Eugenics and the Swiss Gender Regime: Women's Bodies and the Struggle Against Difference[1]

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1   Introductory comments

The modern Swiss nation-state has emerged, to borrow Kriesi's apt terminology (2006), as a "federation of nations". Encompassing various languages and religions, the Swiss nation lacks the common "cultural stuff" that could act as national "glue". Instead, as Kriesi argues elsewhere in this volume, it is held together by its political institutions, in particular, federalism, direct democracy, and armed neutrality, which institutionalise respect for cultural difference and incarnate a model of mutual tolerance based on the principle of "live and let live".

Kriesi's account of Swiss national identity has been highly influential, and his views are rarely questioned within Swiss political science. Persuasive though it is, I believe that the integrationist model of Swiss national identity, as formulated most prominently by Kriesi, nevertheless neglects central characteristics of the modern Swiss nation-state, in particular, its exclusionary tendencies. This conceptual absence is, moreover, shared by competing analyses, such as Linder's (1999), who emphasises the conflictual nature of the historical processes of state- and nation-building in Switzerland but pays little attention to related practices of social and political exclusion.

I suggest that taking a closer look at the Swiss "gender regime" suggests an alternative account of the constitution of the Swiss nation-state. The concept of the gender regime, as proposed by Connell (1987), refers to the ideological and material practices which construct gender identities and institutionalise gender inequalities.

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It is therefore helpful for looking at the institutions which not only produce, but also solidify and anchor gender identities, such as the family, the workplace, or the army. In conditions of modernity, one of the main arenas for the institutionalisation of gender inequalities is the nation-state.

When considering the relations between gender and the nation-state in Switzerland, the first, and rather obvious, point to make is that the founding institutions of Swiss national identity are heavily gendered. Starting with direct democracy, it is hardly necessary to remind readers that women have been excluded from voting rights at the federal level for most of the modern era, until 1971. If we look at armed neutrality, it is also obvious that the Swiss army has traditionally been a primarily male institution. Finally, it could be argued that federalism has been so centred on cultural and regional differences that other differences, in particular gender (and to some extent social class), have been "institutionalised out" of the political community. As Kriesi (1995: 67) has also pointed out, these identity features have been much less salient in Swiss social and political life. To summarise my argument so far: the founding institutions of the Swiss nation-state have been built upon the exclusion of women.

However, we need to further refine this point. Focusing only on the political exclusion of women provides us with a picture of the Swiss gender regime which is at best partial and possibly overly simplistic. It is important also to look at some of the other, more complex, ways in which the social relations of power around gender have operated in recent Swiss history. Against this backdrop, the general argument that I will develop in the following sections is, first, that Switzerland provides a historical example of a "Gardening State", to borrow a metaphor from Zygmunt Bauman: a state concerned with eliminating the bad weeds from its national garden and thereby constructing a sharply exclusionary national identity. Second, that women's bodies have been a central site in this Swiss struggle against "difference", and that gender and sexuality have consequently been a structuring dimension of the Swiss trajectory into modernity. Empirically, I shall illustrate this argument with reference to the Swiss experiments with eugenics (1920s–1960s). It is not my purpose in this article to present an exhaustive historical analysis of this discursive field, nor of the practices that it legitimised.[2] Instead, I propose to use the Swiss experiments with eugenics as an angle from which we can examine the forging of the modern Swiss nation and, especially, the structuring role of gender and sexuality in that process, building upon the body of recent critical historiography in this area.[3]

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2   The contemporary relevance of eugenics and its ideological roots are explored in our article in *New Formations* (Mottier and Gerodetti, forthcoming).

3   I refer in particular to the growing body of current archival research on Swiss-German cantons by historians such as Regina Wecker, Jakob Tanner, Béatrice Ziegler and their research teams, which is being carried out in the context of the PNR51, as well as to earlier work by Jeanmonod and Heller (2000 ; 2001) in the French-Swiss context.

2   Disciplining the nation

The science of eugenics emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century. One of its aims was to assist nation-states in formulating social policies which would improve the "quality" of the population. The emergence of modern techniques of government, including the growth of health and social policy-making from the beginning of the twentieth century, provided the institutional conditions for translating the eugenic rhetoric into practice. The Swiss case is particularly interesting because it pioneered a number of eugenic ideas and policies in Europe, some of which continued until well after the Second World War.

