP stands for true concordance, but simultaneously assures readers that the party will refuse to enter any compromises on the implementation of the Deportation Initiative (Witzmann & Odermatt, 2010). The SVP’s alleged ability to stay in touch with the pressing concerns of the people emerged in various letters to the editor and also featured in a three-page spread in *Die Weltwoche*. In this feature, the author argues that the Swiss people’s decision to vote in favour of the Anti-Minaret

and Deportation Initiatives represents a return to traditional Swiss values of realism, modesty, security and conservatism (Gut, 2010). With the help of a graph tracing the development of Swiss values over time, Gut illustrates the congruence of the SVP's agenda with what is most important to the Swiss populace. Thereby, he constructs his own scientific proof demonstrating that the SVP is the future of Switzerland.

In stark opposition to Gut's article stand the sarcastic ponderings by publicist Roger de Weck in the *SonntagsZeitung*. By process of elimination, de Weck establishes that according to SVP rhetoric neither the political class, nor foreigners, "left-wing do-gooders" or intellectuals belong to the *Volk*, the Swiss people. Consequently he poses the rhetorical question: Does being part of "the people" presuppose party membership? If the Naturalization Initiative were to fail, would the majority of Swiss voters no longer belong to the Swiss "people"? De Weck's concluding statement is: "Switzerland. A homeland without 'people,' but with a People's Party."

In less cynical terms, the SVP was widely criticized for manipulating the Swiss democratic system to advance its exclusionist agenda. Although most of the media coverage focused on the critique originating in neighbouring countries, there were also numerous reports on internal opposition to the SVP's approach. In the context of the Anti-Minaret Initiative, *Blick* reported on the concerns raised by various constitutional law experts. They argue that the SVP acted irresponsibly and without much concern for the rule of law by initiating a vote on specific constitutional wording, knowing that voters would be motivated by general concerns about Islam ("Was die Minaret-Gegner fordern," 2009).

A similar argument was brought forth after the vote in favour of the Deportation Initiative. In an interview with the *Tages-Anzeiger*, Daniel Thürer, Swiss Chair of International Humanitarian Law at the University of Geneva notes that the SVP kept the Deportation Initiative

wording vague, knowing that even slight changes would be virtually impossible after a vote was cast. Thürer states: “It is wrong to use the Constitution as the battleground for propaganda wars. One gets the impression that direct democracy is increasingly becoming a plaything for political strategy and partisan calculations” (Ferrari & Nussbaumer, 2010). One article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* urges readers to view the Anti-Minaret Initiative as a lesson for future SVP attempts to abuse the direct democratic system:

[The initiators] have once again demonstrated how our direct democratic system translates into praxis. The voting public’s right to propose and vote on constitutional changes is virtually limitless in regards to content. Everything can be proposed, mundane, pivotal, serious, petty, symbolic or concrete matters. The right to propose initiatives can even be abused, as we can see, when provisions are only used as pretence to awaken diffuse fears in order to gain political profit. (Auer, 2009).

After the success of the Deportation Initiative, commentators seemed to have reached an even more heightened state of awareness around the SVP’s strategic use of Switzerland’s referendum democracy. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* attributes the initiative’s success partially to the SVP’s ability to act strategically, while the other political parties voted on principle. The SP and Green Party’s decision to reject an unequal criminal code on principle, stifled the National Council’s attempt to convince Swiss citizens to vote for a less extreme counter-proposal (Bochsler, 2010). In an interview with *Blick*, former National Councillor Pascal Couchepin sees referendum initiatives as the foundation of the SVP’s formula for success. He predicts that after the success of the Deportation Initiative, many more initiatives on immigrant policy will follow (Habegger, 2010).

c) How can the successful implementation of initiatives be ensured?

In a letter to the editor of the *Tages-Anzeiger* a German citizen concerned about the outcome of the Deportation Initiative writes:

As a German citizen married to a Swiss, I am in shock over the determination with which the majority of the Swiss people have allowed themselves to be swept away by the SVP's hateful campaign. [...] At this point, the question arises if the praxis of direct democracy – which I have always admired and defended – is the right means to come to decisions on such emotional topics. Can the electorate decide over minorities, ethnic groups or the fortunes of other human beings in general? What supervisory institutions need to be established to avoid an all-encompassing demagoguery, which is the only way to describe this initiative and the SVP's aggressive campaign? (“Das Volk steht nicht über dem Recht,” 2010).

This question illustrates the third prevalent idea within the newspaper coverage: How can new legislation, which becomes mandatory once the voting public has accepted an initiative, be implemented? As this section of my study will show, some commentators argued in line with the SVP's position, stating that decisions made by the people must be accepted as ultimate and cannot be mitigated by internal or external influences. Others contended that there needs to be room for institutional mechanisms to supplement direct democracy and ensure the protection of “outgroups.”

All three referendum initiatives introduced by the SVP presented challenges to the Swiss constitution and the rule of law in terms of their potentially discriminating and despotic elements. The National Council's message on each initiative in this regard was that although

integrating direct democratic decisions with the rule of law poses challenges, the two principles should be seen as complementary, rather than opposite (Szöllözi, 2008). For many commentators, however, the key question remained: If referendum initiative outcomes and the rule of law contradict each other, which one is to prioritize? The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* presented the Naturalization Initiative as a win/lose scenario where either the initiative or the constitution would prevail at the detriment of the other (“Gemeindevorsteher,” 2008). One report on the Anti-Minaret and Deportation Initiatives illustrates that many commentators saw international courts (such as the European Court of Human Rights) as the only means to refute the referendum outcomes (“Reaktionen,” 2009). According to this article, the SVP, on the other hand, considered the suggested involvement of “foreign” judges as a betrayal of the sovereign’s rightful authority. The SVP is quoted as saying that Switzerland must resign its post in the European Council and annul its commitment to the European Convention of Human Rights if the EU courts were to disagree with the Swiss decision (“Die Reaktionen der Parteien,” 2009).

Other suggested measures to ensure the successful implementation of referendum initiatives revolved around preliminary safeguards. After the popular vote in favour of the Deportation Initiative, numerous politicians of the centre parties and the left were quoted in the media, promoting a new approach to preliminary examination of proposed initiatives. Hans Grunder, President of the Civic Democratic Party (BDP), for example, calls for the establishment of a new federal institution aimed specifically at testing initiative proposals for their conformity to constitutional law and human rights (“Gegenseitige Vorwürfe,” 2010). Another proposed measure to prevent initiatives that contradict or challenge human rights is advocated by Gabi Huber, chairwoman of the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP), among others. According to this model, constitutional wording voted on in direct democratic processes would no longer be

automatically adopted into the constitution. Instead, the Swiss Parliament would be obligated to draft a constitutional amendment conforming with human rights after the voting public shows their support in an initiative vote (Windlinger, 2010).

The newspaper articles under examination demonstrated an overall recognition that direct democracy is such an integral part of Swiss identity that it is highly unlikely to disappear from the field of immigrant policy. There was also widespread agreement among commentators that some measures must be taken to ensure the successful implementation of direct democratic decisions, without compromising the rule of law or international human rights conventions. The only party to oppose this stand was the SVP who signalled very clearly that any measure to limit direct democratic authority would be considered as an attack on democracy itself (Engeler & Gut, 2009; Gut, 2010).

III. Impact on Non-Citizens

Considering the extensive newspaper coverage on the merits of direct democracy and the political context in which the three initiatives took place, the reports on the impact of the referendum initiatives on non-citizens were limited. The question of how “foreigners” might experience the initiatives on immigrant policy was mostly addressed in broad, general terms. Individual stories received very little attention in the publications that were selected for this study. In my analysis, I separated between instances in which the experiences of non-citizens were discussed by Swiss nationals and those in which non-citizens themselves were given the opportunity to voice their concerns. It is revealing to note that *Die Weltwoche*, which is positioned on the right side of the ideological spectrum, did not once report on the possible effects of the SVP initiatives on non-citizens. The far-left newspaper *Die WochenZeitung*, on the

other hand, reported extensively in comparison. Out of a total of 18 articles on the three referendum initiatives published in *Die WochenZeitung*, seven included the direct or indirect voices of non-citizens.

Considering the external reflections on the impact of the three referendum initiatives on non-citizens, it became evident to me that there was a clear division between the perspectives of left-leaning commentators compared to those of right-leaning commentators. Consequently, some commentators in the left-leaning press saw the negative impacts of the initiatives as justification for granting all resident non-citizens the right to vote. Right-leaning commentators, on the other hand, clearly separated between well-integrated law-abiding “foreigners” who would benefit from the SVP initiatives, and criminal “foreigners” who deserved the reduction of rights the initiatives called for.

a) Xenophobic atmosphere and inequitable treatment

In the articles addressing the impact SVP initiatives may have on non-citizens living in Switzerland, one of the most prevalent themes was the spreading of a xenophobic atmosphere. In *Blick*, the President of the EKM, Francis Matthey, states his concern that the Naturalization Initiative poisoned the social climate in Switzerland, fostering distrust and suspicion (“SVP Initiative vergiftet Klima,” 2008). According to the *Tages-Anzeiger*, the EKM also claimed that the Naturalization Initiative and the SVP poster campaign were stirring up negative feelings towards citizenship applicants while setting a racist tone (“Rassistische Töne,” 2008). The connection between the Naturalization Initiative and racist tendencies in Swiss society was also established in *Die WochenZeitung*, in an article discussing discriminatory naturalization procedures within the larger context of racism in Switzerland (Stutz, 2008).

Similar concerns reappeared in media responses to the Anti-Minaret Initiative. *Blick* quotes Farhad Afshar, President of the Swiss Coordination of Islamic Organizations: “Muslims do not feel accepted as a religious community in Switzerland.” He further emphasizes the painful impact of the symbolic character of the Anti-Minaret Initiative (““Die Schweiz hat heute verloren,”” 2009). The idea of a gradual acclimatization to xenophobic tendencies also emerged in the responses to the Deportation Initiative. Georg Kreis, President of the Federal Anti-Racism Commission, expresses his concern that a public outcry in opposition to the referendum result would not be as pronounced as the protests in the aftermath of the Anti-Minaret Initiative. According to Kreis, this could be indicative of a general acceptance of discriminatory, xenophobic policies (Hehli, 2010b). In a letter to the editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* a reader writes: “The acceptance of the Deportation Initiative means a continual increase of insecurity and unrest in Swiss society. It also means an increase of prejudices and overall threat to social coexistence” (“Folgen der Härte,” 2010).

Along with critiques of the exclusionist atmosphere created by SVP immigrant policy referendum initiatives came concerns about the well-being of non-citizens in Switzerland. A general theme in the newspaper coverage was the injustice of inequitable treatment experienced by non-citizens. In response to the Naturalization Initiative, many commentators viewed biased decision-making processes on citizenship applications as unjust. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, for example, points out that the right to appeal is a foundational principle of the Swiss constitution that applies even to traffic fines. Excluding non-citizens from this right cannot be legally or morally justified (“Eidgenössische Abstimmung,” 2008). Other negative impacts of both the Naturalization and the Deportation Initiatives that appeared only in general terms were despotism, discrimination, invasion of private sphere and infringement on the right to fair

hearing (“Eitel Einigkeit,” 2008; “Willkür und Demokratie,” 2008; Winteler & Halbeis, 2010). The critics of the Anti-Minaret Initiative focused primarily on questions of discrimination and the undermining of religious freedoms (Schoch, 2009). In an editorial preceding the initiative vote, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* writes: “One reason to vote ‘no’ is that [using the Anti-Minaret Initiative as a symbol against Islamism] would be a collective ‘punishment,’ an emotional abasement of an entire demographic group” (“Stark in Vielfalt,” 2009).

Despite a clear focus on the importance of maintaining non-discriminatory principles in general terms, some commentators expressed concern over more tangible impacts the initiatives may have. However, there were only few mentions of the specific impacts of referendum initiatives on non-citizens. These mentions emerged primarily through letters to the editor and other forms of reader commentary. In an online chat with National Councillor Widmer-Schlumpf published in the *Tages-Anzeiger*, one reader asks in reference to the Naturalization Initiative:

Why is there almost no acknowledgement that many naturalized citizens from the Balkans are refugees, who have found a new home in Switzerland, while their old home fell apart in war? The initiators are consciously trying to equate many hapless human beings, who never attracted negative attention, with a few delinquents (Szöllösi, 2008).

