Switzerland: Contentious Citizenship Attribution in a Federal State

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Abstract: Whereas in most countries citizenship attribution is regulated at the central level of the state, in Switzerland each municipality is accorded the right to decide who can become a Swiss citizen. As the regulations at the national level are very sparse, even villages of as few as 400 inhabitants are empowered to establish formal procedures and criteria by which its alien residents are to be naturalized. Consequentially, naturalization policies and rejection rates vary significantly from one municipality to another. The goal of this paper is to explore naturalization processes from a comparative perspective and to explain why some municipalities pursue more restrictive citizenship policies than others.

The Swiss case provides a unique opportunity for studying how membership criteria are established in negotiation processes between local politicians, and for understanding how such processes are influenced by municipal actors' varying perspectives on citizenship. An innovative theoretical framework, integrating Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' and 'capital', combines symbolic and material aspects of naturalization to explain differences between municipalities. The paper uses data collected in 14 case studies and 180 semi-structured interviews with local politicians.

Keywords: Citizenship, Naturalization, Social Network Analysis, Bourdieu, Switzerland

Local citizenship politics

Switzerland likely has the most particular naturalization system in the world. While citizenship attribution is regulated at the central level of the state in most countries, in Switzerland each municipality is accorded the right to decide who can become a Swiss citizen. Since regulations at the national level are very sparse, villages of as few as 400 inhabitants are empowered to decide upon the formal procedure and criteria by which alien residents are to be naturalized. Consequentially, naturalization policies and rejection rates vary substantially from one municipality to another. My aim is to explain why some municipalities pursue more restrictive naturalization policies than others, and to demonstrate how local political struggles lead to specific local understandings of citizenship—helping me to apprehend these diverging policies. To understand these struggles we have to account for both symbolic and material aspects of citizenship. We have to know, first, the differing understandings of citizenship that are pitted against each other and, second, the power structures that lend some attitudes and positions more influence than others.

In a preliminary study, data from more than 200 municipalities allowed us to pave the way for a more thorough investigation (XY and XY 2004; XY 2007; 2008). Looking at such a large group of municipalities does not enable us to study local citizenship politics in detail, but it permits us to sort out variables that have no explanatory power, and to specify more clearly what must be explained. We were able to demonstrate that socio-economic and socio-structural factors have no influence upon the type of naturalization policy that is pursued in a municipality. A high unemployment rate, a large ratio of foreigners, or a growing number of applicants from Muslim countries—nowadays the largest immigration group in Switzerland—seem not to preoccupy the people who decide how many and which alien residents become Swiss citizens. Rather, cultural and political factors are decisive; rejection rates increase when the local population has a restrictive understanding of citizenship, when the Swiss People's Party (SVP)—a major right-wing populist party—is influential in local politics, and/or when

decisions are taken at closed ballot by the local population. In accordance with my main hypothesis, it is clear that it is how people think about citizenship, and the ways in which political actors influence the naturalization procedures, that decide which policy will be pursued.

Studies on regional and local citizenship politics in other countries have come to similar conclusions. In doing so, these works have not only helped me to answer the questions of my own research; they have made it clear that the Swiss case is not so exceptional as it first appears. These studies corroborate the argument that citizenship can take different forms and meanings within any nation-state. In dealing with the implementation of naturalization laws, the case that probably comes closest to reflecting the Swiss system is found in Germany, where citizenship laws are regulated at the national level but executed by the Länder (subnational states). Various studies have shown that naturalization rates and citizenship politics differ significantly between the Länder (Hagedorn 2001; Dornis 2001; Hailbronner 2006).

In other countries, divergent practices of citizenship can be observed, too. Cinar and Waldrauch (2006) present diverging implementation policies and integration requirements at the regional level in Austria. North (1987) examined the administrative structure of the American naturalization program, and came to the conclusion that the formal procedures and the approaches of the examiners vary a great deal among district offices. Differing implementations of the naturalization laws can even be observed in highly centralized states such as France. Weil (2004: 377-387) observed situations that clearly contradict the idea of the voluntaristic citizenship model, with which France is often associated. In some regional offices, candidates are even manifestly dissuaded from applying for French citizenship. While Costa-Lascoux (1996: 149) reports that the assimilation of candidates is tested very differently from one regional office to the other, Hagedorn (2001: 43-44) found that candidates are often refused for lack of assimilation. Since the degree of assimilation is exclusively judged by regional officers, arbitrary decisions cannot be excluded.