The term "eugenics" was popularised by Sir Francis Galton in 1883, to refer to the genetic improvement of the national "stock" on the basis of the scientific study of "all influences that tend, in however remote a degree, to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had" (Galton, 1883: 25). Galton regarded the evolutionary processes described by his cousin Charles Darwin, in particular the ideas of natural selection and the survival of the fittest,[4] as too slow and uncertain for modern needs. The complexities of modern scientific and cultural developments, he argued, put particularly high demands on political and other elites, whose intellectual capacities he deemed insufficiently evolved. The new science of eugenics aimed to assist governments in implementing social policies which would improve the quality of the national "breed". In opposition to the *laissez-faire* of political liberalism, eugenicists advocated active social engineering. The individual had a patriotic duty to contribute to the improvement of the national community through what Galton's student Karl Pearson (1909: 170) deemed a "conscious race-culture". Eugenics was thus from its origins deeply intertwined with social and political aims. It emerged as both a science and a social movement (see also Mottier 2000: 545). The term caught on rapidly, and numerous eugenics societies were established in Great Britain as well as in other countries, to be followed by the creation of International and World Leagues (see Kühl, 1997). Through such social reform societies, as well as scientific disciplines such as psychiatry, anthropology, biology and sexology, eugenicist discourses acquired institutional support.

The eugenicist concern with the improvement of the population through the regulation of reproductive sexuality reflected the emergence of a wider preoccupation of Western industrialising nation-states with the health and size of their population. In the context of accelerating industrialisation, the rapidly growing urban population appeared as a potentially destabilising force, whilst an orderly, healthy and prolific population came to be seen as a source of wealth for the expanding nation-states (see Nye 1999). The modern state thus twinned the exercise of disciplinary power with that of pastoral power. On the one hand, modern disciplinary techniques, including

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4   Darwin adopted the latter idea from Herbert Spencer in 1868.

mechanisms of surveillance and normalisation within state and para-state institutions such as educational establishments and prisons, aimed to produce orderly and docile subjects. On the other hand, the population was cared for and protected by new welfare policies, which in turn involved both relations of care, and the establishment of further technologies of scrutiny, surveillance and disciplinarisation (Foucault 1979; 1983). These modern techniques of governmental, which Foucault terms "governmentality", were not limited to action by the government structures of the central state, but included, more generally, all ways of directing and regulating the behaviour of citizens (Foucault 1991; see also Dean 1999).

Citizens' bodies are central targets in these relations of pastoral care and social disciplinarisation. This bodily aspect of modern power is expressed in Foucault's concept of "bio-power" (Foucault 1990). Bio-power includes, first, disciplinarisation of the movements, capacities and behaviours of individual bodies; second, it refers to the regulation of the welfare, health and education of the collective national body by state policies (see also Sawicki 1991: 67). The "conduct of conduct" involved in these practices of bio-power and governmentality, such as the eugenic regulation of the reproductive sexuality of the national body, is dependent upon the constitution of a corpus of expert knowledge, produced through careful observation and classification (see also Mottier 2005). In the field of eugenics, Switzerland was at the forefront on both the theoretical and the practical levels. Swiss scientists made significant contributions to the international scientific discourse of eugenics, while important eugenicist practices and policies were pioneered in Switzerland.

The practices of care and normalisation involved in pastoral power are internalised by individuals as contributing to the common good. In this respect, pastoral power involves a normative articulation of a collective identity as well. The national order of the welfare state is discursively founded on the notions of community and solidarity – even though entitlement to welfare provisions has always been conditional, and was, in fact, initially restricted to a very limited number of specific categories of the Swiss population. Pastoral power thus contributes to the formation of a national identity (Mottier 2005).

The construction of the nation as an ordered system of exclusion and disciplinary regulation is central to the formation of a national identity as well as to the workings of modern welfare. As Bauman argues (1989; 1991), the modern nation-state has emerged from a "quest for order"; its aim was to create an orderly society through the dominant alliance of Science and Reason. Sexuality is an important site of the modern quest for order, as well as a central element of national identity. It is through reproductive sexuality that the nation is biologically renewed, which turns it into a concern for the state (see also Mottier 1998). As Foucault puts it, "Sexuality has always been the site where the future of our species, and at the same time our truth as human subjects, are formed" (Foucault 1994: 257)[5]. Consequently,

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5   My translation.

sexuality is the prime target of "bio-power" and, as such, fundamental to processes of disciplinarisation, normalisation and marginalisation of individuals (Foucault 1990). Female sexuality is a particular target. As Yuval-Davis (1989: 106) points out, female bodies and "respectable" female sexuality become the "gate-keepers" of the moral and the biological boundaries of the national community. Female citizens and their bodies thus became of particular interest in the eugenic disciplinarisation of the nation.