In the context of the Deportation Initiative, another reader voices his concern about the initiative’s disregard for non-citizens’ cultural ties to Switzerland:

I cannot in good conscience agree that people who were born and raised in Switzerland, attended Swiss schools, pay taxes and do not speak any other language beside Swiss-German are at risk of being deported to a country that they may never have even been to, only because they do not have a Swiss passport. It

is easy to forget that criminality is not a problem of immigrants, but a problem of people living in poverty who have little education and lack employment opportunities. (“Man vergisst leicht,” 2010).

Throughout the newspaper coverage under examination, the negative impact of an increasingly xenophobic atmosphere emerged as the most frequently cited impact of SVP referendum initiatives on non-citizens.

b) Calls for non-citizen suffrage

Some commentators on the left end of the ideological spectrum went beyond simply voicing their concern about the impact of referendum initiatives on non-citizens by advocating for concrete solutions. One of the suggestions particularly relevant to my study was the reoccurring advocacy for non-citizen suffrage. In the week before the popular vote on the Naturalization Initiative, the *SonntagsZeitung* published an interview with Thomas Fleiner, renowned expert in constitutional law. When asked about the role of minorities in Swiss federalism Fleiner responds:

I am convinced that we could arrive at sensible political decisions if non-citizens were able to participate in political decision-making processes. [...] When workers began to participate politically in the late nineteenth century, the state instantly became more social. Things also changed for the better after women achieved the right to vote. It would be the same with non-citizens. (Tanda & Zenger, 2008).

In an interview with *Blick*, President of the Green Party Ueli Leuenberger also acts as an advocate for non-citizen suffrage: “We have to finally learn to treat Swiss citizens and non-

citizens equally before the law. [...] The Green Party is in favour of granting non-citizens, who reside and work in Switzerland the right to vote” (“Fremdenfeindliche Kampagnen,” 2010).

A call for non-citizen suffrage also appeared in the coverage on the Anti-Minaret Initiative. Three days after the initiative had passed, *Die WochenZeitung* featured an article challenging the SVP’s claim that the Anti-Minaret Initiative was meant to protect Muslim women from oppressive practices advocated in the Koran. The author of the article writes:

How do native and immigrant women in Switzerland come to their rights? Not without their own voices. To claim to know better what Muslim women need, than Muslim women themselves, is not feminism, but pure colonialism. [...] What would actually help Muslim women, as well as the direct democratic system, is granting non-citizens the right to vote. (Wilhelm, 2009).

All three of these reports represent instances in which Swiss citizens contributed to public discourses on immigrant policy to highlight the lack of opportunities for the political engagement of non-citizens.

c) Juxtaposing reputable and criminal foreigners

It is important to note that the impact of referendum initiatives on non-citizens was not only mentioned in negative terms. During the Anti-Minaret Initiative, the political right found an unlikely ally in Swiss women’s right activist and writer Julia Onken. In a public letter reported on by *Blick*, Onken calls on Swiss women to vote in favour of the initiative, arguing that the Koran promotes a misogynistic way of life and that minarets are male symbols of dominance (Odermatt, 2009). This argumentation was in line with the SVP initiators who claimed that a refusal to support the Anti-Minaret Initiative would be harmful to the well-being of Muslim

women, enabling further suppression (“Frauen,” 2009; “Die Initiative,” 2009). The separation of reputable immigrants (Muslim women) from criminal “foreigners” (Islamic extremists) was a strategy employed by the SVP in all three of the referendum initiatives examined in this study.

In an interview published by *Blick*, SVP politician Natalie Rickli advocates for her party’s Naturalization Initiative. When asked by a reader to view the initiative from the perspective of a non-citizen in Switzerland, Rickli replies: “My circle of acquaintances includes many non-citizens. They support this initiative, as well as the Deportation Initiative because these initiatives benefit well-integrated citizens” (“Einbürgern: Wer hat das letzte Wort?” 2008). Later she states: “Many non-citizens support the Naturalization Initiative; certainly those who value the Swiss passport do.” Rickli’s message is clear, only those well-integrated non-citizens who support the Naturalization Initiative value the Swiss passport and are therefore deserving of Swiss citizenship. In a letter to the editor of the *Tages-Anzeiger*, a reader explains why she will vote in favour of the Deportation Initiative. She agrees with the SVP that reputable immigrants will in fact benefit from the initiative:

[A]most daily we can read reports in the media about criminal foreign youth and young adults who can act out uninhibitedly in our country. Delinquents are indulged by certain left-wing politicians and their offences are not taken seriously. This is a slight against all reputable non-citizens in Switzerland, who suffer because of their criminal compatriots and because of this, are often put at a disadvantage. (“Man vergisst leicht,” 2010).

It is noteworthy that with the exception of a few instances, all explicit references to this separation between reputable and criminal foreign citizens appeared in the centre-right populist newspaper *Blick*.

IV. Voices of Non-Citizens

Overall, the direct voices of non-citizens were noticeably underrepresented in the newspaper sources I collected. Only 24 out of a total 558 articles on the three referendum initiatives included the direct voices of non-citizens. The media's silence regarding non-citizen first-hand reflections on the impact of referendum initiatives would have gone unnoticed, were it not for a brief mention in the liberal press. *Die WochenZeitung* writes:

The public has only very limited access to the voices of those, whose children may be deported in the future; those, who according to this initiative must leave the country they have lived in for many years because of committing a minor offence. (Bühler, 2010).

The direct perspectives of non-citizens on the debates surrounding the three immigrant policy initiatives were not always easy to identify. In news reports and special features, I had to rely on the author to identify the citizenship status of those quoted to represent non-citizen perspectives. Letters to the editor offered a similar challenge. Although one contributor clearly stated his non-citizen identity in his letters, I have to assume that others preferred to voice their opinions without naming their citizen status. Therefore, these "hidden voices" were impossible for me to locate and analyze. The reportage on the Anti-Minaret Initiative proved to be particularly challenging in this regard, as reports on the religious affiliation of those affected took precedent over their citizenship status ("Briefe an die NZZ," 2009).

I divided the reports I was able to identify as representing the direct voices of non-citizens into three categories. First, I identified those contributions that raised awareness of the impact of referendum initiatives on immigrant policy through personal stories. I then explored statements made by representatives of immigrant organizations that addressed the first-hand

experiences of non-citizens. Lastly, I focused on the newspaper coverage that revealed the voices of non-citizens through stories on writers and artists who used their prominence to rally against the SVP initiatives.

a) Raising awareness of the impact of initiatives through personal stories

As mentioned above, the direct voices of non-citizens mostly appeared as personal narratives in special features. Contrary to my initial assumption, letters to the editor written by non-citizens were much less common. To be precise, out of a total of 147 letters to the editor collected in my data, only one was identifiably written by a non-citizen. Two days after Swiss voters showed their support for the Deportation Initiative, the *Tages-Anzeiger* published a letter titled “Switzerland has lost,” in which the author clearly identifies himself as a non-citizen:

The referendum vote on the Deportation Initiative this past weekend was not lost by us immigrants. We could not take part in the vote, and where no participation is possible, there are no winners or losers. The true loser in this case is Switzerland, because many citizens allowed themselves to be guided by the populist politics of the SVP, who unfortunately emerged as the winner of the vote. [...] This referendum vote has once again illustrated the convenience of pointing at the immigrant population to find culprits for all kinds of social problems. The SVP has so far, however, failed to find a remedy against the rampant white-collar crime in our country. Thus, the representatives of financial capital can continue to sleep soundly, knowing that they have nothing to fear despite their criminal activities. The immigrants, on the other hand, who work the most physically

demanding and dangerous jobs, and thereby contribute to the wellbeing and prosperity of our country, cannot sleep in peace. (“Die Bevölkerung,” 2010).

This commentary illustrates the author’s concern with being excluded from a general vote that was dominated by SVP rhetoric. In his opinion, immigrants have once again served as easy targets, and their contributions remain largely unappreciated. By using the metaphor of a peaceful sleep (or the lack thereof), the author comments on the xenophobic environment promoted by the SVP, which he considers dangerous for Switzerland’s immigrant population.

Similar sentiments emerged in a feature on the Deportation Initiative published in *Blick*. In a format unique within the data I collected, *Blick* reported on “What Immigrants Think” by presenting ten short statements about the outcome of the initiative. All of the commentators belonged to ethnic minorities, but only seven were non-citizens. Four of the non-citizens expressed a sense of danger and fear as a result of the successful SVP initiative (Francis, 2010). One nineteen-year old non-citizen explains:

My parents are from Bosnia. They brought me here when I was only seven months old. Nobody in my family has a Swiss passport. Still, I feel much more Swiss than Bosnian. The thought that I might be deported because of a minor offence is horrific. [...] That is why I am not happy about the success of the Deportation Initiative. All humans should be equal before the law. (Francis, 2010).

Interestingly, the majority of immigrants featured by the *Blick* report viewed the Deportation Initiative in a positive light. A forty-five year old immigrant from Cameroon, for example argues: “[C]riminal foreigners should be deported, otherwise they will make our reputation here even worse.” Another middle-aged immigrant states: “Last Sunday, I voted with a loud ‘yes,’

because I support the SVP' Deportation Initiative. For foreigners, there should be zero-tolerance. Those who get to start a new life here should consider themselves lucky." Taking the perspective of the ten immigrants surveyed into consideration, *Blick* concludes:

Criminal foreigners must be deported! The hardest line in Swiss immigrant policy is, however, adopted by the immigrants themselves. For many immigrants it is obvious: Those who live in Switzerland have to conform and may not break the law. Criminals have no place here and must return to their home country. (Francis, 2010).

With this feature, *Blick* was the only newspaper examined in this study that gave a voice to non-citizens who were in support of the SVP initiatives. In fact, this feature, along with the above-cited letter to the editor, were the only two instances in which personal narratives on the Deportation Initiative appeared at all. The coverage on the Naturalization Initiative, on the other hand, offered a total of five articles that included personal narratives from non-citizens. All of these reports focused on the injustice of Switzerland's naturalization procedure as experienced by citizenship applicants. It is noteworthy that out of the three SVP initiatives under examination, the one characterized by the most reportage featuring personal narratives, was the only one rejected by the Swiss electorate.

Die WochenZeitung, for example, reported on how Swiss municipalities can manipulate naturalization processes for financial gain. A brief narrative illustrated the injustice experienced by a young non-citizen, whose parents emigrated from Turkey (Gross, 2008). In the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, the story of a young woman born in Romania served as an example for how personal biases can affect naturalization processes in Swiss municipalities. The article details the woman's personal history, focusing on all the reasons why she should be considered well-

integrated, but concludes that all three of her applications for citizenship were rejected (“Mit bitterem Nachgeschmack, 2008). Similar articles published in *Blick* and *Tages-Anzeiger* appeared in the same format, providing detailed back-stories and numerous quotes that allowed the direct voices of non-citizens to surface (Ley, 2008; Knellwolf 2008).

b) Leaders of immigrant groups as “expert” commentators

Furthermore, voices of non-citizens were represented in newspaper reports that covered the reactions of leaders of immigrant groups to referendum initiatives. Although the citizenship status of “expert” commentators was never explicitly identified, their involvement with immigrant groups suggests that they had certain insights that were considered representative of non-citizen perspectives. Reporting on reactions to the Naturalization Initiative both *Blick* and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* discuss the Forum for the Integration of Immigrants (IMM). *Blick* writes:

The clear rejection of the Naturalization Initiative symbolizes a new beginning to the [IMM]. According to Antonio Da Cunha, President of the Forum, the rejection of the initiative also represents a defeat of the politics of ‘exploitation’ used by the SVP. Da Cunha stated that ‘with the rejection of the SVP initiative, [...] the Swiss electorate has presented us with an opportunity to overthrow the negative image of immigrants. [...] Immigrants no longer want to be treated as criminals, as is systematically suggested by the SVP posters.’” (“Reaktionen,” 2008).

Blick also briefly quotes an IMM statement in the context of the Anti-Minaret Initiative, stating that all non-citizens, not only Muslims, would feel even more excluded from Swiss society as a result of the initiative (“Reaktionen,” 2009).

Another non-citizen organization quoted in my newspaper data was *Second@s Plus*. Although the Vice-President of *Second@s Plus*, Ivica Petrušić is a Swiss citizen, the organization represents hundreds of non-citizen members (Jirát, 2011). Petrušić's highly critical take on the Deportation Initiative was featured in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and the *Tages-Anzeiger*. While the former only briefly reports on Petrušić's opposition to both the SVP's initiative and the National Council's counter proposal, the latter dedicates an entire article to the position advocated by *Second@s Plus* in response to the initiative ("Ausschaffungsinitiative," 2010; Cortesi, 2010).