In most of these studies, the varying application of national citizenship laws is explained by the political orientation of the regional governments, and the attitudes of the authorities involved in the decision-making process. These ideas serve as a strong starting-out point for finding explanations for diverging citizenship politics, and for further elaborating and testing my arguments. The fact that different citizenship policies are pursued within a country suggests that these policies cannot simply be explained by national citizenship models. Rather, we must explore the *practice* of citizenship politics, i.e. how these models are applied and how this implementation depends on local political constellations. By adopting such an approach, we are in the position to go beyond existing explanation schemes and to account for the contentious and political nature of citizenship politics—showing how local politicians imagine their nation, how they struggle over their individual perceptions of Swiss citizenship, and how a dominant understanding of citizenship emerges within a municipality. To better understand these struggles and to analytically grasp them I will introduce Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' and 'capital,' and operationalize them by means of instruments borrowed from social network analysis and community power studies.

Before I put forth my arguments I must first specify what I am going to explain, and also give an overview of what the naturalization procedure looks like in Switzerland. To test my arguments I will then draw on data collected in 14 case studies and 180 semi-structured interviews with local politicians. By doing so, I am in the unique position to adopt a comparative approach for our study of citizenship attribution. Such an approach, which has hardly been adopted so far in this field, will not only give me the opportunity to study diverging applications of citizenship models at the sub-national level. Given the large competencies at the local level, it will allow me to treat Swiss municipalities as theoretical laboratories, in which I may test new analytical instruments for the comparative study of national citizenship politics.

Naturalization processes in Swiss municipalities

A Swiss is not only a citizen of his or her country, but also of a canton (sub-national state) and of a municipality. Accordingly, a foreign resident applying for citizenship gets naturalized at all threes levels. The singularity of local citizenship is partly due to the large degree of municipal autonomy and a relic of times when each town and village was responsible for taking care of its poor, and when only citizens (that is to say, not *all* inhabitants) of a municipality were allowed to participate in local politics. It was therefore in the interest of every municipality to control access to local citizenship and to send beggars and other people in need back to their home-municipalities.

While the municipalities are no longer responsible for poor relief, they have remained the most important level for ordinary naturalizations.[1] The Swiss Confederation only regulates the granting of citizenship through descent, marriage, and adoption. Only in recent years, after some discriminatory decisions against candidates from Muslim countries have occurred, have some political actors begun to criticize the current system and demand that the decision-making responsibility be delegated to the cantons, the national level, or at least to the municipal administrative body. At the same time, the Swiss Federal Court declared in 2003 that procedures involving decisions at closed ballot by the entire population violate the Swiss constitution. In opposition, various initiatives have been launched in the last two years that would have municipalities retain the power to decide upon the procedures and criteria by which foreigners are naturalized. Therefore, the future of the Swiss naturalization system remains open.

While the sequence of naturalization decision-making varies from canton to canton—the three political levels making their decisions in different orders in different regions—it is clear that the procedure at the local level consistently constitutes the crucial part of the process. Whereas the decisions of the Confederation and the cantons constitute formal and administrative procedures on the basis of very few but clearly specified criteria, the municipalities make mainly political decisions. The federal laws on citizenship stipulate merely that only

those foreign residents who have lived in Switzerland for at least twelve years, who respect the legal order, who do not compromise the interior and exterior safety of the country, and who are integrated and familiar with Swiss habits and customs can be naturalized. The first three criteria are quite clear, easy to verify, and are always checked by the federal administration. As for the questions of integration and familiarity, matters are much more complicated. Not only do these constitute vague requirements, but they also are judged exclusively by local actors. The candidates often have to pass a kind of exam or interview evaluation to verify that they are familiar enough with the Swiss political system, Swiss history, and the language of their particular region. The local administration and decision makers decide whether or not, and to what extent, candidates must pass such tests or interrogations.

Which local actors are involved in these decision-making processes? In most cases, the local administration is in contact with the applicants during the entire naturalization procedure. They inform applicants about the formal aspects of the process and check whether certain criteria for naturalization have been fulfilled. Often, the local administration also discuss with candidates whether they have any chance of getting a Swiss passport—making recommendations to political bodies involved in the process. In almost all municipalities, a naturalization commission composed of local politicians discusses in detail the dossiers of applicants, and makes recommendations to those who are charged with handing down the final decisions. Sometimes dossiers are circulated several times between the various collective bodies involved in the decision-making processes. It might also happen that the local parliament or the executive body makes recommendations before the final decisions are made. Final decisions are made by the entire population in some municipalities, either by ballot or during a municipal assembly. In other municipalities, it is the local parliament or the executive body that decides who can become a Swiss citizen.