3   Eugenic practices in Switzerland

Swiss eugenic policies were frequently articulated in a social-democratic perspective. They were closely bound up with the emerging welfare system and shaped by the specific Swiss political institutions, in particular federalism. In the Swiss context, the terms racial hygiene and eugenics were used interchangeably, the former being the more widely used (Schwank 1996). The most important sites of racial hygiene discourse in Switzerland were the new disciplines of psychiatry and sexology. Internationally, the best-known Swiss "degeneracy experts" (Aeschbacher, 1998: 291) were the psychiatrist and sexologist Auguste Forel (1848–1931), and the psychiatrists Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939) and Ernst Rüdin (1874–1952). However, eugenic scientific discourse was not limited to these fields, but encompassed a wide range of disciplines and authors in Switzerland.

The construction of the Swiss national order was at least partly founded on what I have elsewhere termed the Swiss "dream of order" (Mottier 2000). The social and political order was seen to be "troubled" by various categories of "disorderly" citizens and non-citizens, such as Jews, "vagrants" such as Yenish ("gypsies") and other "travellers", the mentally ill, the physically disabled, unmarried mothers or homosexuals. The eugenic conception of the national order was concerned with eliminating of such "troubles". The rational management of reproductive sexuality by the state was a central mechanism for doing so.

The emerging welfare state provided the means to translate eugenic narratives of the nation into large-scale social experiments. It also added an additional motive to that of preventing degeneracy: limiting public expenditure. Indeed, the "inferior" categories of the national population were soon to become the main recipients of the expanding welfare institutions. Limiting their numbers appeared as a rational way of reducing costs. The fact that, in the Swiss state, local, rather than federal, authorities carry the financial burden of supporting "indigent" members of local communities may also have increased the appeal of the argument of cost-reduction. The eugenic experiments in social engineering were thus shaped by specific Swiss political institutions, and federalism in particular. Indeed, federalism led to important cantonal differences in policy frameworks and practices. So did religious

differences, which of course partly overlap cantonal borders. Reflecting the more general differences in the perception of bodily "deficiencies" within Protestantism and Catholicism, it seems that Protestant cantons were particularly open to eugenic discourses and practices.

Eugenic ideas were influential in the formulation and implementation of a number of Swiss pre-War and post-War health and social policies. Such policies included forced sterilisation, legitimised by the subordination of individual interests to the collective interest of the nation, educational programmes, non-voluntary incarceration in psychiatric clinics, as well as other measures aimed specifically at vagrants or Yenish. Worldwide, the first eugenic sterilisation law was introduced in Indiana in 1907, and by the 1930s almost two-thirds of US states had similar legislation aimed in particular at institutionalised individuals such as criminals and those labelled as mentally ill. In Europe, Switzerland was the first country to introduce eugenically motivated legislation of marriage interdiction for the mentally ill in its Civil Code of 1907, which became effective in 1912 (Wecker 1998a: 169). Article 97 of this law prohibits marriage to individuals who are "unable of discernment" and "mentally ill". In 1928, the Swiss canton of Vaud, after public appeals from Forel and the *Société de patronage des aliénés du Canton de Vaud,* adopted the first European eugenic sterilisation law (followed by Denmark in 1929, Germany in 1933, Sweden and Norway in 1934 and Finland in 1935). In addition, the canton's Criminal Code of 1931 included a clause allowing for eugenically motivated abortions.