After the vote in support of the Deportation Initiative, non-citizens living in Switzerland are disappointed – to say the least. Many alleviate their frustration by taking part in protests or by clenching their fists in their pockets. The immigrant organization *Secondos Plus*, which is active in several Swiss-German cantons, is taking a different path: It encourages its members to get naturalized. This call is primarily directed at non-citizens who were born and raised in Switzerland. The only way to break free of the 'dire inequality before the law' resulting from the successful SVP initiative, would be to become a Swiss citizen. Vice-President of the organization, Ivica Petrušić states that citizenship cannot be seen as a definitive insurance for escaping unscathed in case a crime is committed. 'But the fear of being deported because of a minor offence is wide-spread.' Naturalization therefore offers 'a type of self-protection.' (Cortesi, 2010).

Although the *Tages-Anzeiger* does not provide a clear statement on the paper's perspective on this question, the author concludes the article by citing "other immigration experts" as well as the

SVP spokesperson on the Naturalization Initiative Uli Schuler, all of whom disagreed with the position taken by *Second@s Plus*.

c) Artists as agents of non-citizen interests

My interview with Dragica Rajčić, which took place before I analysed the newspaper sources I collected, raised my awareness of the role artists and writers can play in publicizing non-citizen perspectives. In my analysis of the news reportage on the three referendum initiatives, I discovered ten articles referring to the involvement of artists. It must be noted that none of the articles cited in this section identified the citizenship status of the artists involved. Upon further research, I found that only four reports (all on the same instance of artist involvement) did in fact directly represent non-citizen perspectives. All others involved artists who – to the best of my knowledge – are Swiss citizens. I included these articles into my analysis despite the fact that they did not include the direct voices of non-citizens. In my view, they nevertheless represent a diversification of publicly accessible discourses that shift non-citizen perspectives into focus.

The four reports that communicated the direct voices of non-citizens were on a manifesto called *Aufruf der Hundert* (Proclamation of the Hundred) signed by 120 prominent cultural figures in order to promote their opposition to the Deportation Initiative. This proclamation was initiated by the organization *Kunst+Politik*, whose membership counts numerous non-citizen artists (Kunst+Politik, 2012). In the *SonntagsZeitung*, one signatory Guy Krneta is quoted as saying: “We have had enough of the xenophobia and the attacks on human rights” (Wessalowski, 2010). The challenges of writers turning activists are discussed in a lengthy feature in *Die WochenZeitung*. The author concludes that writers may be better served to refrain from activist

activities: “The curse of the writer, who voices her position on political matters, is that she will be at first recognized and judged as a photo model, then as an author – and only much later, if at all, as a *citoyenne*” (Riklin, 2010).

Another manifesto with a similar aim as the “Proclamation of the Hundred,” was publicised by a collective of eleven public figures (politicians, religious leaders, cultural figures) in opposition to the Anti-Minaret Initiative. In a brief report by the *Tages-Anzeiger*, the manifesto is quoted as saying: “The Swiss electorate ‘has allowed itself to be manipulated into accepting the Anti-Minaret Initiative and thereby conceded to a un-culture of exclusion [*Unkultur der Ausgrenzung*]’” (“Dreifuss und Muschg,” 2009). *Blick* reports on the same manifesto:

In [the collective’s] eyes the Anti-Minaret Initiative, which has been approved by the Swiss electorate humiliates Muslims and cuts down their rights. [...] According to the manifesto, the initiative was born out of the ‘intention to create an atmosphere of [...] cultural conflicts.’ ‘It is time to recognize the prosperity immigrants bring to our country.’ (“Wider die ‘Unkultur der Ausgrenzung,’” 2009).

In addition to the above-cited reports, I found a number of articles featuring renowned Swiss artists who individually attempted to illustrate the impact of the SVP initiatives on non-citizens. For example, in the months leading up to the vote on the Anti-Minaret Initiative, Swiss author Charles Lewinsky published a narrative series of fictionalized immigrant experiences in the right-of-centre newspaper *Die Weltwoche*. In an interview with *Die WochenZeitung*, Lewinsky states that reaching Switzerland’s conservative voter-base and creating a new dialogue was important to him (Pfister, 2009). Similarly, the *Tages-Anzeiger* reports on an attempt made

by Micha Lewinsky, Charles Lewinsky's son, to illustrate the impact of the Deportation Initiative. Lewinsky directed and disseminated a series of short films depicting the story of a Swiss teacher who punishes misbehaving students with varying severity, depending on their ethnic origin (Meier, 2010). The *Tages-Anzeiger* also published a very brief report on Turkish-Swiss musician and comedian Müslüm, who released a song mocking the Deportation Initiative only one day after Swiss voters decided in favour of the initiative (Lettau, 2010).

This section of my analysis explored the media coverage on artists who united into collective groups or took an individual stand against SVP initiatives. Despite the fact that the majority of artists who became involved in counter-campaigns were Swiss citizens, their initiatives were aimed at promoting understanding of non-citizen perspectives. The articles cited therefore offer concrete examples of how well-known cultural figures can influence the public debates on immigrant policy and raise public awareness around cultural diversity.

V. Conclusion

My analysis of the Swiss-German newspaper coverage on SVP initiatives discussed an extensive amount of data and produced a wide variety of themes. In my attempt to narrow my findings to address my research questions as succinctly as possible, I created three main categories and divided the key articles I found accordingly. The category with the largest volume of articles was by far my analysis of how the media represented of the link between immigrant policy and Switzerland's direct democratic system. I found that with the exception of reports on the political right, there was a general understanding that all three SVP initiatives shed light on possible shortcomings of the direct democratic system.

The second theme I analysed revolved around the impact of the referendum initiatives on non-citizens, as perceived by Swiss citizen commentators. Here, I found that the impact of the initiatives on Switzerland and Swiss society in general terms was at the forefront of public consciousness. Concerns about upholding democratic principles, such as non-discrimination dominated the press, alongside worries of how the initiatives would reflect on Switzerland internationally. Speculation about specific personal impacts on non-citizen residents remained marginal.

Of the three themes I examined, the direct voices of non-citizens received the least amount of coverage. Direct-voices were more prevalent in the newspapers representing the left end of the ideological spectrum. They appeared predominantly through personal stories and quotations in feature reports, as well as through news stories referring to “expert” opinions. I also found that the media took note of the role prominent artists can play in advancing their views on immigrant policy. Throughout the newspaper coverage, artists were portrayed as holding a representative function, reaffirming some of the themes that emerged in my interview with Dragica Rajčić.

4.4 In-depth Interview

How can we understand the world, if we don't have arts, like films and books?

How can we understand who we are? How do we know through which glasses to look at the world?

– Dragica Rajčić (Personal communication, February 5, 2012 [PC, 2012]).

As part of my study on political exclusion of non-citizen minorities in Switzerland, I feel it is crucially important to move beyond the dominant public discourses as they are found in

mainstream Swiss German media. In an attempt to capture an alternative perspective on the Swiss approach to immigrant policy, I have sought out the voice of someone who has experienced the Swiss debates around immigrant policy as a non-citizen and has contributed in a significant way to the promotion of alternative discourses. On February 5, 2012, I conducted an in-depth semi-structured interview with the Swiss-Croatian writer Dragica Rajčić. Rajčić has lived in Switzerland permanently since the early 1990s and works as a writer and educator. In addition, she is a member of the EKM, the Swiss commission for questions concerning migration. Rajčić's literature (see bibliography) is multifaceted, ranging from general philosophical contemplations to personal reflections on the Balkan Wars. However, most interesting for my study are her poems on the experience of being a foreigner in Switzerland. In her poetry, Rajčić creates an alternative transcultural narrative on Swiss immigration, challenging dominant discourses on inclusion and exclusion.

During our interview, Rajčić provided me with insights into her perspective on political participation and citizenship that differs significantly from the dominant public discourses in German-speaking Switzerland. Although her voice is only one amongst many, it reflects sentiments that are consistent with other contemporary Swiss artists and writers, who share with her what is often termed a *Migrationshintergrund* (migratory background).¹¹ Keeping in mind Rajčić's past appropriation as "the voice of foreigners" by Swiss publishers and literary critics (Schallié & Fritze, 2010), it is important to me to approach the author not as a representative for non-citizens in Switzerland, but as an individual who has insights into both the lived experiences and the politicised roles of immigrants in Switzerland. My analysis of the interview data is

¹¹ These writers include Irena Brežná, Melinda Nadj Abonji, Samir, Catalin Dorian Florescu and many others. The recently published anthology *Globale Heimat.ch* showcases the work of almost 60 authors who address themes of transculturality and the challenges of diverse living in Swiss society (Schallié & Zinggeler, 2012).

qualitative, as I seek to gain a deep understanding into one specific point of view without considering Rajčić's perspective to be representative of a highly diverse population group.

I. Dragica Rajčić's Works in the Context of Transnational Literature in Switzerland

Dragica Rajčić was born in 1959 in Split in former Yugoslavia. She first started publishing poems and short stories as a high school student. After living in Australia and Germany for brief periods of time, Rajčić and her family moved to St. Gallen, Switzerland in 1978. During the following ten years, Rajčić was employed in various manual labour and service sector jobs. In 1986 she published her first book of poetry in German language, *Halbgedichte einer Gastfrau* (half-poems by a female guest). Upon her return to former Yugoslavia in 1988, she founded the magazine *Glas Kastela* and worked as a journalist. After the outbreak of war in former Yugoslavia, Rajčić fled back to Switzerland in 1991 where she completed a degree in Social and Cultural Studies. Today, she works as freelance writer and educator. Her publications include four poetry collections, two theatre plays, numerous contributions to anthologies and her most recent book *Warten auf Broch. Text über Text* (2011).

Taking Dragica Rajčić's personal background and the themes she addresses in her writing into consideration, her works fall within the genre of transnational literature (Seyhan, 2000). Over the past decades, the role of transnational literature in shaping the national literary canon has become an issue of discussion for many scholars around the world. In literary scholarship, the term transnational literature has developed from terms, such as ethnic, exilic, minority and diasporic literature. The characterization of transnational literature as *Migrantenliteratur* (migrant literature), which was predominant in Switzerland until the end of the twentieth century, highlights the fact that foreigners were expected to stay only temporarily as visiting

workers. With the term transnational literature, the scholarly focus has shifted away from viewing migrant authors as foreign others, encouraging a new, broader perspective on literature written by individuals with diverse cultural and national identities.

In her book *Writing Outside the Nation*, Seyhan (2000) describes the concept of transnationality in literature as follows:

Transnational literature [is] a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those in what I call “paranational” communities and alliances. These are communities that exist within national borders or alongside the citizens of the host country but remain culturally or linguistically distanced from them and, in some instances, are estranged from both the home and the host culture. (Seyhan 2000, p. 10).

Transnational texts are generally written in a language that is not the writer’s native tongue, but the language of the community the writer finds him/herself transplanted into, creating a unique challenge to national identities, which generally depend on national languages in the formation of their cultural memories.

Dragica Rajčić writes within the context of a Swiss national language (German), moulding this language into something foreign. In her poetry, she dissects the German language in order to reassemble it in a way that reflects her own experiences as a foreigner in Switzerland. Rajčić refuses to adhere to the semantic and grammatical rules of the German language, creating her own words and sounds, while simultaneously echoing the language native German speakers would expect to hear from a foreigner. On second glance, her seemingly simplistic sentence structures reveal the depth of thought that lies beneath the author’s use of non-standard language. Rajčić plays with the German language, striving to say the “right thing with wrong words,” while

using a language that is poetic and powerful (Rajčić cited in Schallié & Fritze, 2010, p. 150). By shaping the German language in a way that reflects her transnational self, she calls Swiss national identity markers into question. She establishes what Bhabha (1994) calls a “third space” that challenges the boundaries between self and other, the national and the transnational.

The place of migrant literature within the national canon continues to be debated within the field of German Studies. In his article “Theory as Hierarchy: Positioning German *Migrantenliteratur*,” Bayer (2004) calls for a pluralistic approach to literature that allows for both political and aesthetic readings. He posits that transnational literatures should not be reduced to “documents of minority experience,” but rather be valued in their own right. According to Bayer, one of the challenges to reading transnational literature for its aesthetic values, is the common expectation that the reading of transnational literature will have political consequences, namely, promoting or even producing a multicultural society (Bayer, 2004, p. 5). However, the idea of transnational literature in itself implies that there is a coherent national literature on the other side of the spectrum, which is indirectly if not explicitly depicted as superior (Peck, 1989, p. 204). I agree with Bayer and Peck that separating transnational from national literature in a binary opposition is problematic. I also see the potential for change in favour of societal diversification in the promotion of transnational literature.

