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Textual analysis of identity in francophone Switzerland:
la Suisse romande through the lens of feminist language
policy documents

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Abstract

The identity of la Suisse romande, the French-speaking region of Switzerland, is one characterised strongly by conceptions of the French language in the francophone social imaginary, and by the will to affirm an identity separate to that of the country's dominant, German-speaking majority. This identity simultaneously forms, and is formed by, a complex set of ideologies unique to this imagined community. These ideologies on the French language, on language and identity, and on language's relationship with reality, implicit and explicit, reveal themselves most clearly when examined through the lens of feminist language policy in the region.

In this thesis, I therefore analyse official feminist language policy documents available at three levels of Switzerland's political structure. At a federal level, comparative analysis of official French- and German-language documents exposes a marked disparity between the policies of the two communities – a concrete manifestation of their socially perceived linguistic and cultural differences. At a regional level, the official feminist language guide of la Suisse romande reveals consistent Romand adhesion to France, rather than to other, non-francophone Swiss communities, in the social imaginary. Lastly, at a cantonal level, the bilingual canton of Bern issues near-identical feminist language guides for official governmental policy, but comparative analysis of policies published by tertiary institutions illustrates the francophone tendency to linguistic conservatism and the community's potential alienation from feminist language planning initiatives conceived of from a germanophone perspective, these attempts being perceived as not adequately taking into account the unique francophone identity. Federally, regionally, and cantonally, these policies illustrate the significance of the French language and its cultural-historical conceptions in the social imaginary of la Suisse romande, as well as the effect of their status as a linguistic minority on the French-speaking Swiss' alignment with France and distancing from the perceived threat of the germanophone linguistic majority in their own country. At all levels, la Suisse romande reveals itself to be less engaged with and committed to the issue of feminist language planning than la Suisse alémanique, and it is only close, comparative policy analysis that reveals precisely the ideological factors underlying this.

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The seed for this thesis was first planted over two years ago, during a study abroad paper in France. I had no idea that a few bullet points on the use of ‘sénateur’ and ‘sénatrice’ in the French Senate, written half-heartedly on a train to Grenoble with no Wi-Fi, could ever grow into the 40,000 words in front of me. Although the path to the finished product was very challenging and far from straight-forward, I know I am extremely lucky to have been able to produce research of my own that is reflective of my principles as a feminist and as a linguist. It feels far longer than two years ago that I began to write and research in this field, and there are numerous people without whom this project would never have come to fruition.

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Chapter 1: Setting the scene: Theories of language and identity

Switzerland has long been viewed as an example of linguistic co-existence and harmony. Known for its peaceful quadrilingualism and independent, yet co-operative, cantonal system, the country indeed appears the quintessential “success story” for linguistic diversity (Grin, p. 1). However, when one examines the ideological fractures and linguistically driven separatist movements at the forefront of the social imaginaries of the French-speaking Swiss, this national myth, this shared collective narrative, does not hold. This divide between Switzerland’s German-speaking majority and minority francophone group, contrary to the popular narrative of linguistic harmony, pervades almost every aspect of the French-speaking Swiss society and experience. But nowhere else is it more clearly illustrated than in each population’s respective feminist language policies. Textual analysis of these policies brings to light a variety of ideologies of language and identity, and allows us to gauge each community’s approach to a ‘linguistic issue’ – here, the question of feminist language reform. For a country with equal treatment of and access to services in all official languages enshrined within its constitution (Le Conseil fédéral, 1999), when it comes to feminist (also known as non-sexist, or gender-fair) language policy, the disparities across francophone and germanophone policies, recommendations, guides, and strategies reveal the speech communities’ equally disparate identities.

At each of the country’s structural levels - federal, regional and cantonal -, French-speaking Switzerland has produced language policies on feminist language reform markedly different to those of their German-speaking counterparts. Close analysis of these policies reveals distinct underlying ideologies of language and identity. French-speaking Switzerland has several key documents on non-sexist language use, each applicable to a different level of the country’s political structure, each revealing different facets of la Suisse romande’s identity and how it is experienced and expressed.