Reflecting the eugenicist focus on female bodies as the reproducers of the nation, the sterilisation of "inferior" categories of the population was a strongly gendered practice. For example, out of the 57 eugenic sterilisations that were carried out on the basis of the Vaud law in the period between 1929 and 1936, only 1 was carried out on a man (Wecker 1998b: 220). In the years before the Vaud law, from 1919 to 1928, 45 women and 4 men had been sterilised in this canton, the majority on the ground of "feeblemindedness" (Steck 1938). Data on Zürich shows that sterilization in general was relatively widespread. As Meier (2006: 116) reports, in the 1930s alone, between 2'200 and 4'600 sterilisations were carried out on the basis of approval from the psychiatric polyclinic of Zürich. The large majority of these concerned women who had asked for permission to have an abortion, which was often granted on condition of sterilization. The arguments used in Zürich tended to be primarily social and psychiatric, including the inability to financially support children, illegitimacy of the children, or sexual promiscuity. Eugenic arguments appeared in around 30% of the recommendations for sterilization (Meier 2006: 142). In contrast, in Bern, doctors tended to use predominantly eugenic arguments, reflecting the preference of the director of the Bernese Womens' Clinic Hans Guggisberg, who refused to accept social indications (see Ziegler 1999). Other data on Zürich suggests that from 1929 to 1931, eugenic sterilisations were carried out on 480 women in conjunction with abortion, and on 15 men (Wecker 1998a).

Rosenow (1990: 94) reports data from the Zürich guardianship office mentioning 60 sterilisations and 6 castrations carried out primarily on the basis of eugenic arguments on individuals between 1908 and 1935, mostly women. Of these women, 28 had been put under legal tutelage because of "feeblemindedness", 10 because of "mental illness" and 13 because of "immoral lifestyle". The gendered nature of this data is comparable to the Swedish context, where Runcis (1998) reports that almost 95% of the 63,000 Swedish eugenic sterilisations between 1930 and 1970 were carried out on women.

As Jeanmonod and Heller (2000) point out, the Vaud law in practice limited the number of sterilisations, since half of the applications for sterilisations in this period were rejected. The introduction of a legal basis would, it was thought, help regulating and curtailing practices of sterilisation that were commonplace, and this argument had played an important role in the debates around the adoption of the Vaud law, many psychiatrists opposing the law for this reason. There were occasional attempts to introduce national legislation: psychiatrists petitioned for it in 1910 and academics continued to press the case for legislation until well into the post-war period (these include a legal dissertation by Hans-Rudolf Böckli in 1954 which was intended as a blueprint for a national sterilisation law) (Huonker 2003: 152). However, calls for the introduction of a federal sterilisation law in the context of other ongoing legal reforms encountered opposition from the mid-1930s on from doctors who rejected the legal restrictions upon their discretionary power. Legal experts were also generally hostile lest the inclusion of a sterilisation clause should cause the rejection of the entire legal reform package by the catholic cantons. The Swiss Federal Council reported to parliament in 1944 that its family policies pursued three aims: demographic, pedagogic and eugenic. Concerning the eugenic dimension of its family protection measures, the Council stated that "...the state must help to prevent the founding of families which would produce hereditarily diseased offspring, and encourage the founding and stability of families who are hereditarily healthy".[6] However, the parliament agreed that a federal law wasn't really necessary, since sterilisation practices were already widespread anyway (Wecker 2003: 108). At the cantonal level, no other Swiss cantons ever adopted sterilisation laws, preferring local guidelines as in Bern (1931), and agreements between local authorities and doctors.

As in other countries, the majority of legal eugenic sterilisations in Switzerland were carried out on young female social deviants: mostly unmarried women from lower social classes, living in poor conditions, having had children out of wedlock, and labelled as "maladapted", "sexually promiscuous", of "low intelligence", "mentally ill", or "feebleminded". The general categories of mental illness and feeblemindedness were notoriously vague. The famous eugenic psychiatrist Bleuler, for example,

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6   Bericht des Bundesrates an die Bundesversammlung über das Volksbegehren "Für die Familie" (10 October 1944), in: Bundesblatt, 96(1), Bern, p. 868.

in his *Manual of Psychiatry* (1916: 476), defined the terms "to include anything that deviates from the norm", whereas his former student Maier's 1908 dissertation on the term "moral idiocy" extended the notion to moral flaws. The policing of femininity and respectable female sexuality appears as a central motive in the practice of eugenic sterilisation, since "dirtiness" and "moral deficiency" (both of which could include sexual promiscuity), "disorderly housekeeping", "loose morals", "uninhibited" female sexuality and "nymphomania" were considered as signs of mental illness and hereditary degeneracy, and frequently used as arguments for forced sterilisation.[7] Moreover, sterilisation was thought to be partly able to moderate more generally female disorders such as "hysteria", "nervosity", "masturbatory insanity", "nymphomania" and sexual "abnormalcy", and was therefore also used prophylactically (Wecker 1998b: 223). Men labelled as sexually "abnormal" such as exhibitionists or homosexuals were similarly submitted to therapeutic castrations with the aim of moderating their deviant sexual drives, often under the pressure of long-term internment as the only alternative (Huonker 2003: 232 ff.).