It appears that various actors are involved in municipal naturalizations, and that the evaluation of the candidates' dossiers occurs at different stages in different localities. Natu-

ralizations can therefore be compared to decision-making processes in other political fields where political actors have to negotiate and come to an agreement on the matter of which policies should be pursued. Formal regulations at the local level are rare and when they exist, the criteria that must be fulfilled are formulated in a very general way. Therefore, decisions depend more upon municipal politicians' interpretations of existing regulations, and upon how successful they are in imposing their individual understandings of citizenship. As a consequence, the procedures are often not very transparent, and applicants tend not to know why they have been rejected.

Culture and Power: The practice of citizenship

For these reasons, we cannot rely on a national citizenship model to explain naturalization politics in Switzerland; we must account for the practice of citizenship at the local level. Tilly's (1999: 252-253) definition of citizenship is useful to my analysis of this phenomenon. He defines citizenship as a contract involving transactions that centre on the topics of mutual rights and obligations. The results of these transactions draw visible lines between insiders and outsiders. Such a contract is never completely specified. Rather, it can vary in range, be modified by practice, be dependent on unstated assumptions about context, and/or be constrained by collective memory.

What stands out in Tilly's definition is the contractual nature of citizenship, which underscores the notion that citizenship is not a mere aggregate of persons who happen to belong legally to a state. Indeed, nation-states are not simply territorial organizations; rather, they are *membership organizations* or *associations of citizenship* in which all citizens are equal and have the same rights through their direct relations with the state (see Brubaker 1992). As Tilly emphasizes, such a contract depends on *unstated assumptions about context* and is *constrained by collective memory*. According to this view, it is ideologies and ideas about citizenship and nationality that influence the resolution of issues related to immigrants. Brubaker's

(1992) comparison of citizenship politics in Germany and France is probably the most prominent study adopting this approach.

While ideological factors are important in deciding how foreigners are naturalized, we must also recall the contentious and political nature of citizenship—understanding that the outcome of a specific naturalization policy is the result of ongoing political struggles, over the questions of who we are and who belongs to us. As Tilly (1999: 252-253) emphasizes, citizenship contracts are *never completely specified*, but are rather *modified by practice*. Thus, to understand naturalization processes and to grasp their variations in range, we must concern ourselves with more than formal rules. We must also (and even more importantly) account for the behaviours of political actors, analyzing the ways in which they put citizenship models and naturalization laws in practice.

Whether we are dealing with citizenship models, or with conceptualizations of national self-understanding, it is important to note that research relying solely on macro-sociological data does not allow for a full understanding of these social phenomena. Indeed, it is only by accounting for agency that we may properly understand the processes and resultant variations that are the objects of our analysis. As Hobsbawm (1990: 10) has put it, '[nations are] dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people.'

Following the citizenship-as-practice idea does not mean disregarding the pitfalls of individualistic or psychologistic approaches, of course. Tilly (1999: 253) seems to be quite clear on that point, when he reminds us that the practice of citizenship is *constrained by collective memory*. This implies that we should not take what people do in their daily lives for granted and must account for the wider patterns of social life, since what people do is located in a social space and shaped by social relations. Just as we would be loath to consider nations as stable homogeneous entities, we should not assume that individuals are completely free to

decide which aspects are crucial for national citizenship. According to Bourdieu's famous words, one can avoid having to choose between objectivism and subjectivism by accounting for how dominant interpretations emerge out of different representations of the social world in ongoing processes. Similarly, Wimmer (2002) argues that culture should be defined as an open process of negotiating meaning, which leads to temporal cultural compromises. Following this line of thought, it becomes clear that by 'practice' I do not simply refer to the idea that municipalities implement national regulations in different ways, as if they were homogeneous cultural and political entities. Rather, I understand the importance of observing local political struggles, paying careful attention to questions of which procedures and criteria are most appropriate and relevant.

Such struggles consist of both symbolic (i.e., related to individual understandings of citizenship) and material aspects (power structures that give some ideas more weight). To combine discursive elements and power structures I refer to Bourdieu's 'field-approach', which accounts for both the symbolic and material aspects of interactions (Bourdieu 1977; 1990; see also Swartz 1997).[2] A nation—or in my case a municipality—is such a field in which people argue, in a socially constituted space, their opinions on what constitute cultural boundaries (cf. Spillman and Faeges 2005: 435). Such a definition does not predefine which categories lie at the basis of a nation; to the contrary, it leaves open the questions of which actors will participate in the processes of labelling the nation and which arguments will be mobilized. It merely expounds that people incessantly struggle in political processes over the questions of who they are and whom they exclude, noting that the arguments of the more influential actors prevail.