Weidauer (2003) is among those who might disagree with my perspective. He presents a rather pessimistic outlook of the role of transnational literature in societies that continue to identify themselves along national boundaries:

Hyphenated identities put on their song and dance in front of non-hyphenated audiences. It is their task to entertain us. These are spectacles put on for the majority culture and a minute elite segment of the minority culture. (Weidauer

2003, p. 27).

Though Rajčić's works certainly have the potential to entertain, the texts I chose to supplement my analysis illustrate their subversive potential. Her unusual style and politically challenging topics serve as a constant reminder of the inequalities between those "inside" and those "outside" what is considered mainstream culture. Although I aim to portray Rajčić as the multifaceted individual she is, I am critically aware that by focussing distinctly on her exploration of her own foreigner-status in Switzerland, I am not only politicizing her, but I am in some way also reaffirming her "otherness."

II. Thematic Analysis of Findings

a) On politics and the arts

The relationship between art and politics has been widely studied across disciplines. The subversive and change-inducing role of art has been explored in innumerable studies, ranging from American slavery to East German communism and post-colonial rebellions (Gardullo, 2007; Jacoby, 2007; Bleiker, 2000; Espada, 2010). In the context of international relations, Danchev and Lisle (2009) argue that "the artist articulates a vision of the world that is insightful, and consequential; and the vision and the insight can be analysed" (p. 775). Further, they claim that the Anglo-American scholarship is not accustomed to engaging with art and artists in a way that fully acknowledges the political contributions of artistic productions. To remedy this disconnect, Danchev and Lisle promote collaborative research with artists and academics, revealing the "connections that exist between academic debates about global life and the way artists struggle to grasp and represent such issues" (p. 777).

One of my main points of interest in interviewing Rajčić was to hear her perspective on the relationship between politics and the arts, particularly in the context of the “over-foreignization” discourse in Switzerland. This interest was sparked by a previous comment by Rajčić, in which she asserted the inherently political nature of her art: “I am explicitly political. My literature is political per se, because I do not want to write a certain way only because people expect it of me” (Rajčić cited in Schallié & Fritze, 2010, p. 150). In response to my first interview question, Rajčić commented on the connection between her art and her political thoughts:

[...] I am already political because of the way I write. The words I put on paper are political within themselves, because I use the language of one third of Switzerland’s population in a way they know it. I cannot imagine any writer or artist who doesn’t contribute to social debates through his art, just in the way he articulates himself and abstracts what he sees. Art is always a contribution to communication within a society, even if the artist thinks he is apolitical. It is similar to religion. Even if you are an atheist, you have already defined your relationship to God. [...] A writer has to believe that words are important and that they can have an impact. He also has to believe that words can take roots within others, inspire them and contribute to how they see the world. (PC, 2012).¹²

Although Rajčić recognizes the inherent link between her political understanding and her art, she does not consider her writings to represent any form of political activism. Despite telling me that she created a pseudonym to write for *Glas Kastela*, a magazine challenging the socialist authorities of former Yugoslavia, she sees her journalistic work as a means to an end for a

¹² All translations of interview segments are by Christine Fritze.

financially struggling writer, rather than a form of political activism. Rajčić also concedes that her own need for understanding the world is her primary reason for writing and that the potential impact of her work cannot be controlled and does not have priority. Jokingly she says, “a useful impact of my writing would be if I didn’t have to live in constant worry about my income. But that will never happen” (PC, 2012).

The idea of wanting to make a calculated impact or direct other people’s way of thinking is problematic to Rajčić: “There are many examples of propaganda and political incitements aimed at steering people’s ideas. I am a long way off from both. Literature distinguishes itself by ambivalence. The world is not merely black and white” (PC, 2012). Nevertheless, Rajčić sees the value of including art in political discourses. She takes part in an initiative called *Kunst+Politik* that brings together politically engaged artists and supports artistic activities that contribute to socio-political debates (Kunst+Politik, 2012). Rajčić also acknowledges that the positive impact of art on politics cannot be considered a given. In one of her poems she addresses her own struggles with acting on the injustices she sees (Rajčić, 2004, p. 145-147).

[...]	[...]
Wieso	<i>Why</i>
Sitze ich da	<i>Do I sit here</i>
Lese zeitung	<i>Read the newspaper</i>
Über gekannterte	<i>About capsized</i>
Flüchtlinge	<i>Refugees</i>
Blättere zum	<i>Flip through to the</i>
horoskop	<i>horoscope</i>
Rauche	<i>Smoke my</i>
Fünfte	<i>Fifth cigarette</i>
Schreibe gedicht	<i>Write a poem</i>
Gegen	<i>Against</i>
unsoziales	<i>social injustices</i>
Und	<i>And</i>
Später	<i>Later</i>
Schlafe	<i>Sleep</i>
Traume von	<i>Dream of</i>
Belanglosen schuen	<i>Insignificant shoes</i>

[...]

© Dragica Rajčić. Edition 8.

[...]

Translated by Christine Fritze

Throughout our interview, Rajčić stresses that an insufficient cultural education in schools is a key problem that must be addressed when considering the possible impact of transnational literature on the Swiss “over-foreignization” discourse. She states that in her own experience as both writer and educator, immigrants themselves seldom read transnational literature (PC, 2012). Rajčić largely blames the very real barriers to education that immigrants and their children face in Switzerland:

What I have noticed in my work with children of immigrants is that their fluency in their mother tongue is not recognized as a potential, but an obstacle. I think that is where self-contempt begins. Melinda’s [Nadj Abonji] new book is an excellent example of a second-generation immigrant grappling with the heritage of the first generation. It shows her perspective on living in between different worlds. Many Secondos can identify with that. Books like hers are very important for appreciating one’s own reality. When children only see movies where immigrants are corpses or criminals, and have no teachers or role models who are immigrants, it is easy for them to lose self-confidence. The way integration has been approached in Switzerland suggests that everyone is equal, but our life stories and the conditions we live in are not the same. (PC, 2012).

Rajčić argues, a more focused use of transnational literature in the Swiss curriculum could serve as an opportunity for increasing the self-confidence of immigrant children. It could also help Swiss children understand that every person has their own story and aid them in becoming more critical of common stereotypes about foreigners.

b) On being a “foreigner” in Switzerland

The continuing struggle over the rights of foreigners and their acceptance in Switzerland has in many ways shaped the literature of Dragica Rajčić. She sees the challenge Switzerland faces in terms of cultural diversity as one that has yet to be addressed openly:

There is no multiculturalism in Switzerland; each minority has to protect itself from other minorities in order to survive. Insofar it is understandable that Switzerland has run out of steam on its way to multiculturalism and is lacking a sense of cosmopolitanism. [...] On one hand, the Swiss People’s Party, the SVP, is bursting at the seams. All of Europe is experiencing a shift toward the political right; Switzerland is no exception. On the other hand, Swiss people argue they have already achieved multiculturalism and have nothing left to do about it. And in addition to that, just like in Germany, there are always discussions on whether Switzerland is in fact an immigration society. If politicians admit this, much more money will have to be allocated for this immigration society to function properly. That is why Switzerland says, “we are already multicultural and are taking a completely different route.” As a matter of fact, this strategy is very insincere. (Rajčić cited in Schallié & Fritze, 2010, p. 151-152).

Rajčić makes a very important point in encouraging her readership to question established ideas of multiculturalism, rather than taking the existence of functioning multicultural societies for granted. In her article “Multiculturalism and the Study of German Literature,” Arlene Teraoka (1997) argues that most existent forms of multiculturalism are actually reaffirming differences among ethnic groups, rather than trying to focus on what people have in common beyond their ethnicity (p. 70).

The exclusionist rhetoric of the SVP initiatives examined in this study is based on the idea that there are fundamental cultural differences between the Swiss and “others,” posing a threat to the Swiss people. This threat is not only seen in the abstract realm of national identity, but also in concretely physical terms. Promoting a collective fear of foreigners has therefore been a key strategy in garnering political support for the SVP agenda. When I asked Rajčić how she experienced past initiatives on immigrant policy as a non-citizen, the otherwise rather jovial tone of our conversation changes abruptly:

Horrible. It hurt physically. I have lived in Switzerland for over thirty years. All the necessary preconditions for the development of a mass hysteria could be witnessed in the political right during these campaigns. They are increasingly working with visual tools. The posters used for the Deportation Initiative succeeded at making even naturalized immigrants feel unwelcome. These posters perpetuate social stratification. There are the “foreigners,” then there are the naturalized “quasi-citizens,” who have crept into the Swiss nation and should really be denaturalized, and then there are the Swiss people, *das Volk*. The rhetoric used by these posters is very reminiscent of the 1930s. Maybe it hurts me twice as much, because that is also how the war in former Yugoslavia started. In the beginning we all think it’s still controllable, but it can get bad really quickly. Actually, what frightens me the most is how completely normal people are swept away by this propaganda, because they are constantly exposed to it. There is no escaping it, so people believe it. That is the biggest threat to Switzerland. The propaganda isn’t geared towards rich foreigners though, it is geared towards those who cannot defend themselves. The Deportation Initiative injured my Swiss

identity. I am not a naturalized citizen, but it really bruised my love for Switzerland. There are many Swiss who were just as pained by it and felt ashamed. (PC, 2012).

Rajčić draws attention to a number of significant points. For one, she alludes to the danger that lies in fear mongering and expresses her sorrow in seeing Switzerland go down this path. Rajčić also notes that although she is not a Swiss citizen, the exclusionist SVP initiatives have wounded her *Schweizertum*, the Swiss elements of her personal identity that exist despite her official exclusion from the national body.

Rajčić comments on her struggles as a “foreigner” living in Switzerland in many of her poems. In *Politisches 2 (Ausländergesetz)* she addresses the voiceless-ness of non-citizens in Switzerland. She also responds to the Swiss immigrant law, which reflects Swiss fears about the dangers foreigners might pose to the country’s perceived cultural homogeneity (Rajčić, 2004, p. 135).

Politisches 2 (Ausländergesetz)	<i>Political Matters 2 (Immigrant Law)</i>
In der Sorge dass es schlimmer wird Verschlimmern sie uns Morgen.	<i>Fearing that things will get worse They make us worse Tomorrow.</i>
Wir stimmen Zu. Ohne Stimme.	<i>We voice Agreement. Without voices.</i>
Warten auf bessere Zeiten	<i>Wait for better times</i>
haben Recht auf Unrecht durch das Ausländerrecht.	<i>have the right to lack rights due to the Immigrant law.</i>

Notably, Rajčić chose not to write *Politisches 2 (Ausländergesetz)* in her characteristic non-standard German. Here, she conforms to the grammar and spelling rules of the German language, illustrating that her usual choice of words does not reflect her incapability to write Standard German, but that it is rather a conscious choice on her part.

In *Politisches 2 (Ausländergesetz)*, Rajčić makes extensive use of repetitions, which have the effect of emphasizing certain ideas, but also illustrate a repetitive cycle of rhetoric in the Swiss debates on the immigrant law. In the first stanza of the poem, she focuses on the Swiss perception of foreigners as *schlimm*, a term that can be translated as bad, but also carries more severe associations, which could be expressed in English as sinister, wicked or vicious. In the second stanza, the idea of voice, or a lack thereof moves into the centre of attention. The German word *Stimme* means not only voice, but also vote. To complicate the matter, if something *stimmt*, it is correct or right. The most difficult stanza to translate is the last, which ties back to the title of the poem. The term *Ausländergesetz* in the title literally means the law concerning foreigners. In the last stanza, Rajčić unpacks this term, showing her readers that there is an important difference between law and justice. In German, the word *Recht* can mean a number of things. *Das Recht* is the law, but it also translates to right or privilege. Significantly, the word also implies that the law is good and fair. The Swiss *Ausländerrecht* is an oxymoron, since it implies justice, but is inherently unjust. For those who are considered “foreign” in Swiss society the immigrant law is not simply a bureaucratic formality, it can determine the course of their lives and affect the essence of their deepest self.