In this thesis, I will therefore examine the differences in feminist language planning, and attitudes towards it, across Swiss-French and Swiss-German linguistic groups. I will undertake this analysis at increasingly focussed levels of Switzerland’s political structure in order to uncover the underlying social and linguistic ideologies, and ideologies of identity, held by these groups. Throughout this thesis I will focus on these issues in a specifically French-speaking context, and from a francophone perspective. This involves analysis considering the social imaginaries reciprocally constructed by and constructing specific conceptions of the French language, by Swiss cultural ‘myths’ and stereotypes such as the ‘Röschti graben’, and by the status of Swiss-French as a minority language in the country. I will consider not only linguistic factors, but also social, historical, and political issues in my policy analysis, with the aim of illustrating why precisely why French-speaking and German-speaking

Switzerland's different approaches, conceptions, attitudes, and ideologies surrounding language and its relationship with reality and identity necessitate feminist language policies that are not unified or cohesive across the country, its regions, or within its cantons.

This thesis is structured around analysis of texts representative of each of these political levels, with the remainder of this chapter serving as a discussion of theoretical frameworks and literature relevant to this research. I will examine the linguistic and political situation in Switzerland as a whole, and explore in greater depth the historical divide between la Suisse romande and la Suisse alémanique. This will permit historically informed discussion of the tensions between the two groups present within the country, its regions, and its cantons still today, which are illustrated in their divergent policies on feminist or non-sexist language reform. Chapter 2 discusses this topic at a macro-level by analysing federally applicable language policies. The Swiss-French version of this national policy is found in the document *Guide de formulation non sexiste des textes administratifs et législatifs de la Confédération*, which was published by the Federal Chancellery in 2000. On a meso-level, 'la Suisse romande', or the French-speaking region of Switzerland, refers to the 2002 document *Ecrire les genres: guide romand d'aide à la rédaction administrative et législative épicière*. This collaborative text, published by the Bureaux d'égalité romands (the gender equality offices of all French-speaking cantons), is the subject of Chapter 3. Finally, on a micro-level, each individual canton has an independent feminist language policy. Chapter 4 will focus on comparative analysis of francophone and germanophone feminist language policy in Bern, a bilingual canton with a French-speaking minority.

La Suisse: a linguistic overview

Among Switzerland's four official languages – German, French, Italian, and Romansh – the convincing linguistic majority are German-speaking Swiss, comprising around 63% of the population (Office fédéral de la statistique, 2018). French is the second-most widely spoken language, spoken by approximately 23% of Swiss (Office fédéral de la statistique, 2018). Italian and Romansh (a language unique to the canton of Grisons/Graubünden) are spoken by around 8% and 0.5% of the population respectively (Office fédéral de la statistique, 2018). Switzerland has definitive geographical language borders; each official language is confined to clearly demarcated areas. German-speaking Switzerland is located in the east, north, and centre of the country, French-speaking Switzerland to the west, and Italian-speaking Switzerland in the south. Each of these linguistic regions is largely monolingual. For example, according to recent census data, 99% of Swiss residing in la Suisse romande spoke French regularly, but this figure drops to just 19% and 11% for German and Italian respectively (Office fédéral de la statistique, 2018). Only four of the 26 cantons, or 'states', of

Switzerland have more than one official language. This indicates that, despite the country's plurilingual appearance, there is, in fact, little multilingual interaction between localised speech communities due to the tangible language divisions in the country. It also begs the question of whether Switzerland can truly be considered a multilingual country when its major languages have so little direct contact or interaction.

While dialectal varieties of French in Switzerland have largely given way to 'standard' French, German-speaking Swiss have conserved their "Schweizerdeutsch" dialect (Matser et al., 2010, p. 155). Swiss germanophones, however, also speak and write Hochdeutsch, or standard German; this diglossia has meant, according to Rash (2002), that French speakers typically show greater reluctance to learn or understand German (of either variety) than their German-speaking counterparts do of French.