Since fields are always power arenas, as Bourdieu notes, we must account for the positions of the actors in the field in order to understand which ideas are more influential than others. Following the idea of ongoing interactions in a social space, we must emphasize the relational nature of power, which can best be captured by Bourdieu's notion of political capi-

tal (Bourdieu 1996; see also Kauppi 2003). The power, or the political capital, of agents or groups that hold convictions, depends on their social and symbolic capital. Social capital stands for the relationships or the social networks of agents and the resources that depend on specific social affiliations. Symbolic capital can be thought of as the perceived and legitimized form of any capital (i.e., prestige and legitimacy). Political capital is mostly symbolic capital, since only legitimated and respected politicians can convince others of their interpretations of the social world. However, this is also social capital insofar as the power of actors depends on their positions and relationships with other political actors.

This field approach allows me, first, to combine the arenas of culture and structure, and second, to recognize the interpretative character of institutional life that is visible in practice and in social arenas of power relations. Thus, to understand diverging naturalization politics we must account for the actual politics of citizenship, i.e., the ways in which ideas about the question of who might be admitted are pitted against each other within specific power fields. Accordingly, we must consider not only the prevailing understandings of citizenship, but also the local power structures that show us which ideas are more influential. In other words, I may explain more variance with both factors together than with ideology alone. Concurrently, and in accordance with the results from the large-N analysis, I assume that socio-economic and socio-structural factors have no impact (see Helbling and Kriesi 2004; Helbling 2008).

In the following sections, I will discuss how I operationalized my theoretical concepts and how I analysed local citizenship struggles. I will measure the opinions of the involved actors towards naturalization criteria as an inquiry into their understanding of citizenship. Their political capital will be operationalized by the reputation (prestige and legitimacy) they have in local politics. Finally, the idea of structural equivalence will help me to sketch the topography of the local naturalization fields. To begin this undertaking, however, I must first specify which data I will use, and how I will select the municipalities.

Case selection and data

As I have stated, our preliminary large-N analysis reveals that three cultural and political factors are good predictors of the naturalization policy that is pursued in a municipality. On the basis of these results, I have selected 14 municipalities, in which I have executed detailed case studies. I have selected the municipalities in a way intended to guarantee a broad variety of cases, and to ensure that they are representative for the entire population of cases (King et al. 1994: 139-146; Collier et al. 2004: 94-95). For a small-N analysis, random selection is unwise, as it would run the risk of missing typical cases and/or ending up with minor or no variation for my dependent variable. Thus, I selected the cases for both the dependent and the explanatory variables. Such a procedure involves some dangers, since it is easy to achieve biased results inadvertently. As King et al. (1994: 142) note, the most egregious error would be to select cases in which dependent and independent variables vary together in ways that are consistent with the hypotheses to be tested. To avoid this danger, I applied a 'mixed-selection procedure', by which the cases are selected in two steps (King et al. 1994: 143-144).

First, I selected municipalities on the basis of the variation of the three variables that had a significant impact on the rejection rate in our large-N analysis. I ascertained whether the municipalities of our sample demonstrated a restrictive or a generous understanding of citizenship, whether or not the Swiss People's Party (SVP) was influential in local politics, and whether collective decisions were effected by the population by ballot, by municipal assembly, or by elected politicians (a parliament or an executive body). I then regrouped all cases of the sample according to these three characteristics. For some groups, I disposed of none or only one case. In a second step, one municipality with a relatively high, and one with a relatively low, rejection rate was selected from each of these groups. I thus ended up with 14 municipalities that most displayed the various aspects of naturalization politics that turned out to

be of importance in our large-N analysis. At the same time, I made sure that the various dependant and independent variables do not vary together.

In Table 1 I present some characteristics of the 14 municipalities in ascending order of their rejection rates (the dependant variable). Since we promised our interviewees complete anonymity, and as I am not interested in naturalization politics of specific municipalities but seek instead to make some general statements about local citizenship politics, I decided not to give the names of the cases. The rejection rates had already been collected in our large-N analysis and constitute the ratio between the rejected and the submitted applications. Contrary to the naturalization rates, this indicator does not depend on the demand side (i.e. the reasons why foreigners apply for Swiss citizenship). Rather, it completely reflects the supply side— that is to say, the local naturalization policy. As we see, local naturalization policies vary quite a lot: the rejection rates range from zero to 47 per cent.