In her poetry and prose, Rajčić uses her own interpretation of the German language to express her experiences of living as a foreigner in Switzerland. On one hand, she employs German in a way that reflects her search for her own distinct language:

I always said that I wanted my very own language; every human being craves that. I want language to grow back like a layer of skin, and I will never pretend that I am further ahead than I actually am. [...] I say: Here, I am naked; do you understand me? I think the point is to assume the right to be different. I reserve the right to be the person I am, what other people make of that is their problem. (Rajčić cited in Schallié & Fritze, 2010, p. 155).

On the other hand, Rajčić challenges her readership to experience what it is like to be the “other.” According to Seyhan (2000), this common characteristic of transnational literature not only lets us understand our “self” better, but also allows for the opening of a third space where we can find similarities, rather than differences between seemingly polar opposites (p. 5).

In the 2010 “Citoyenneté” (citizenship) issue of the EKM’s publication *terra cognita*, Rajčić contributed a piece of short prose titled *Auf der Suche nach der eigenen Sprachstimme*, in which she addresses the challenges of finding her own language. She writes,

Erst in der Schweiz wurde mir die Zerbrechlichkeit unsere Wortgeschaffene Realität bewusst und ich bekam die Freude durch die geschriebene Sprache die Wirklichkeit zu ver.-rücken. In meinen Büchern mache ich den Leser zu zeugen der Verfremdung seine Sprache. Ver.-rücken in der Richtung der Unsicherheit, in der Richtung, das sich der andere für Moment lang nicht mehr seiner selbst in Wörtern sicher ist. Mit Schreiben erzeuge ich die Unsicherheit beim Muttersprachlern was wirklich Bedeutung ihre selbstverständliches in Muttersprache ist. Sie fühlen sich irritiert, unsicher genau so wie das sie in eine fremde Sprache lesen um für Augenblicke in haut des fremden zu sein. Viele sind wütend darüber, kein Wunder, ich die Fremde soll bitte endlich normal wie sie werden. Problem ist, das mit Wechsel des Lebensortes Jeder von uns zur ‘Unnormalen’ werden kann. (Rajčić, 2010).

© Dragica Rajčić. Terra cognita.

Only when I came to Switzerland I became aware of the fragility of our word-created reality and I had the joy to shift reality through the written language. In my books, I make the reader witness to the alienation of his own language. I shift it towards uncertainty, towards making the other feel momentarily insecure in his own words. With my writing, I generate insecurity in native speakers around the self-evident meaning of their native tongue. They feel irritated, unsure, just as if

they were reading a foreign language and for the wink of an eye, slip into the foreigner's skin. Many are angry, no wonder, the foreigners should finally become normal like them. The problem is that by changing the place we live in, all of us can become 'un-normal.' (Rajčić, 2010).

Translated by Christine Fritze

When I first read this text, I immediately assumed Rajčić's intention was to use her language to irritate those who take their mother tongue for granted and to invoke the emotions she describes in this excerpt. Her response to my assumption showed that her intent is not provocation alone:

In actual fact, I am intent on something completely different, a fundamental question of which mechanisms we use to exclude others. One of these mechanisms is language. I experienced this personally as a child, growing up with my grandmother who passed on her strong rural dialect. When I started school, the other children laughed at me. I loved my grandmother very much, so I was not only hurt personally by their laughter, I also thought it meant they disliked her. I still feel physical disgust when people are excluded and dehumanized. So, who does language belong to? It is not unusual for immigrants to feel self-contempt because they struggle with a new language. We all know how frustrated we get with ourselves when we go to a foreign country and realize we cannot communicate the way we would like to. (PC, 2012).

The issue of language as means of exclusion is magnified in the Swiss context due to the difference in the written and spoken language. The Swiss-German dialects – *Mundart* – are orally distinct from Standard German, and do not formally exist in written language. In addition, the Swiss-German dialects are virtually impossible to learn as an adult, making it even harder for immigrants to fit in. “Dialect is like a big trap, people can recognize within seconds that you do not belong” (PC, 2012). In Switzerland, most discussions around the integration of foreigners

seem to be tied to language acquisition. Rajčić questions the validity of this assumption and draws my attention to the possible dangers in viewing language as a necessary prerequisite of successful integration:

People often say that if only immigrants would learn to speak German properly, everything would be fine. There is an assumption that if we all know the German language equally well, we will become equal. People who advocate for this conceal the fact that I can still be excluded and stigmatized based on my pronunciation or my appearance. (PC, 2012).

Rajčić sees this issue of exclusion based on language capabilities as particularly difficult and urgent for children of immigrants:

Many children are ashamed of the way their parents speak. When I write German the way I do, people get angry. I have Swiss friends who feel embarrassed for me. They say, my friend is an author, *but...* When my son was younger, he used to correct my poetry on the computer. At first, he told people at school I was a seamstress. [...] It hurts me when I see how important the symbols I put on paper are to others. If you don't get the symbols right, you are considered uneducated. Therefore, you don't think properly and therefore you don't have to be treated as a human being. Those are small steps. (PC, 2012).

c) On making one's voice heard

During our interview, I became increasingly aware of the difficulties non-citizens face in publicly articulating their concerns about Swiss immigrant policy. As Rajčić points out to me, it

is not easy for non-citizens to make their voices heard over the silent roar of strategically simplistic SVP posters that target deep emotional needs for security in Swiss society:

In the EKM, we had many debates on how to respond [to the SVP posters]. Our strategy has been humanist decency and a commitment to fight back with facts. During the Deportation Initiative the EKM promoted the fact that legal means to order the deportation of criminal foreigners already exist in Switzerland. We delivered statistics, brought in social scientists. The problem is, rational facts cannot compete with emotions. They are not as enticing as black sheep. For me, this is not about exchanging blows. It's about staying true to our position. In order to effectively communicate the perspective of immigrants, we rely on Swiss citizens, because we have no political leg to stand on. (PC, 2012).

For Rajčić, the difficulties in voicing one's concerns as a non-citizen in Switzerland's consensus democracy are very closely tied to what she sees as general shortcomings of democracy as it is practiced in Western nations today:

I am not just pained by the fact that only Swiss citizens can vote, but even more so because the values of democracy are not taught sufficiently at schools. Democracy and what we mean by it has to be re-negotiated every single day. Participation is not recognized as the core value of our society. Democracy is abandoned through negligence. [...] A large percentage of the Swiss people don't participate in votes. We say the Arab world has to become more democratic, but what are we doing with our democracy? (PC, 2012).

Another challenge to democratic systems, according to Rajčić, is the vast and ever increasing amount of information we are faced with. Information brings opportunities for

transparency, but can also confuse our vision by the sheer mass of its global dissemination. How can political actors attract attention to their cause in this over-saturated news environment? She argues,

Political parties that put foreigners on their agenda get votes. Almost all Swiss parties have realized this, the right, the Green Party, the liberals and the socialists. It's less about accomplishing specific ends and more about setting an atmosphere. The issues change often and quickly, not necessarily out of malevolence, but it forces people to over-simplify. The Deportation Initiative is only one example. People vote yes, so the initiative has to be realized, but no one knows how. (PC, 2012).

Her inability to vote in elections and on national initiatives is a nuisance for Rajčić, particularly because she lacks the opportunity to say 'no' to referendum initiatives, which she does not support. She knows that she has lived in Switzerland long enough to apply for citizenship, but feels uneasy about doing so. When I ask her how she experiences not being able to vote, Rajčić answers:

People tell me to apply for Swiss citizenship. That is an option. [...] Although I could maintain my perspective on Switzerland even as a citizen, there are stereotypes that come along with being Swiss that don't fit my self-perception. In a way I long to participate politically, but there is also a fear that I can never truly become Swiss. (PC, 2012).

The question if the right to political participation should be tied to citizenship has concerned Rajčić since her early years in Switzerland. In this piece of short prose she journals

her thoughts after hearing that Swiss voters rejected the 1993 initiative aimed at giving non-citizens the right to vote municipally (Rajčić, 1994, p. 65-66.):

Ausländer stimmrecht auf Kommunal ebene abgelehnt. 26. 9. 93

Ja, es stimmt einen nachdenklich. Ich denke gerade über komplizierte Infrastruktur Frage nach. Stell dir vor was alles unter dem Strassenbeton liegt. Rohren, Kabell, Wasser, Ratten, verlorene Eheringe, Autoschlüssel und noch vielmehr. Nehmen wir an ich komme aus Gottweisswo, dort haben alte Romer schon Wasserleitungen eingelegt ich musste zweitausend Jahre alt sein um zu diesen Leitungen eine Stellung zu haben, hat mich eine danach gefragt, Antwort ist Nein. Jetzt zu Strasse welche mich und meine siebzig Kilo tregt, eben unter diese Strasse ist ein Eigenleben und das wissen nur Eingeweihte, sprich Kinder welche Bau verfolgt haben. Die haben das Sagen, wann, wo, wieviel darf Strasse aufgemacht werden, die haben jetzt abgestimmt ob ich als Neuankommlig in das geheime Strassenwissen ein Einblick bekommen darf. Sie haben einfach NEIN gesagt, es ist unsere Strasse, es is unsere Spielzeug drin, was hat die Fremde mit Strassenleib in Hut? Wenn es sein muss, warden wir drei mall so viel Zement über unsere Strasse geben (nicht gerade wir, aber Arbeiter aus Gottweiswo) wir leben schlisslich in eine Demokratie und wer wissen will was unter Erdoberfläche liegt, soll wenigstens dreissig tausend Franken aus der Tasche ziehen. Stimme, eine Stimme hat schliesslich jedes Hund aber Geld nicht.

Ich suche fieberhaft nach einem Sparschwein, ich will abstimmen wie viel Beton unter meine Fusse kommt. Meine gute Wille fehlt mit dem Geld in Schweinbauch, wenn es so weit ist ist alles schon verbetoniert. Ich weinne jezt, das kommt von Nachdenken sagt Kioskverkäuferin, was Weiss sie, sie ist mit einem Eingeborenen verheiratet.

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Franchise for foreigners on the municipal level rejected. 26. 9. 93

Yes, it is thought provoking. I am just contemplating the complicated question of infrastructure. Imagine all the things that lie under the concrete: Pipes, cables, water, rats, lost wedding rings, car keys and much more. Let's assume I come from God-knows-where, where the old Romans have already built aqueducts. Someone asked me if I need to be two thousand years old to have an opinion on these aqueducts, and my answer is no. Back to the street that carries me and my seventy kilos. Under this street there is a way of life that only insiders can know, only those who have witnessed the building of this street as children. They have the say about when, where and how much the street can be excavated. They cast their vote on whether I as a newcomer may receive insight into the secret street knowledge. They just said NO, it is our street, our toys are buried under it, of what concern is our street to the foreigner? If we have to, we will pour three times as much cement over our street (not we personally, but the labourer from God-

knows-where). After all, we live in a democracy, and whoever wants to know what lies under the surface of the earth, should have thirty thousand Swiss Franks in their pocket. Voice, every dog on the street has a voice, but not money.

I frantically search for my piggybank. I want to vote on how much concrete goes under my feet. My goodwill is missing along with the money from the pig's belly and when I finally get it, everything will already be filled up by concrete. Now, I cry. The lady at the kiosk tells me that's because I think too much, but what does she know, she is married to a native.

Translated by Christine Fritze

Those concerned with the seemingly inextricable link between citizenship and participation may say that the creation of a Swiss commission for migration is a step in the right direction. Being part of the federal ministry for culture, the EKM serves as a link between Switzerland's immigrant and cultural associations and the government. It came into being on January 1, 2008 when the Swiss *Ausländerkommission* (commission for foreigners) and the *Kommission für Flüchtlingsfragen* (commission for questions concerning refugees) were merged (EKM, 2012). The EKM membership is made up of Swiss citizens and non-citizens. Its main function is to serve as a consultative body for both government and administration, conducting studies, publishing reports and recommendations (EKM, 2012). Rajčić herself has a critical, but optimistic perspective on the potential impact the EKM could have on decision-making in the area of immigrant policy:

The EKM is a federal consultative commission. We conduct research and give recommendations, but the government is not bound by them. Not every National Councillor is interested in our work. With every new Councillor we hope that things will get different. Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and Christoph Blocher were both part of the SVP. Why should the SVP listen to the EKM? Wouldn't that be nice? But we won't give up. We are needed. (PC, 2012).