Exact figures on the number of sterilisations in other Swiss cantons are not available yet. Historians seem to agree, however, that the practice became relatively widespread in Switzerland, especially for individuals who were already institutionalised in those psychiatric clinics that were the playgrounds of the eugenicist ideologists.

While sterilisation policies were the most extreme form of eugenic regulation of reproductive sexuality by the welfare state, these technologies of bio-power were complemented by "preventive" education policies. Following Forel's and other campaigners' insistence on the necessity of eugenicist sexual education and marriage advice, eugenics entered the education curriculum. For example, an information brochure for youth was produced and distributed to Zürich's association of schools and officers' association in 1939 about the dangers of reproducing with degenerates, and their patriotic duty to the national collective. Readers were encouraged: "Choose your spouse from a physically and morally healthy, mentally superior family! You owe this to your offspring and to the Nation" (Schmid 1939: 44).[8] In addition, a "Central Agency for Marriage and Sex Counselling" was founded in Zürich in 1932, as well as in other locations, and organised exhibitions and conferences on issues such as "hereditary responsibility" and "psychiatric-eugenic advice on marital candidates" (1930s), or "prevention of hereditarily diseased offspring" (1949) (see Gerodetti 2006).

Other "educational" measures included the forceful removal of over 600 Yenish children from their families, to be raised in state orphanages, work houses, and foster families. The notorious operation of the *Kinder der Landstrasse* was carried

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7   See, for example, Jeanmonod and Heller's (2000; 2001) research on the Canton de Vaud; Wecker
      (1998b: 222) and Huonker (2003: 101) on Swiss-German contexts.
8   My translation.

out by the federal agency *Pro Juventute* from 1926 to 1972 under the directorship of Alfred Siegfried and his successors Peter Döbeli and Clara Reust. The stated aim of *Kinder der Landstrasse* was not to improve living conditions of the children of the "ambulants" (travelers) and "pot-repairers", but to eradicate the national "pest of vagrancy" by "appropriate measures of placement and education" (Leimgruber et al. 1998: 29). The forced removal of the children of travelers was partly legitimized on eugenic grounds. As Leimgruber et al. (1998: 56 ff.) report, travelers' children were considered racially inferior, according to previous psychiatric studies carried out, in particular, at the psychiatric clinic Waldhaus in Chur. Psychiatrists there had for many years been working in the tradition of racial biology, carrying out anthropometric and genealogical research on Yenish individuals and families, who were labeled as "amoral psychopaths", "nymphomaniacs", or "irredeemable alcoholics". In his influential work *Psychiatrische Familiengeschichten* ("Psychiatric Family Histories"), published in 1919, the psychiatrist Josef Joerger thus came to describe "vagrancy, delinquency, immorality, feeblemindedness and madness, poverty" as hereditarily transmittable traits. However, Joerger also believed in the "environmental theory" of child development, according to which inherent hereditary flaws can be "corrected" by good racial hygiene, including placement in a "better" family or educational environment. The founder of the *Kinder der Landstrasse* operation and director of Pro Juventute until 1959, Alfred Siegfried, shared this belief in the redeeming power of education, as did other eugenicists. Where education failed to "improve" a Yenish child, sterilization and other measures (such as the refusal to give permission to marry to certain individuals under their legal guardianship) should prevent further degenerate offspring – a view which Siegfried promoted until well into the 1960s (Leimgruber et al. 1998: 60). In addition, Yenish were also placed in penal institutions when authorities argued that no other alternatives were available, or that there was a risk of escape (Leimgruber et al. 1998: 46).