To create a clearer picture of the cases I investigate, I have listed a general description of the municipalities and their respective populations in Table 1. The generation of the indicator for the dominant understanding of citizenship (UC)—my main independent variable—will be explained below. To ensure that the cases were representative, I compared the mean values with the averages of all Swiss municipalities. Note that the size of our sample cases is significantly higher than the Swiss average. We already were compelled to exclude the very small cases for the sake of the large-N analysis, as only very few applications have been submitted in the period of investigation in these municipalities. To make valid statements, I had to make sure that high rejection rates were caused by a relatively high number of rejected applications. In Table 1 I also included three indicators that tell us something about the socio-economic and socio-structural characteristics of my cases, and that I will use as control variables for the analyses below. It is important to note that the ratio of foreigners living in a municipality, the ratio of candidates from Muslim countries applying for Swiss citizenship, and the local unemployment rates roughly correspond to the Swiss average. Because of this, we can conclude

that the sample is representative for Swiss municipalities—with the caveat that we cannot make any statements about citizenship politics in very small municipalities.

-- Table 1 about here --

In the 14 municipalities, we first analyzed various documents and conducted expert-interviews with representatives of the local administration, in order to better understand the local naturalization processes and especially the role, influence, and attitudes of the local actors. Once this was finished, interviews were conducted with all actors involved in the decision-making processes—mostly with the members of the local executive body, several members of the municipal parliament and the naturalization commission, representatives of the local administration, and representatives of political parties. We carried out face-to-face interviews with the selected 180 actors using standardized questionnaires, between September 2004 and February 2005. The data collected in these interviews helped me to measure the main theoretical concepts. To operationalize their understanding of citizenship, we asked questions about their attitudes towards specific naturalization criteria. To measure the power of an actor and his or her positions in the naturalization fields, we asked questions about the reputations of and their contacts to other actors.

Understanding of citizenship and local power structures: operationalization

First, it was necessary to establish an indicator, for the purpose of describing the understandings of citizenship we find within the 14 municipalities. Given the fact that virtually no formal or written regulations exist at the local level, we relied exclusively on the attitudes of local decision makers on naturalization criteria. We therefore chose criteria that often come up in debates about naturalization in Switzerland, to generate an indicator for the understanding of citizenship. Attitudes towards the following eleven criteria were collected: required degree of

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integration or assimilation; required language knowledge; required knowledge of Swiss history and the Swiss political system; the right for Muslim women to wear a headscarf in public; allowance of dual citizenship; required membership in local associations; unemployment as an obstacle to naturalization; social security dependence as an obstacle to naturalization; disability insurance as an obstacle to naturalization; facilitated naturalization for the second generation of immigrants; facilitated naturalization for the third generation of immigrants.

For each of these questions, each interviewee was asked to evaluate how important it would be for a candidate for naturalization to fulfil the respective criteria. A politician who required many criteria to be fulfilled demonstrated a restrictive understanding of citizenship, and a politician who required fewer criteria to be fulfilled evidenced a more open, or 'generous' understanding of citizenship. From the information we complied regarding individuals' attitudes on these criteria, I generated an indicator that varies between '0' (generous) and '1' (restrictive) and tells us how each actor thinks about citizenship, and how restrictive or generous each actor's national self-understanding is.

Needless to say, oppositional attitudes on naturalization politics can be found in each municipality. How do we know then which ones prevail, when it comes to making decisions on naturalization applications? To get a clearer picture of the prevailing attitudes, it is necessary to ascertain which actors most influence the decision-making processes. Instruments borrowed from social network analysis and community power studies constitute useful means to identify the influential actors, and thus to elucidate the dominant understandings of citizenship (XY et al. 2005). One approach in community power studies that comes closest to our conceptualization of powerful actors through Bourdieu's concept of political capital is the *reputational approach* (Hunter 1953). This approach enables researchers to determine the local elite based on local insiders' assessments of political, economic, and social actors. The perceptions of these insiders constitute the main source of information. The strength of this approach is rooted in the concept that power bases can be both direct and indirect, and can

translate into interpersonal influence *only* if they are perceived as influential.

This indicator was constructed using data collected in our face-to-face interviews. In this process, we did not simply interview a certain number of insiders. Rather, we asked all interviewees to indicate all actors whom they thought held some influence in the naturalization politics of the respective municipalities from a comprehensive list. Then they were asked to indicate the three most important actors and out of these three, the one they considered to be the most influential. For the index, I summed up the number of times an actor was mentioned as being influential. Persons among the three most influential actors received an additional point, and those who were mentioned as the most important actors received two additional points. This indicator was then standardized so that the most important actor in the respective municipalities received a value of 100.