When I ask if she sees an alternative to equating democratic participation with franchise, Rajčić draws attention to other forms of participating democratically beside voting federally or taking part in national referenda. Participation in any form, gives people a sense of responsibility, but more importantly, she argues, it allows people to communicate with each other and gain self-confidence. Rajčić ponders the empowering effect that participation in *Ausländervereinen*, “foreigner-clubs” can have for immigrants, but is unsure to which degree these types of associations can take part in larger federal discussions about immigrant policy:

There are many foreigners who are active in clubs or associations and consider this their best chance to participate. There are also some naturalized immigrants who stand up for those, who have no political say. Not very many, but quite a few. Let’s put it this way, I think the world is becoming increasingly opaque and politicians know little about the specific policy areas. In order to get their attention, one needs a lobby. Farmers, road construction businesses, wineries, they all have good lobbies to convince the National Assembly of the importance of their cause. I don’t think immigrants have a good lobby. Over the years, Swiss women, as well as many disenfranchised groups have made themselves heard in Switzerland. Immigrants should start to take things into their own hands, but in order to really make a difference we will need to be enfranchised. For me, it is not about citizens and non-citizens. It is about Swiss residents who live in this country and in order to feel at home, they need to share responsibility for decision-making processes. (PC, 2012).

At this point, I ask Rajčić if she is at all concerned that having an official body representing foreigners in Switzerland would reinforce essentialist thinking in lumping all non-

citizens together as one homogenous “other.” Her answer is straightforward and succinct: “One has to be pragmatic. The world is not always fair” (PC, 2012). She then continues to point out that civic representation of some form is necessary in any democratic system. In her view, a key element of representational democracy that is too often ignored is dialogue; dialogue and political education, because before speaking to each other, “we must first know what we are speaking about” (PC, 2012).

My interview with Dragica Rajčić provided me with a deeper understanding of what I am trying to “speak about” with this thesis. Her perspectives on the link between direct democracy, immigrant policy and non-citizen experience enabled me to expand on the widely accessible discourses of the news media. In our conversation, Rajčić emphasized the challenges of living as a non-citizen in Switzerland, in light of recent referendum initiatives on immigrant policy. She also provided me with concrete examples of the barriers to political integration immigrants to Switzerland face, thus informing the recommendations I present in the final chapter of my study.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The research findings presented in the previous chapter were based on three different data sources, which produced a wide variety of information. Although the analysis of these sources proved challenging in terms of data management, the broad range of information was conducive to my case study methodology and allowed for data triangulation. In comparing and contrasting my findings, I was able to extrapolate the key themes of my analysis and develop them into recommendations, which will be discussed in this final chapter of my study.

My analysis of SVP campaign posters as well as newspaper articles illustrates the significant impact the Swiss People's Party has on public discourses concerning immigrant policy. My findings also reaffirm that the political right is using referendum initiatives to establish an exclusionist discourse that focuses on irreconcilable differences between "the foreign" and "the Swiss." One of the key tools in establishing this discourse has been to instil a sense of fear among citizens by portraying the "foreign" influence of non-citizens as dangerous. I also found that the system of direct democracy is used very intentionally by the SVP as a vehicle to promote the party's agenda. Although this has not always been effective, as the outcome of the Naturalization Initiative shows, there is a high potential for the future success of referendum initiatives restricting the rights of immigrants. The Anti-Minaret and Deportation Initiatives show that the SVP's choice to address symbolic issues around immigrant policy through popular initiatives resonates with majority of the voting public. The SVP rhetoric depicts direct democracy as the ultimate means for Swiss citizens to collaborate on policy development. The party collectively portrays itself as the voice of the common people.

This Swiss preoccupation with direct democracy also became evident in my analysis of newspaper sources. The main focus of the Swiss-German newspapers I examined was the relationship between direct democracy and referendum initiatives on immigrant policy. The media coverage presented arguments illustrating both weaknesses and strengths of the Swiss political system. Although there was some debate surrounding how “the people” are represented in these initiatives, the question of voter turnout only emerged once. A letter to the editor of the *Tages-Anzeiger* states:

Just over half (52.6 percent) of the Swiss electorate cast their vote on the Deportation Initiative. Just over half (52.9 percent) of the half agreed with the SVP. That means that approximately one quarter of the Swiss population accepted the initiative. One quarter of the Swiss population does not equal Switzerland. It is only a minority that considers the populist party as ‘Our People – Our Population.’ (“Das Volk,” 2010).¹³

Debates rarely extended to questions of whether or not non-citizens should be considered part of ‘the Swiss people.’ They did, however, reaffirm the importance of the direct democratic system to the Swiss national identity.

Throughout the newspaper coverage, many concerns were voiced about how the Swiss system could be improved and altered to be more relevant in the context of the demographic realities of the twenty-first century. One of the continuously cited reasons for why these changes may become necessary was the potential impact of the three referendum initiatives on non-citizens. The discourses of impact mostly took place in broad terms, focussing on general concerns about infringing upon democratic principles and on what it means for Switzerland to

¹³ Translation by Christine Fritze.

challenge international law. Discussions of more specific impacts on non-citizens appeared only marginally.

It is crucial to note that the media coverage paid virtually no attention to structural limitations to participation. The fact that there was very little opportunity for non-citizens to voice concerns only found mention in one out of 558 articles. Thus, the fact that the voices of non-citizens are only marginally present in debates around crucial policy decisions did not appear out of the ordinary for commentators. In total, there were 24 reports featuring the direct voices of non-citizens. Although the inability of non-citizens to cast their votes was addressed by some of the commentators, there was no mention of alternative forms of participation independent of citizenship status. My findings on the Naturalization Initiative in particular illustrate that there is a widespread assumption among media commentators that all foreigners would want to become Swiss citizens, if they only had the opportunity. The possibility that non-citizens may be primarily interested in having a political voice and being part of decision-making processes in their place of residence, without having to become Swiss citizens, was not discussed.

The challenges presented by equating political participation with electoral franchise – and consequently making it dependent on citizenship status – also became evident in my interview with Dragica Rajčić. Our conversation illustrated how political participation can and should be seen as much more than casting a vote. Participation is about involvement, responsibility and ultimately about being part of a national dialogue on what is important for all people residing within Swiss borders. Rajčić emphasized the inextricable link between her art of writing and her political perspectives and argued for the important role artists can play in enriching public discourses on issues such as immigrant policy. She also provided me with insights into how she

experiences being a “foreigner” in Switzerland, focussing on the challenges of living in-between cultures and being constantly confronted with being different. In our conversation, Rajčić pointed to some of the structural obstacles that in her opinion inhibit the successful integration of immigrants. Here, she focused primarily on the importance of education and the need for positive non-citizen role models.

Rajčić’s understanding of the issues under examination allowed me to triangulate the data I collected on political advertisements and newspaper coverage. More importantly though, our conversation gave me the opportunity to turn the voice of a non-citizen into a key element of my study. Although Rajčić’s voice represents her unique experiences and perspectives, it also reflects many of the sentiments other non-citizens expressed in the newspaper reportage. For example, her emphasis on the role artists and writers can play in diversifying public discourses on immigrant policy also appeared in the newspaper coverage about the involvement of artists in rallying against SVP initiatives. The grave importance of broadening public discourses becomes particularly evident in light of the simplistic, populist and yet successful SVP campaigns, which by every indication will continue to steer public discourses on immigrant policy.

Overall, my research findings illustrate a discrepancy between the democratic ideals that are foundational to Swiss consociationalism and the de facto practice of democracy in Switzerland. Despite extensive public awareness around the importance of direct democratic processes in the Swiss context, there is virtually no open debate on the country’s fundamental approach to democracy; an approach that allows for the political exclusion of 1.5 million contributing, permanent residents. The SVP, Switzerland’s strongest political party, is actively engaged in establishing an authoritative claim over representing the needs of the Swiss *Volk*. Through rhetoric, the party has positioned the principles of Swiss democracy at its core, without

adhering to these principles in practice. This study provides an example for how the SVP has attempted to consolidate the reduction of rights and political exclusion of almost one quarter of Switzerland's population, making Switzerland's democracy increasingly undemocratic.

5.2 Applicability of Findings

My study illustrates that discourses on immigrant policy in German-speaking Switzerland are driven by a variety of actors and are influenced by many contextual factors. Consequently, the public conflict around establishing the rights and responsibilities of Switzerland's non-citizen population is complex and multifaceted. It is carried out in a myriad of disputes that range from disagreements within political parties, to ideological debates carried out in the Swiss National Assembly, to legal appeals challenging naturalization decisions, and to overt incidents of xenophobic violence. In many ways, the Swiss conflict can be seen as a worldview conflict. It is largely based on core values and beliefs, which in themselves cannot be negotiated. Based on my findings, I came to the conclusion that in order to address this conflict, special attention must be paid to measures that could promote cross-cultural understanding. I thus consider a transformative approach to addressing the manifestations of this conflict as highly beneficial. Transformative approaches utilize the constructive characteristics of conflict and shift the focus from managing particular problems to building healthy relationships. The foundational principles of conflict transformation guided me in developing areas of applicability for my research findings. The recommendations that emerged during this process will be the focus of the final chapter of my study.

a) Re-Imagining Political Participation of Non-Citizens

The question whether the political participation of non-citizens should be promoted through granting them the right to vote has continually re-emerged in public debates on integration. So far calls for non-citizen suffrage have focussed on municipal and cantonal elections, which has placed the responsibility to decide on non-citizen suffrage primarily on the cantons. Considering the successful implementation of non-citizen suffrage in five of Switzerland's 26 cantons, further attempts should be made at exploring the benefits in granting non-citizens the right to vote in local matters. Granting non-citizens a say in the decisions made in their permanent place of residence would diversify public discourses on political questions. It may also be an important symbolic step in building positive relationships between Swiss citizens and non-citizens.

Another important step in this regard is the acknowledgement that political participation may not have to be intrinsically tied to the formal right to vote. Political participation can take place through many different modes of collaboration. The work of the EKM illustrates what close collaboration between Swiss federal institutions and non-citizen associations can potentially look like. The key shortcoming of the commission is that it has so far remained a purely consultative body. Since it provides the government only with non-binding recommendations, true collaboration does not take place. Institutions like the EKM will only reach their full potential if governments take their research and recommendations seriously. If the Swiss government is intent on upholding the foundational principles of consociationalism, it must revisit the processes through which it engages non-citizen residents. Collaborative approaches to conflict, as explored for example by Innes and Booher (2010), have the potential

to inform the future development of immigrant policy in Switzerland, making it more inclusive and less restricted by the boundaries of citizenship.

b) Promoting Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Coming in contact with foreigners can evoke fears on both sides and can lead to conflicts. Laws cannot eradicate fears. The way to overcome fears is a culture of encounter and of dialogue.

– Letter to the editor, *Tages-Anzeiger*, November 25, 2009.¹⁴

Another aspect of my research findings that stood out to me is the importance of dialogue. My research data showed that the public dialogue on immigrant policy has been in many ways closed off to non-citizen contributors. If meaningful and inclusive dialogue on immigrant policy is to take place, Swiss institutions must actively encourage this dialogue. The foundation of consensus is the interaction between people with differing perspectives. Direct democracy may be collaborative in the way that it gives citizens a direct voice, but it does not replace the need for dialogue. A direct democratic process does not guarantee a meaningful public dialogue. In fact, the public discourses on SVP referendum initiatives show that the participation of non-citizens in dialogues on immigrant policy has so far been marginal at best. My conclusion in this regard is that in order to achieve meaningful consensus in a democratic society, both dialogue and some form of direct involvement of residents need to take place.

Dialogue is the most important tool in fostering understanding among people with differing worldviews. It can enable us to find commonalities and shift our perception of difference from negative to positive. Ultimately, I believe the creation of meaningful and

¹⁴ Translation by Christine Fritze.

inclusive dialogues will be the first and most important step in transforming the Swiss conflict. The importance of interactions between citizens and non-citizens is also illustrated in the fact that the SVP initiatives were the most successful in areas with a small non-citizen population. I would agree with the Secretary General of the Social Democratic Party, Thomas Christen, who argued that there is a real need for facilitating positive encounters between Swiss citizens and immigrants in rural communities (Hehli, 2009b). There are many different ways intercultural encounters and dialogues could be structured and facilitated. One example is the internationally applied World Café framework that is aimed at fostering collaborative dialogue through the sharing and connecting of diverse narratives and perspectives (Brown & Isaacs, 2005).¹⁵

c) Active Engagement with Marginalized Voices

I strongly believe that the public discourses on the three initiatives examined in this study exemplify how minority rights and cultural diversity can be challenged in direct democratic settings. The marginalization of non-citizen voices illustrates the importance of finding new ways to build an environment in which direct democracy can work to its fullest potential. In order to overcome these barriers to a more inclusive practice of direct democracy, both the Swiss government and society must find a way to simplify issues for broad access without presenting complex policy questions as black and white, win/lose scenarios. A crucial step in this process is the recognition that whoever designs referendum initiative questions, and determines the strategy of information dissemination, holds immense power in the shaping of public opinion. Any democratic government should be concerned about its responsibility to provide an institutional framework that facilitates democratic discourses, focussing on promoting diversity and cultural

¹⁵ A more in-depth analysis of how a national dialogue between sub-groups could be constructed goes beyond the scope of my study. Many useful examples of engaging large and diverse groups in constructive, change-oriented dialogues can be found in *The Change Handbook* by P. Holman et al. (2007).

understanding. The limited access to non-citizens' perspectives in Swiss-German public discourses indicates that there are clear structural challenges for immigrants that set significant barriers to meaningful dialogue and cross-cultural understanding.