Currently, there are four cantons with French as the official language (Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel, and Jura), and three in which French and German have co-official status (Fribourg, Bern, and Valais) (Ball & Marley, 2017). Traditionally, the Swiss equilibrium between the autonomy of individual cantons and the necessity of a central, unified government is associated with almost complete cantonal independence (Leclerc, 2015). An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development profile report describes the autonomy of the cantons in the Swiss federalist system as "sovereign except to the extent that their sovereignty is limited by the Federal Constitution" (OECD.org, 2016, p. 1). Each canton has its own constitution, legislature, government, and courts, as well as healthcare, welfare, law enforcement, taxation, and education systems (OECD.org, 2016). Cantonal differences, whether linguistic, political, or socio-cultural, reflect the fractured history of Switzerland as a confederation of separate states, gradually linked and demarcated due to wars, invasions, and alliances (Ball & Marley, 2017). According to Leclerc (2015), Swiss federalism can be described as "fédéralisme d'exécution", meaning that the implementation of the majority of federal legislation, on which all cantons are equally consulted, is the responsibility of each separate state. In terms of cantonal legislation, each canton develops and enforces its own individual policies. Regarding language policies, as we will see, one canton may apply very different policies to another, and implement these in a wide variety of different ways (Leclerc, 2015). Ultimately, each canton is entirely sovereign in its jurisdiction.

In terms of feminist language policy in particular, it is often at a cantonal level that we see the clearest, most concrete, and most convincingly applied policy. This has to do with the relationship between the cantonal system and the federal government; federal feminist language policy (as will be discussed in Chapter 2) is by necessity more ambiguous due to the level of authority given to

cantonal governance. Some of the earliest official feminist language policies created in Switzerland were cantonal legislation. In la Suisse romande, Geneva, for example, established the use of feminisation in official texts of the public sector in just 1988 (Conseil d'Etat de la République et canton de Genève, 1988), and in 1992, both Jura and Bern enacted similar legislation (Matthey, 2000). Neuchâtel followed in 1995 with the introduction of the *Règlement concernant la formulation non sexiste des textes officiels* (Conseil d'Etat de la République et Canton de Neuchâtel, 1995). The canton of Fribourg adopted *Recommandations concernant l'égalité linguistique entre femmes et hommes* made by the canton's Chancellerie d'Etat and Office de législation in 1998 (Elmiger, 2000). The next year, the canton of Vaud began the first of several attempts to institute their own non-sexist language policy, inspired by that of Bern (Assemblée constituante du Canton de Vaud, 1999). Vaud eventually followed the rest of la Suisse romande with the institution of their own official language recommendations in 2005 (Chancellerie d'Etat de Canton de Vaud, 2005), and the canton's official non-sexist language guide, *L'égalité s'écrit*, was published in December 2007 (Bureau de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes du canton de Vaud, 2007), now an influential text in francophone Switzerland. Lastly, the bilingual canton of Valais/Wallis published *Directives sur l'élaboration de la législation* in 2005 (Elmiger, Tunger, & Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017). In this way, we can see that a Swiss citizen will receive differing recommendations from their canton, region, and country regarding what feminist or non-sexist language and strategies to use, and the contexts in which they must (or are recommended to) employ these even in one language, let alone when these policies are compared to those of another national language.

La Suisse romande versus la Suisse alémanique: modern manifestations of historical tensions

Exploring the divisions both modern and historical between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland will therefore allow better understanding of the precise reasons behind the adoption of these vastly different language policies and identities across the two speech communities.

From a Swiss romande perspective, francophone Switzerland within this federal system maintains a clearly delineated and distinct identity from both its German-speaking and Italian-speaking compatriots. According to Sonderegger (1967), the language boundary between la Suisse romande and la Suisse alémanique has remained stable since approximately 1100. Leclerc (2015) explains that Germanic invasions in the third century disrupted the relative linguistic unity in what was then known as Helvetia, or Helvétie in French; the 'Alemanni' germanised the east, whereas the Burgundians, further west, adopted the Latin spoken in the area since the Roman conquest, and "C'est ainsi que naquit une nouvelle frontière linguistique". This western population became speakers of 'franco-provençal', which later developed into French, and to the east, Germanic

languages became dialects of the German we know today (Leclerc, 2015). In the late 1200's, a small collection of 'cantons', Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwald, formed an alliance to defend against, and to ensure their independence from, the Habsburg Empire. Gradually, other cantons and city states, including Glarus, Zug, and Bern joined the increasingly powerful "Confédération helvétique" (Leclerc, 2015). Even as the Confederation expanded its territory to include Fribourg (Freiburg), Solothurn, Aargau, and several other cantons part of modern Switzerland, it remained a German-speaking – or Germanic-dialect-speaking – country: "la langue allemande prédominait" (Leclerc, 2015).