Social network analysis allows us to do more than to merely account for relationships between actors; it provides us with instruments for the regrouping of individual actors, and for defining their relative positions within a group. Such an approach is especially important for Bourdieu, whose relational approach is not confined to concrete interactions, but concentrates on broader latent structures that better reflect the entire field under investigation (Mützel 2006). A useful instrument for such an approach is block-modelling (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 394-424). A block is a group within an adjacency matrix that displays structurally equivalent actors. Recall that by 'structural equivalence' we mean that actors are substitutable. In my case, such actors have the same patterns of relationships with third persons. By identifying structurally equivalent actors, all the contacts of all the actors—and hence their relative positions in the network—are accounted for. Given the fact that these actors are connected to exactly the same nodes, they are identical with respect to all structural variables and indicators of centrality (Borgatti and Everett 1992: 7). This implies a certain cohesion or proximity between structurally equivalent actors, since they are found in the same part of the network (Borgatti and Everett 1992: 9). Moreover, structurally equivalent persons tend to

have similar attitudes, because they interact with the same kind of persons (Burt 1978: 199). For the purposes of my study, information on the ties between actors was collected in our face-to-face interviews. Each interviewee had to indicate with whom he or she had been in regular contact to discuss matters of local naturalization politics.

To illustrate what I have done, Tables 2A and 2B list the block-models of two municipalities: one with a restrictive naturalization policy and a relatively high rejection rate (24 per cent) (Table 2A), and another with a generous naturalization policy and no rejections between 1990 and 2002 (Table 2B). By means of the CONCOR method, I have divided the actors of each municipality into four blocks.[3] For each block, I have listed the party affiliations of its members, and calculated the indicators for degree of influence and the understanding of citizenship by averaging the values of the individual actors of the respective blocks. The blocks within each municipality are listed in descending order of their degree of influence.

-- Tables 2A and 2B about here --

If my hypotheses are correct, the influential blocks in municipalities with a high rejection rate should feature high values for the understanding of citizenship. Inversely, municipalities with few rejections should be dominated by groups with a markedly more liberal understanding of what it means to become Swiss. Moreover, actors with opinions that diverge strongly from the general naturalization policy should be found in the third and fourth blocks, which typically exert little influence. As Table 2A reveals, in the municipality with a restrictive naturalization policy, the most influential block is composed of politicians with a rather restrictive understanding of citizenship. In block 4, there are three politicians who possess even more restrictive positions towards naturalization candidates. They are members of right-wing and center parties. One of them is even member of the Swiss Democrats (SD), a party that is situated right of the Swiss People's Party (SVP). These three politicians are rather isolated, and have

no major influence on the local naturalization policy. Their positions seem to be too radical. This is also reflected in the fact that this municipality rejects a relatively high number of candidates, although it is not among those municipalities with rejection rates between 40 and 50 per cent.

In the example of a 'generous' municipality in Table 2B, we see that the three most influential actors—two members of the Social Democrats (SP) and one representative of the municipal administration—have a very generous and open understanding of citizenship. Most of the representatives of the Liberal Party (FDP) are also relatively influential, although their positions regarding applicants for naturalization are only slightly more restrictive than those of their left-wing colleagues. Even the only representative of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) in block 4 has a very generous attitude.

Analysis and results

Having assembled and parsed this data, we are now prepared to systematically study the impact of power structures, and of actors' understandings of citizenship, on the outcome of related naturalization decisions. It should be noted that I argue that analyzing the related power structures gives us a clearer picture of local naturalization politics than we would receive from accounting for the understanding of citizenship alone. I therefore hypothesize that the average understanding of citizenship (UC) among the most influential actors helps us predict the rejection rates better than the average attitudes of all actors involved in the decision-making processes. By means of regression analyses, I have compared the impacts of the average values of the most powerful blocks with the average attitudes of all actors (see Table 3, for the dominant UC of all cases see Table 1).

Having few cases does not present a statistical problem as far as the basic assumptions of the classical normal linear regression model are concerned (see Gujarati 2003: ch.10; Goldberger 1991: 248-250). It is decidedly important that the number of observations is

greater than the number of regressors, and that there is sufficient variability in the values taken by the regressors—as is the case for my data (see Table 1). Further potential problems lurk in the facts that that small-N regression analyses lead to big standard errors, and that individual cases can easily distort general results. Since the effects of the independent variables are highly uncertain when we have only a limited number of cases, a large standard error ensures that we do not jump to conclusions, since we need much more data to reap significant results (Goldberger 1991: 248-250). Thus, if the t-values are low, we might too quickly accept the null hypothesis. Conversely, if the number of observations is small and we still obtain statistically significant results (even if they are significant at a low level), we can be sure that we have confirmed our hypotheses. The impact of individual cases is a more serious problem. As I have shown, however, I have carefully selected a representative sample of cases (see Table 1). Moreover, I am in the position to compare my results with alternative analyses. As we shall see, the results from the 14 case studies confirm to a large extent the findings of our large-N and qualitative analyses (see XY and XY 2004: 50-51; XY 2007; 2008). Thus, we can be sure that the results presented below are not distorted by individual cases.