An important step in the process of engaging with marginalized voices is to become more cognisant of how political positions on immigrant policy are advertised in the public sphere. With their widely disseminated campaign posters, the SVP succeeded at reaching an extremely broad audience. Without having to read the paper or watch the news, the majority of Swiss residents were exposed to billboards and placards that promoted a simplistic and one-sided perspective on highly complex issues. Competing with this visual discourse has proved challenging to the opponents of SVP initiatives. However, one example of a relatively successful attempt was the Anti-Minaret Initiative counter-campaign poster crafted and disseminated by the Society for Minorities in Switzerland (GMS). The GMS utilized similar popular media tools as those used in SVP poster campaigns, but aimed at promoting a positive and inclusive view of Swiss society. The poster was titled *Der Himmel über der Schweiz ist gross genug*, the sky/heaven above Switzerland is large enough, and showed the steeples of houses of worship representing five different religions below a vast stretch of sky.

Figure 10 – GMS Poster: Anti-Minaret



Source: <http://minarett.blogspot.ca/2009/11/der-himmel-uber-der-schweiz-ist->

Not only did this poster suggest that there is enough room in the Swiss skyline for Christian churches, as well as minarets and other places of worship, it also insinuated that there is room for more than one valid religion in Swiss society. The wide dissemination of this image allowed for a powerful counter-narrative to SVP campaigning that opened up a public discourse around the freedom of religious expression in Switzerland and challenged the over-simplification and polarization of the issues at hand.

The active engagement with marginalized voices can take many shapes and forms. One tool of diversifying public discourses is the expansion of public access to transnational literature, for example through policy innovation. The role transnational literature can play in encouraging the diversification of integration discourses is the focus of Baumgartner & Zinggeler's anthology *From Multiculturalism to Hybridity: New Approaches to Teaching Modern Switzerland* (2010). The authors introduce their book by stating: "Switzerland has slowly begun to acknowledge the transcultural and hybrid realities of the 21st century, as migrant and native artists alike refract in their works these new and complex cultural negotiations about identity, ethnicity, and race" (p. 3). This increased recognition of transnational authors became evident, for example, when non-citizen author Melinda Nadj Abonji won the Swiss Book Prize in 2010 for *Tauben fliegen auf*. In this fictionalized autobiography, Nadj Abonji tells the story of a young immigrant from former Yugoslavia who struggles with her parents' exaggerated and humiliating efforts to integrate into Swiss society ("Es ist nicht gerade schweizerisch," 2010).

One of the most promising applications of transnational literature, according to Baumgartner and Zinggeler, is the increased incorporation of transnational literature in school curricula. Thus, their anthology addresses some of the key challenges of incorporating Switzerland's struggles with multiculturalism into contemporary approaches to education. It also

provides concrete curriculum suggestions that are in line with a multifaceted view of Switzerland that incorporates the experiences of non-citizens. This approach to engaging marginalized voices is very much in line with Dragica Rajčić's call for changing the way children and youth learn about diversity. Personally, I see education as one of the key elements in the process of diversifying public discourses on the integration of non-citizens, and addressing the conflict around the integration of immigrants in German-speaking Switzerland.

5.3 Areas of Further Research

This thesis explored questions within the field of cultural diversity management, an area that has become of great international interest in the face of the demographic realities of the twenty-first century. Switzerland's challenge to maintain a sense of national identity while embracing the new mobility across Europe must be seen within its larger international context. The question of how best to integrate resident non-citizens into national communities is becoming increasingly important in many western countries. The vast amount of research on this topic would have allowed me to take my thesis into many different directions. Even within my particular focus on the public discourses on immigrant policy in German-speaking Switzerland, my research methodology had clear limitations. For example, in a different study and with more time available, it would be interesting to see how including a larger number of interviews may lead to different conclusions on the inclusivity of political decision-making processes. Another area of further research would be a comparative approach to my research questions. Time constraints prevented me from exploring the links between the Swiss and the Canadian approaches to democracy and diversity management, which initially sparked my interest in the topic I chose.

Although my thesis provides broad recommendations of how to approach the Swiss conflict surrounding the development of immigrant policy, it does not explore the specific steps of institutionalizing collaboration on policy development. An analysis of how a national dialogue between sub-groups could be constructed goes beyond the scope of my study. Nevertheless, conducting such an analysis will be a crucially important step in moving towards more inclusive decision-making processes in German-speaking Switzerland.

Considering the pan-European urgency to find more effective ways to promote the political and social integration of immigrants, I expect many more research studies will emerge in the coming years. With projects like *baloti.ch* or *citoyenneté*, 2011 was an important year for advances in the area of non-citizen political participation in Switzerland. Time will tell if these projects meet their objectives. Once the various Swiss projects have been established for a sufficient length of time, it will be important to determine best practices and comparatively evaluate the success of federal, cantonal, municipal and non-governmental programs.

5.4 Conclusion

This thesis examined Switzerland's conflict around the integration of non-citizens in the context of the Swiss system of direct democracy. By conducting a case study on three recent Swiss referendum initiatives on immigrant policy, I set out to answer my research question: How does the use of referenda on immigrant policy impact public discourses on the social and political integration of non-citizens in German-speaking Switzerland? In particular, I was intent on exploring how these public discourses address the link between direct democracy, immigrant policy and non-citizen experiences, and whose perspectives are represented in these public debates.

Through my analysis of political advertisements, newspaper articles and an interview with Swiss resident author Dragica Rajčić, I came to truly appreciate the complexity of my research endeavour. Based on my findings it is clear that the use of referendum initiatives to make decisions on immigrant policy has had a significant impact on integration discourses. Most notably, it has provided the conservative nationalist Swiss People's Party with the opportunity to advocate their political agenda on immigrant policy on a very large scale. Through campaign posters, billboards, newspaper columns, interviews and political statements, the SVP not only reached a broad audience, but also set the tone for public debates on immigrant policy in the past five years. Despite a substantial amount of coverage criticizing the SVP initiatives, the political right succeeded in convincing the majority of Swiss voters in two of the three initiatives under examination.

My findings also showed that the majority of newspaper coverage portrayed immigrant policy as a highly complex issue and addressed this issue in theoretical or generalized terms. The public discourses examined in this study showed very little room for personal narratives from non-citizen perspectives. This meant the emotional argumentation put forward by the SVP and the narratives of danger communicated through initiative campaign imagery had virtually no direct competition. Overall, there was a clear shortage of non-citizen representation in the public discourses that emerged in my newspaper data. Further, my interview with Dragica Rajčić suggested that establishing non-citizen perspectives in dominant public discourses on immigrant policy in German-speaking Switzerland has been very challenging. Rajčić's responses also showed that the process of reaching decisions on immigrant policy through popular initiatives has made it difficult to feel welcome as a non-citizen in Swiss-German society.

Based on my findings, I concluded that the process of transforming the Swiss conflict around the integration of non-citizens will require Swiss governments to re-imagine how political participation could be institutionalized within the framework of consociationalism. Another important step will be the promotion of cross-cultural dialogue. By encouraging encounters and meaningful dialogue between Swiss citizens and non-citizens residing in Switzerland, Swiss governments would foster transcultural understanding and relationship building. Lastly, I believe Swiss institutions have an important role to play in actively engaging marginalized voices and promoting the diversification of public discourses. Switzerland's struggle with cultural diversity and the integration of immigrants is taking place within the context of rapidly changing demographics in Europe. Moving forward, Switzerland will have to find a way to balance its need for sovereignty with the cultural and demographic realities of a transient population in an increasingly globalized world.

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APPENDIX A

Invitation Email

Dear _____:

I am currently working on a research project on the ways in which collaboration on Swiss immigration policy could move beyond the boundaries of citizenship. (“Collaborating beyond the boundaries of citizenship: A transcultural perspective on public participation in the development of Swiss immigrant policy”). I am particularly interested in how using referendums as tools of resolving public conflicts has impacted the dominant public discourse on who is part of the national ‘self’ and who should be excluded. This study is based primarily on a textual analysis, but I believe it is crucially important to include the voice of someone who has personal insights into the lived experience of an immigrant in the Swiss setting.

If you indicate your interest in participating in my study, I will email you a consent form containing detailed information on what your involvement would entail. I will also gladly answer any further questions you may have. You should feel no obligation whatsoever to participate in my study due to our previous work together.

If you agree to participate, I would be most thankful if we could schedule an interview in February 2012 during your visit at the University of Waterloo for the symposium “The Dream of the Other Europe: Rethinking *Germanistik* Through the Balkans.” If you are interested and available, kindly let me know what possible dates will work for you. I will be at the University of Waterloo February 2 – February 6 and can meet you wherever and whenever it suits you best.

I look very much forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Christine Fritze

MA Candidate in Dispute Resolution
School of Public Administration
University of Victoria

APPENDIX B

**Department of Dispute Resolution
University of Victoria
Box 1700 STN CSN
Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2**

Participant Consent Form

**Collaborating beyond the boundaries of citizenship:
A transcultural perspective on public participation in the development of
Swiss immigrant policy**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “Collaborating beyond the boundaries of citizenship: A transcultural perspective on public participation in the development of Swiss immigrant policy” that is being conducted by Christine Fritze.

Christine Fritze is a graduate student in Dispute Resolution in the Department of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by email. This thesis will be supervised by Dr. Charlotte Schallié, Assistant Professor in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies.

This research is being funded by **THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA (SSHRC)**

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ‘over-foreignization’ (*Überfremdung*) discourse in Switzerland and explore the ways in which collaboration on immigration policy could move beyond the boundaries of citizenship. I aim to analyze the ways in which using referendums as tools of resolving public conflicts has impacted the dominant public discourse on who is part of the national self and who should be excluded. Despite the assumption that direct democracy embodies a collaborative means of decision making, the Swiss case demonstrates that there are clear boundaries to who is involved in the direct democratic process and who is not. With this research I hope to gain insight not only into the structural challenges to multiculturalism in Switzerland, but also into how the dialogue across cultures could be improved to make future attempts to shape immigration policy more inclusive. This study is based primarily on textual analysis, but I believe it is crucially important to include the voice of someone who has personal insights into the lived experience of an immigrant in the Swiss setting.

Importance of this Research

In Switzerland, the shaping of immigration policy has been treated as relevant and urgent topic in the dominant public discourse. My thesis will look at the Swiss multiculturalism challenge from a multidisciplinary perspective, linking the strategies and tools of conflict studies with theories rooted in political science and literary analysis. I hope that my research will lead me to a meaningful discussion of how the dialogue across cultures could be improved in Switzerland to make future attempts to shape immigration policy more inclusive.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a German-speaking Swiss (-based) writer with a migratory background. I selected you not only because of your role as creator of an alternative narrative on lived immigrant experience, but also because the transcultural spaces you create in your work are particularly interesting to my methodological approach.

What is Involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a face-to-face interview with me. The actual time reserved for the interview will be between 1 to 3 hours. The interview will be electronically recorded with a digital voice recorder. In addition, I may take written notes to highlight certain issues you raise.

Inconvenience

Your participation in this study should not cause any inconvenience to you. If any potential or known inconvenience is incurred through your participation, please bring it to my attention and I will do my best to compensate for or alleviate any inconvenience.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

As a potential benefit of your participation in this research, your writings will be exposed to a broader range of North American scholars.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used.

Ongoing Consent

In order to ensure your ongoing full consent, you will be given the opportunity to proofread a transcription of the entire interview and comment on it prior to publication. I will remove any sections from the interview that do not meet your approval. I will also ask you to send me your re-consent in an email message.