Before taking up the directorship of *Kinder der Landstrasse* which he held for several decades, Alfred Siegfried had been a schoolteacher in Basel and had lost his post after being convicted a pedophile relationship with one of his young male students, a fact hushed up by the local authorities at the time. Siegfried's successor, Peter Döbeli, would later be removed from his post at *Pro Juventute* due to a similar conviction for sexual abuse of his charges, and replaced by Clara Reust (Huonker 1987: 244; Huonker and Ludi 2001: 45). Yenish victims of the child removals later reported that they had suffered sexual abuse by care personnel and by Siegfried himself.[9] More generally, the policy of systematic destruction of Yenish culture that the *Kinder der Landstrasse* operation entailed, has been described as a form of "genocide" (Capus 2006).

The legal basis for child removal practices was more often federal adoption and guardianship legislation rather than penal law. Penal dispositions could also

9   See Thomas Huonker's on-line archive www.thata.ch.

be drawn upon, however, by the cantons responsible for the local application of concrete measures, as well as by other institutions involved, such as *Pro Juventute* and the charity *Seraphische Liebeswerke*. Two articles of the Civil Code were especially important supports for the *Kinder der Landstrasse* operation. They defined the categories of individuals who should be put under legal tutelage as follows (Leimgruber et al. 1998: 44): "any adult who, due to mental illness or feeblemindedness, is incapable of managing his affairs, needs care and permanent help, or puts other persons in danger" (Art. 369CC) and "any adult who puts himself or his family at risk of indigence, in need of care and permanent help or puts other persons in danger, due to his financial extravagance, drunkenness, bad behaviour or bad management" (Art. 370CC).

These two legal articles of the civil code, together with others which regulated parental authority, allowed individuals who had not committed any legal offence to be placed under legal tutelage or in workhouses. Inherent "laziness", "bad behaviour" and lack of fixed abode defined them as a threat to public order. Children could be put under legal guardianship on the basis of Article 285CC, by removing them from parents "incapable or prohibited from exercising parental authority, or guilty of serious offences against authority or serious negligence"; and they could be removed from their families if "the father and mother do not fulfil their parental obligations" (Art. 283CC) or if "the child"s physical or intellectual development is threatened, or in the case of moral neglect" (Art. 284CC). When parental authority was withdrawn from a married couple (from unmarried parents with no legal parental rights anyway), a practice which, incidentally, was not restricted to Yenish families alone (see Ramsauer 2000), a child could be given over for adoption without the knowledge of its biological parents.

Despite the left to scope interpretation offered by the vagueness of the legal dispositions, Leimgruber et al. (1998: 49) note that several measures taken by the *Kinder der Landstrasse* clearly lacked a legal basis, and cases existed where children were removed from their parents in the absence of any previous legal decision. However, there is also a documentary evidence of examples of resistance. First, not all local authorities were equally enthusiastic participants in removal measures. Certain local authorities refused to cooperate with *Pro Juventute*, expressing their disagreement with the policies. *Pro Juventute* also complained that certain local police agents would "systematically forget" to deal with the Yenish individuals on their territory.[10] The canton of Chur, which had the largest traveler population, seems to have been most active in implementing the removal of Yenish children. More generally, the Swiss-German cantons and the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino tended to be more cooperative than local authorities in French-speaking Switzerland, where very few cases of child removal have been recorded. Second, parents sometimes exercised their right to legal appeals, at times with success. The

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10   Quoted in Leimgruber et al. (1998: 53).

large majority of victims, however, either did not have access to the necessary legal expertise, or lacked the financial means to do so.

4   Concluding remarks

Echoing Foucault's notion of a "history of the present", the aim of this article has not been primarily to provide a detailed historical analysis of Swiss eugenics, but, rather, to use current historiography on eugenics in order to question critically the modern Swiss nation-state. I am concerned with a wider question: how can we use eugenics as a way of thinking about the complexities of power relations between gender and the state in the Swiss context, and about their impact on the construction of the modern Swiss nation? In this light, there are two further points to make. First, we need to question the claim that Swiss national identity is based upon mutual tolerance and "respect for difference". Although this presentation is by no means inaccurate, I suggest that it overemphasises cohesion, leaving us with no conceptual tools to account for one possibility of sharply exclusionary practices, such as eugenic policy experiments, in such an integrative community. In other words, it gives us only half of the picture. As the historical experiments with eugenics suggests the truth is a lot messier and more ambivalent. The construction of the modern Swiss nation-state has been characterised by a struggle against difference as much as by the institutional accommodation of difference. In other words, in addition to political elements and ethnicity, gender and sexuality also constitute structuring dimensions of Swiss modernity.