In Table 3, the impacts of the general (all actors) and the dominant local understandings of citizenship (the most influential block) are compared (see Models 1 and 2). An observer immediately sees that accounting for the power structures predicts the outcomes of citizenship policies more accurately. While the coefficient of the second indicator is highly significant, the first one is significant only at a relatively low level. Moreover, the weighted UC explains the variance of rejection rates much better. In Models 3 and 4 I control for socio-economic and socio-structural factors—the employment rate, the ratio of foreigners living in a municipality and the ratio of applicants from Muslim countries. It appears that the influence of the general understanding of citizenship decreases and is no longer significant. At the same time, the coefficient of the dominant indicator remains stable and is still significant. Compar-

ing Models 3 and 4 affirms the notion that more variance is explained when information about the influence structure is included.

Furthermore, we observe that the unemployment rate and the number of Muslim candidates have no significant impact on the rejection rates. The second aspect is particularly interesting in light of the growing number of migrants and applicants from Turkey and the countries of the former Yugoslavia. As for the ratio of foreign residents living in a municipality, the results are ambiguous. Contrary to the results we obtained from our large-N analysis, the negative sign seems to indicate that fewer candidates are rejected in municipalities with a large foreign population.

-- Table 3 about here --

Conclusion: From the 'laboratory' to the real world politics of naturalization

As I emphasized in the introduction of this paper, my intention has not been to merely elucidate the functioning of the convoluted Swiss naturalization system. Just as importantly, I have aimed to take advantage of the unique opportunities provided by the Swiss system— approaching citizenship politics from new directions, and striving to reflect upon existing analytical instruments. My object of study not only enabled me to demonstrate that citizenship can take different forms and meanings within a nation-state. It also allowed me to go beyond formal citizenship regulations, looking closely at the moments in which naturalization laws are interpreted and put into practice. Instead of simply surveying formal regulations, we talked to the people who make the final decisions on naturalization applications, and tried to detect their national self-understanding, and to understand which naturalization criteria they most favoured. By tracing the local power structures, I sought to synthesize a picture of the actual politics of citizenship, and to find out which attitudes are dominant within a given municipality. In that regard, Switzerland did indeed provide a useful 'laboratory' for studying

decision-making processes, struggles over national boundaries, and the practice of citizenship in clearly delimited fields.

And while our analyses cannot be transferred directly to the study of national naturalization regimes, I am convinced that the general ideas of this study could be very useful for the analysis of national citizenship politics. Studying the actual politics of citizenship—i.e. understandings of citizenship and degrees of influence of relevant political actors—will most likely relate a clearer picture of what happens when foreigners are naturalized, than one obtained from simply accounting for formal regulations or ideal-typical citizenship models (which, it should be noted, rarely align with real world politics). By contrast, of course, we would be less interested in positions and power of individual actors than in those of collective actors. However, measuring attitudes by accounting for positions towards concrete naturalization criteria is feasible at both levels. Applying the instruments I have borrowed from community power studies and social network analysis is also possible at the national level. Considering a nation as a political field, in which people confront their opinions on what constitutes the cultural boundaries in a socially constituted space, would help us understand why citizenship politics changes over time.

Finally, it could be very stimulating to compare a relatively large number of cases at the national level. As Howard (2006: 443) rightly observes, most studies on citizenship politics focus on either single case studies, or a small number of comparative case studies. Following the lead of the comparison of 14 municipalities, genuine cross-national work would be very fruitful for testing and expanding existing theories, and for achieving a more systematic understanding of how citizenship works and how countries adopt specific naturalization politics. For example, aggregating understandings of citizenship as I have done would enable us to generate an indicator that allows for the placement of countries along a scale from very restrictive to very generous. By doing so, we would be in a position to account for more sensi-

tive cross-national differences, and go beyond the rather crude dichotomization of ethnic and civic citizenship models.

Notes

1. This merely implies that the most important political decisions are effected at the local level. It does not mean that, of all three citizenships, the local one is the most important. On the contrary, once a person is naturalized, he or she receives only a Swiss passport; virtually all citizenship rights are related to the Swiss nationality. As for the emotional dimension of citizenship, there is likely still a large minority that considers itself first and foremost as citizens of a municipality.

2. Note that I use only Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital in order to combine ideological and material aspects of citizenship politics and to grasp the municipal naturalization spaces in this paper. Contrary to XY (2008) I do not have the space here to fully develop and apply Bourdieu's political sociology and the idea of the logic of practice.