Anonymity

Please note that you will be referred to by name in the publications.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by saving the files containing the interview in a password-protected computer and a locked filing cabinet. None of the information provided to me for the purpose of this study will be used for any other purposes.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others as part of my MA thesis, as well as a journal article.

Future Use of Data

Your consent for future data analysis will be obtained in the following way: I will contact you first and request your consent in writing. For that purpose, I will send you a draft of the interview (by mail or email) requesting your written consent in a brief signed letter or email message. The data will be saved unless you request that it be destroyed.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include myself as well as my supervisor, Dr. Charlotte Schallié.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT

I agree to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study.

I agree to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results.

_____ (Participant to provide initials)

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. Do you see a connection between your writing and your socio-political perspectives?
2. In what ways – if at all – can your works be considered political activism?
3. What was your experience with the recent referendum initiatives on immigrant policy in Switzerland?
4. Have these initiatives influenced your writing?
5. How did you experience the SVP initiative campaigns?
6. How do you feel about not being able to take part in referendum votes on immigrant policy?
7. In your opinion, are there ways of political participation that do not depend on citizenship status?
8. Who do you think makes the ultimate decisions regarding immigrant policy in Switzerland?

APPENDIX C

Cited Interview Segments
(transcribed and edited by Christine Fritze)

Ich bin schon politisch mit dem wie ich schreibe. Meine Wörter, wie sie auf dem Papier stehen, sind politisch an sich, weil ich die Sprache eines Drittels der Bevölkerung so auf das Papier stelle, wie diese Menschen sie kennen. Ich kann mir eigentlich keinen ernsthaften Schriftsteller oder Künstler vorstellen, der in dem wie er abstrahiert und sich artikuliert, nicht zu Diskussionen beiträgt. Kunst ist immer ein Beitrag zur Kommunikation in einer Gesellschaft. Das ist wie mit dem Glauben. Auch wenn du Atheist bist, hast du deinen Bezug zu Gott schon definiert. [...] Ein Schriftsteller muss glauben, dass Worte wichtig sind und dass menschliche Worte etwas bewirken. Er muss glauben, dass Worte sich auf längere Sicht in anderen einpflanzen und inspirieren können. (p. 88).

Eine gute Wirkung meiner Arbeit wäre, wenn ich kein einkommensumsorgtes Leben hätte. Aber diese Wirkung erreiche ich nicht. (p. 89).

Es gibt Propaganda und Agitation, die darauf ausgerichtet sind, menschliche Ideen zu steuern. Davon bin ich weit entfernt, denn Literatur zeichnet sich durch Ambivalenz aus. Die Welt ist nicht nur schwarz und weiß. (p. 89).

Was ich bei meiner Arbeit mit Kindern von Migranten bemerkt habe, ist dass wir ihre Muttersprache nicht als Potential, sondern als Hindernis wahrnehmen. Und ich glaube da beginnt die Selbstverachtung. Das Buch von Melinda [Nadj Abonji] ist für mich ein ganz ausgezeichnetes Beispiel dafür, wenn die zweite Generation anfängt, über ihr Aufwachsen mit der ersten Generation zu schreiben. Es zeigt auch ihre Perspektive vom Leben zwischen den Welten. Viele Secondos können sich damit identifizieren. Solche Bücher sind sehr wichtig, um die eigene Realität anzuerkennen. Wenn Kinder Migranten nur in Filmen sehen, in denen sie immer als Leichen oder Kriminelle auftauchen, und kein Lehrer in der Klasse Migrant ist, verlieren sie leicht Selbstvertrauen. Die ganze Integrationsgeschichte basiert auf der Annahme, dass alle gleich sind, aber unsere Lebensgeschichten und die Zustände, in denen wir leben, sind nicht gleich. (p. 90).

Schrecklich. Also es tut mir wirklich körperlich weh. Jetzt lebe ich über dreißig Jahre in der Schweiz. Alle Voraussetzungen für die Entstehung einer Massenhysterie waren in der rechten Ecke in der Schweiz zu finden. Sie arbeiten immer mehr mit visuellen Mitteln. Mit den Plakaten zur Ausschaffungsinitiative, haben sie sogar eingebürgerte Ausländer als die unerwünschte Gruppe dargestellt. Mit diesen Plakaten entsteht Klassenpolitik. Es gibt die Ausländer, dann die eingebürgerten, eingeschlichenen, Quasi-Bürger, die wieder ausgebürgert werden sollten, und dann gibt es das Volk. Wenn man die Rhetorik auf diesen Plakaten genau betrachtet, erinnert das stark an die dreißiger Jahre. Vielleicht tut mir das alles zweimal so weh, weil der Krieg in Ex-Jugoslawien so angefangen hat. Am Anfang glaubt man immer, dass alles noch steuerbar ist, doch es kann ganz schnell schlimm werden. Was mich eigentlich am meisten erschreckt ist, wie ganz normale Menschen dieser Propaganda langsam auf den Leim gehen, weil

sie ständig auf sie einprasselt. Es gibt kein Entkommen, und man fängt an wirklich daran zu glauben. Das ist die größte Bedrohung der Schweiz. Die Propaganda richtet sich aber nicht gegen reiche Ausländer, sondern nur gegen die Wehrlosen. Die Ausschaffungsinitiative hat mein Schweizertum verletzt. Ich bin keine eingebürgerte Schweizerin, aber es hat meine Liebe für die Schweiz sehr betroffen. Aber es hat auch Schweizern genauso wehgetan. Man hat sich dafür geschämt. (p. 92-93).

Eigentlich geht es mir grundsätzlich darum, mit welchen Mechanismen wir andere Menschen ausschließen. Einer dieser Ausschlussmechanismen ist die Sprache, das habe ich an meiner eigenen Haut erlebt. Ich bin mit meiner Großmutter aufgewachsen und sie redete einen Dialekt, den sie aus ihrem Dorf mitgebracht hat. Als Kind lernte ich diesen Dialekt. Als ich in die Schule kam, wurde ich aufgrund meines Dialektes ausgelacht. Ich habe meine Großmutter unendlich geliebt. Ich war nicht nur verletzt, weil sie mich ausgelacht haben, sondern auch weil ich dachte, dass sie zugleich meine Großmutter schrecklich fanden. Wahrscheinlich empfinde ich deswegen einen körperlichen Ekel, wenn ich sehe, dass Menschen ausgeschlossen und entmenschlicht werden. Denn wem gehört die Sprache? Wir kennen das alle, in dem Moment, in dem man in ein anderes Land geht, bekommt man einen schrecklichen Eindruck von sich selber, weil man nicht so kommunizieren kann wie man es will. (p. 96).

Dialekt ist eine große Falle, denn man kann in Sekundenschnelle an deiner Stimme erkennen, dass du nicht dazugehörst. (p. 96).

Es heißt, wenn Migranten Deutsch lernen, dann ist alles gut. Alle müssen Deutsch sprechen, damit wir gleich werden. Aber wir sind nicht alle gleich. Wer das fordert, verschleiert, dass er mich anhand meiner Aussprache und meines Aussehens trotzdem ausschließen kann. (p. 97).

Viele Kinder schämen sich ihrer Eltern wegen ihrer Sprachkenntnisse. Wenn ich die Sprache auf meine Weise benutze, sind viele verärgert. Ich habe Schweizer Freunde, die mich fragen, "wirst du bitte endlich normal?" Sie schämen sich. Sie sagen, meine Freundin ist eine Schriftstellerin, *aber...* Als mein Sohn noch jünger war, hat er am Computer meine Gedichte verbessert. Zuerst hat er in der Schule erzählt, ich sei Näherin von Beruf. [...] Es tut mir weh, wenn ich sehe, dass es anderen so wichtig ist, wie ich Zeichen auf das Papier setze. Wenn man diese Zeichen nicht richtig verwendet, dann gilt man als ungebildet. Von dem her kann man nicht richtig denken und ist von dem her auch nicht wert als Mensch behandelt zu werden. Das sind kleine Schritte. (p. 97).

In der Eidgenössischen Migrationskommission hatten wir viele Diskussionen zu den Postern. Unsere Strategie war humanistische Anständigkeit und ein Kampf mit den Fakten. Bei der Ausschaffungsinitiative hat die Kommission betont, dass es auch damals schon die Möglichkeit gab, Ausländer auszuschaffen. Wir konzentrierten uns darauf, Statistiken zu bringen und Wissenschaftler einzuladen. Doch mit Rationalität anstatt Emotionalität zu argumentieren ist schwierig. Rationale Tatsachen sind eben nicht so verführerisch, wie schwarze Schafe. Es geht uns nicht um Schlagabtausch, sondern darum, Position zu halten. Und dazu braucht es vor allem Schweizer, denn die Ausländer haben kein politisches Standbein. (p. 98).

Ich glaube mir tut es nicht einmal so sehr weh, dass nur Bürger abstimmen können, sondern dass die Demokratie gar nicht mehr gelehrt wird in den Schulen. Die Demokratie und

was wir darunter verstehen muss jeden Tag neu ausgehandelt werden. Politische Teilnahme wird nicht als das höchste Gut unserer Gesellschaft betrachtet. Die Demokratie wird langsam einfach aus Nachlässigkeit abgeschafft. [...] Ein großer Teil der Schweizer Bevölkerung nimmt nicht an Wahlen teil. Wir sagen zwar, dass die Arabische Welt demokratischer werden muss, doch was tun wir mit unserer eigenen Demokratie? (p. 98).

Ausländer auf die politische Agenda zu setzen ist guter Stimmenfang. Das machen jetzt fast alle Parteien in der Schweiz, sei es die Grünen, die Liberalen, oder die Sozialisten. Es geht weniger um konkrete Resultate als um Stimmungsmache. [...] Alles ist sehr schnelllebig, nicht mal aus Bösartigkeit, doch man ist dazu gezwungen, die Dinge zu vereinfachen. Die Ausschaffungsinitiative ist ein Beispiel dafür. Jetzt wird abgeschafft. Diese Initiative muss umgesetzt werden, doch wie, fragt kein Mensch! (p. 99).

Man sagt mir, ich soll mich einbürgern lassen. Das ist eine Möglichkeit. Ich kann zwar meine Position gegenüber der Schweiz so oder so halten, aber mit dem Schweizertum kommen auch alle möglichen Stereotypen, die nicht zu meinem Selbstbild passen. Irgendwo sehne ich mich danach, mitzusprechen und habe trotzdem eine gewisse Angst, dass ich nie wirklich Schweizerin werden kann. (p. 99).

Die Migrantenkommission, ist eine Beraterkommission des Bundes. Wir können Empfehlungen geben, forschen, doch der Bund muss dies nicht in Entscheidungen einbeziehen. Nicht alle Bundesräte sind an unserer Arbeit interessiert. Wir hoffen immer, dass es mit einem neuen Bundesrat ein wenig anders wird. Widmer-Schlumpf und Christoph Blocher waren beide ein Teil der SVP. Wieso sollte die SVP auf die Migrationskommission hören? Schön wäre es. Doch wir geben nicht auf. Uns braucht's. (p. 101).

Es gibt viele Ausländer, die sehr aktiv in Ausländervereinen sind und dort ihre Chance sehen. Es gibt auch eingebürgerte Ausländer, die für die Rechte von denen, die nichts zu sagen haben, einstehen. Nicht sehr viele, aber einige. Sagen wir mal so, ich glaube die Welt wird immer undurchsichtiger und Politiker wissen wenig über spezifische Fachgebiete. Man braucht eine gute Lobby im Schweizer Parlament, sowie die Landwirtschaft, Wein und Straßenbau. Ich glaube die Ausländer haben keine gute Lobby. Nicht nur Frauen, sondern auch viele Minderheiten in der Schweiz haben sich Muskeln zugelegt. Ausländer sollten das auch tun und die Sache in die eigene Hand nehmen. Doch die Voraussetzung um Muskeln zuzulegen ist das Wahlrecht. Für mich geht es nicht um Bürger und Nicht-Bürger, sondern um Landeseinwohner. Einwohner leben in diesem Land und um in diesem Land zuhause zu sein, müssen sie auch Verantwortung tragen. (p. 102).

Man muss pragmatisch sein. Die Welt ist nicht gerecht. (p. 103).

Es mangelt an Dialog, Bildung, politischem Interesse und politischer Mitsprache, doch man muss zuerst wissen worüber man spricht. (p. 103).