A consideration of the Swiss experiments with eugenics, and the "gender regime" which has provided both the context and the outcome of this historical experience, consequently leads to an alternative account of the Swiss nation. While not denying the importance of political institutions in the building of a Swiss national identity, I argue that the focus on the institutionalised expression of religious or linguistic "difference" fails to take into account other important historical discourses and practices, concerned not with the respect for diversity, but with the small-scale eradication of some "differences": those deemed "degenerate" or "un-Swiss". As we have seen, eugenic "science" played an important role in this struggle against difference, not only as part of the symbolic construction of Swiss nationhood but also as the foundation of social policies which aimed at eradicating the weeds from the Swiss garden (Mottier 2000).

Recognizing the importance of the gender regime for the workings of the modern state is not to say, however, that the state exercises male power over its female citizens in any straightforward way. Women were often important agents in the implementation of eugenic measures, while men were sometimes victims. Clara Reust, director of *Pro Juventute* in the last decade of the *Kinder der Landstrasse*

operation, is a notorious example, but by no means an exception. Women were actively involved in the implementation of welfare measures more generally, although to a lesser extent than in other countries such as the UK (Ramsauer 2000: 104 ff.). Women's organisations such as the Zürich Women's Temperance Organisation,[11] founded on the initiative of Forel, and the Swiss Organisation of Abstinent Women,[12] founded by Hedwig Bleuler-Wasser, the wife of Eugen Bleuler, supported eugenic ideas and measures, and the magazine of the Swiss Women's Movement[13] enthused about Siegfried's success in sedentarising the Yenish in 1963 (Leimgruber et al. 1998 : 63). More generally, female social purity campaigners actively intervened in the public debates triggered by the introduction of the new Civil Code of 1907, often speaking out in support of racial hygienist issues (Gerodetti 2004).

It is important to also recognize that the Swiss state has not acted as a homogeneous actor in this arena. Overall, the eugenic mechanisms of the Swiss welfare state were characterised by a mix of interventions by the federal state, such as through *Pro Juventute* and federal legislation prohibiting marriage for the mentally ill; of local forms of interventions through legislation and administrative measures at the communal and cantonal level; and of para-state actors such as institutional psychiatry. Eugenicist "science" provided the ideological basis for the Swiss "Gardening State", concerned with eliminating the "weeds" from the national garden.[14] Reflecting the complexities of federalism, numerous para-state institutions such as schools, psychiatric clinics and hospitals operated in different and sometimes contradictory ways within the Swiss gender regime.[15]

Women's bodies have been central sites in the Swiss struggle against difference, but in complex ways. Women were particular targets of eugenic policies applied by the state as well as by institutions such as psychiatric clinics, hospitals and schools. While sterilisations constituted the most extreme forms of eugenic regulation of reproductive sexuality, these technologies of bio-power were completed by "preventive" educational policies. Following the campaigners' insistence on the necessity of a eugenicist sexual education and marriage advice, eugenics entered the education curriculum. Women were particular target here since they were seen as the primary reproductive agents. Reflecting the eugenicist focus on female bodies as reproducers of the nation, the sterilisation of "inferior" categories of the population was also a strongly gendered practice as the large majority of eugenic sterilisations were carried out on women. As we have seen, eugenic interventions were a means of policing female sexuality and respectable femininity more generally. Men were significantly less often submitted to eugenic castrations, and, when they were, eugenicists seemed as much preoccupied with the policing of "normal" masculinity through the eradi-

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11   *Zürcher Frauenverein fur Mässigkeit und Volkswohl.*
12   *Schweizerische Bund abstinenter Frauen.*
13   *Zentralblatt des Schweizerischen Frauenvereins.*
14   See also Mottier (2000: 2005).
15   Similar observations have been made in the Scandinavian context (Koch 2004).

cation of an "abnormal" male sexuality and of "perversion" as they were with male reproductive agency (see Huonker 2003 ; Imboden and Ritter 2005).