3. The CONCOR approach (CONvergence of iterated CORrelation) was applied for the analysis of the local networks and the structural equivalence of the individual actors (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 376-381). Similar to hierarchical cluster analysis, this analytical instrument permits us to regroup actors with similar characteristics and to analyze the structure of the naturalization field. CONCOR begins by correlating each pair of actors. Each row of this actor-by-actor correlation matrix is then extracted and correlated with each other row. Through repeated correlations, groups of actors are divided into two subgroups consisting of actors that are as similar as possible. This operation can be repeated, whereby the regrouped actors are again divided into two groups. I have divided each municipality into four blocks for practical reasons. Regrouping all actors into just two groups would not have allowed me a very differentiated analysis. Running the regrouping three times, I would have ended up with eight blocks, most of them consisting of one or two actors only. For the analysis of the net-

work data, I used the program Ucinet 6.59 (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 1999).

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Table 1. Description of the 14 case studies

Cases	Rejection Rates	Dominant UC	Kind of municipality	Inhabitants	Ratio of foreigners	Ratio of Muslim candidates	Unemployment rates
1	0	0.16	Small industrial and commuter town	10'803	17	0	1.8
2	1	0.47	Small town	10'776	26	0	2.7
3	1	0.37	Agglomeration and commuter town	10'260	28	49	2.8
4	1.7	0.42	Agglomeration and industrial town	21'743	40	59	4.5
5	4.5	0.12	Industrial town	37'361	27	30	4.5
6	11	0.47	Industrial and agglomeration town	13'250	43	0	4.4
7	11	0.38	Commuter and industrial town	8'240	23	52	2.2
8	13	0.57	Rural and commuter village	8'421	18	39	1.8
9	15	0.27	Large town	31'566	31	11	4.1
10	22	0.40	Small industrial town	14'284	21	63	2.5
11	24	0.49	Industrial town	27'439	29	45	3.2
12	26	0.50	Agglomeration and commuter town	14'103	19	41	1.5
13	40	0.43	Rural and commuter village	1'444	9	47	1.6
14	47	0.59	Rural village	12'025	17	72	0.7
	Sample average			15'837	25	36	2.7
	Swiss average			2'100	21	36	2.5

Notes: 'Dominant UC' lists the values for the dominant understanding of citizenship within a municipality whose effect will be tested in Table 3. The rejection rates and the ratio of Muslim candidates are mean values for the period 1990 – 2002 (our period of investigation of our large-N analysis). The other information date from 2002. The ratios of foreigners and Muslim candidates are rounded up.

Sources: Federal Statistical Office (unemployment rates, Swiss average of foreigners), Dataset 'Survey of municipal secretaries 1988, 1994 and 1998' by Andreas Ladner ('kind of municipality'), Ladner (1991: 47) (Swiss average of inhabitants) and our own survey (all other data).

Table 2A. Political structure in a municipality with a restrictive naturalization policy

Blocks	N	Political parties	Influence	UC
1	5	3 SVP, Grüne, FDP	44	0.49
2	3	2 FDP, CVP	22	0.36
3	6	2 FDP, 2SP, SVP, CVP	12	0.31
4	3	SVP, SD, FDP	7	0.60

Table 2B. Political structure in a municipality with a generous naturalization policy

Blocks	N	Political parties	Influence	UC
1	3	2 SP, Admin.	51	0.16
2	5	4 FDP, Admin.	45	0.22
3	3	EVP, SVP, FDP	7	0.32
4	1	SVP	0	0.19

Abbreviations: Understanding of citizenship (UC), Liberal Party (FDP), Christian Democrats (CVP), Social Democrats (SP), Swiss People's Party (SVP), Green Party (Grüne), Evangelical People's Party (EVP), the Swiss Democrats (SD), person in charge of naturalizations at the local administration (Admin.).
Scales of indicators: 'Influence' varies between '0' (no influence) and '100' (very influential). 'Understanding of citizenship' varies between '0' (generous) and '1' (restrictive).

Table 3. Rejection rates: Non-standardized regression coefficients, standard error in brackets

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
General understanding of citizenship	0.71*		0.51	
	(0.35)		(0.42)	
Dominant understanding of citizenship		0.60**		0.60*
		(0.26)		(0.29)
Unemployment rate			0.08	0.12
			(0.13)	(0.11)
Ratio of foreign residents			-0.84	-1.06*
			(0.52)	(0.48)
Ratio of Muslim candidates			0.23	0.21
			(0.20)	(0.17)
Constant	-11.17	-8.64	5.40	4.46
	(13.69)	(10.85)	(19.86)	(14.80)
R^2 (adj.)	0.19	0.26	0.29	0.44
N	14	14	14	14

Notes: Level of significance: * $p<0.1$, ** $p<0.05$.