Interestingly, when we look at the ways in which gender and sexuality were intertwined in the eugenic context, a more complex picture of gender emerges itself. We started out by exploring the way in which the Swiss gender regime exercised power on men and women differently, but we end up having to differentiate between more than two genders: normal/masculine men, abnormal/"effeminate" men, normal/feminine women, "defective"/"sexual" women, etc. The examples of the *Kinder der Landstrasse* operation and more generally of the racialisation of the Yenish, as well as of the marriage ban on the mentally ill suggest, moreover, that gender was not the only relevant category here: some eugenic practices were strongly linked to racism and disability, while social class was a differentiating factor in the application of eugenic measures. Swiss eugenics consequently allows us not only to explore the Swiss gender regime, but also offers a good example of the intersection of gender, social class, race, and disability. To the extent that gender cross-cuts these other categorisations, the eugenic experience illustrates that women's bodies and female sexuality were constructed as seed-beds in the gardening efforts of the modern Swiss nation-state.

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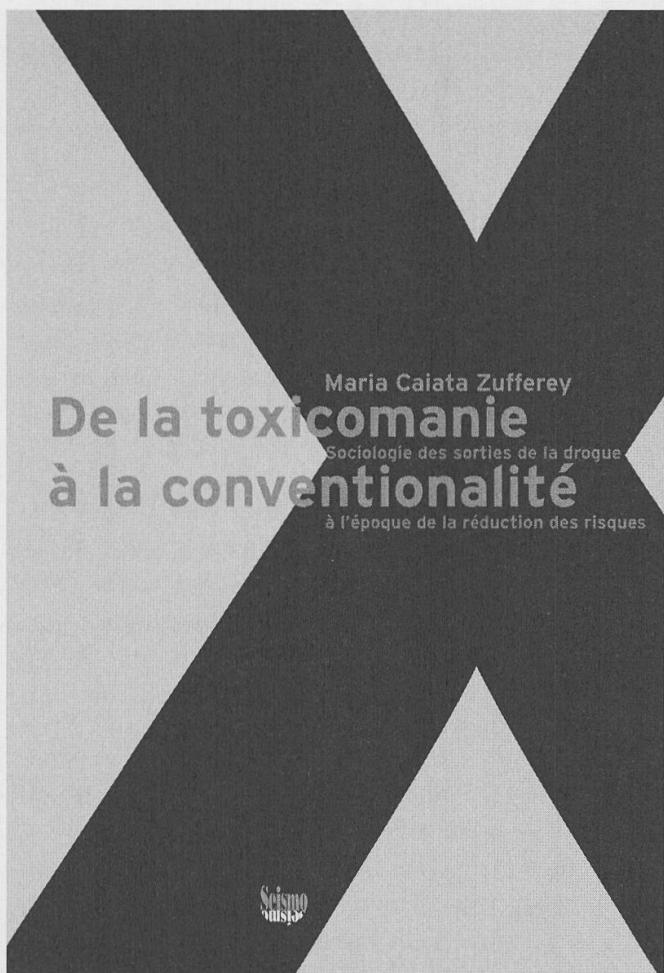
Maria Caiata Zufferey

De la toxicomanie à la conventionalité

Sociologie des sorties de la drogue à l'époque de la réduction des risques

Seismo

Que signifie sortir de la toxicomanie, quand la manière appropriée de se conduire à l'égard des drogues n'est plus si évidente ? C'est sur cette question, apparemment excessive et provocatrice, que repose ce travail. L'auteure part du présupposé selon lequel la frontière séparant la toxicodépendance de la non toxicodépendance est devenue ambiguë. Dans un contexte de réduction des risques, comme c'est aujourd'hui le cas en Suisse, l'abstinence n'est plus le seul type de rapport à la drogue socialement accepté : désormais, l'usage occasionnel et l'utilisation de produits de substitution constituent des formes admises d'éloignement de la pratique compulsive, voire encouragées par les politiques et les programmes concrets d'intervention. Dès lors, qu'est-ce que s'en sortir, quand on n'est plus obligé d'arrêter de consommer ? Et, plus généralement, que signifie se conduire de manière conforme à la norme, quand la norme se dilue ? Pour répondre à ces questions, Maria Caiata Zufferey a mené une recherche qualitative auprès d'une trentaine d'anciens toxicodépendants. Le résultat est une analyse approfondie des parcours d'affranchissement à travers la mobilisation d'un outil conceptuel original, apte à expliquer la diversification des trajectoires et l'uniformisation de leur signification sociale : l'action individuée.

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