Switzerland became the plurilingual state it is known as today in the late 15th Century, as the cantons of Bern and Fribourg conquered new romand territories, including Vaud, in the west. However, it was not until the period of the Napoleonic Empire that French was finally given any official status in Switzerland. This was because, despite widespread use in many of its 'subject' territories, only German-speaking cantons and bilingual Fribourg were full members of the Confederation (Leclerc, 2015). After Napoleon's invasion in 1798 and subsequent Act of Mediation five years later, when the cantons of Aargau, Thurgau, Grisons, St. Gallen, Vaud and Ticino became equal cantons in their own right, Switzerland became a multilingual state with formal recognition of linguistic equality for French and Italian (Church & Head, 2013). The Congress of Vienna in 1815, after the fall of Napoleon, saw 'la Confédération helvétique' formalise its internal and external borders. The country's parliament, known in French as "la Diète", was restored, and although German was its sole official language, the delegates from "les cantons romands" were able to express themselves in their native languages (Leclerc, 2015). The cantons of Geneva, Neuchâtel, and Valais also joined the confederation; each canton chose its own language and constitution, and the country returned almost exactly to the system of high cantonal autonomy used before the French invasion (Leclerc, 2015).

A new constitution was adopted in 1848, in which German, French, and Italian were recognised equally as "langues nationales de la Confédération" (Leclerc, 2015), meaning that the country was officially trilingual (Romansh not was declared a "national language" until the 1938 Swiss Constitution). According to Leclerc (2015), it was the Vaud delegation that proposed this article – a highly progressive and unique proposition, as many other European nation states had long-since adopted the principle of "un État / une langue", a concept which will be further discussed shortly. However, this juridical-political linguistic equality was not always respected in reality, with federal laws and acts only translated into the "langues latines" after first being written (and evidently conceived of) in German (Leclerc, 2015). This persisting Germanic predominance will become an important theme throughout my policy analysis. Despite this official trilingualism, the national languages had relatively little contact, a phenomenon that persists today (Rash, 2002). According to

Rash (2002), Switzerland's "decentralised federalism... allows linguistic and cultural differences to be maintained and perpetuated, but also allows the different linguistic communities to coexist relatively unproblematically" (p. 117). Therefore, Switzerland's history, as a predominantly germanophone collection of independent states, informs much of its approach and attitude to linguistic and political questions today.

These sets of linguistic and cantonal boundaries within the country must be carefully and constantly navigated, and, although officially the country appears multilingual, the reality is closer to "passive" linguistic co-existence than to a plurilingual paradise, with clear divisions between speech communities (Rash, 2002, p. 124). A phenomenon that represents the divide between Swiss-French and Swiss-German populations is the 'national myth' of Röschtigraben. Röschtigraben, or le Rideau de Rosti in French, refers to the language boundary (both geographical and in the sense of identity), and differences in mentality, culture, and the substantial political cleavage between French-speaking and German-speaking areas of Switzerland (Rash, 2002). The term has negative connotations, and Kriesi et al. (1995) attest in a report for the Chancellerie fédérale, l'Office fédéral de la statistique, and l'Office fédéral de la culture, that French speakers, as the linguistic minority, are more aware of the sociolinguistic rift between the two communities. That this report was commissioned at all speaks volumes to the extent of the perceived divide between francophone and germanophone Swiss populations. The two groups have also been proven to vote differently on issues ranging from immigration, to medical insurance, to joining the European Union (Eichenberger, 2014). Rash (2002) states that one of the "chief cause[s] of friction" between French- and German-speaking Swiss is their disparate attitude toward dialect use, German-speaking Swiss insisting on 'Schweizerdeutsch', the Swiss-German dialect, and French Swiss "belonging to a supranational francophone cultural community", that "accords high status to the French standard language" (p. 124). The Swiss-French attitude toward their language, and particularly toward the concept of 'standard' French, upon which I will elaborate shortly, is an extremely meaningful ideological aspect of the Swiss-French identity and will become a significant theme in this policy analysis. Uriel Weinreich expands upon this discussion of linguistic borders with his theory of 'language loyalty' (1966). Weinreich explains that speakers of a given language are more likely to "defend" it from the influence of other, nearby languages if they have a strong emotional investment in and attachment to their language (1966, p. 99). This is obviously very applicable to the experience of the French-speaking Swiss, who, being both highly attached to their language as very close to the standard or 'prestige' form of French and threatened by the country's German-speaking majority, feel the need to defend their "superior" language from outside influence (Rash, 2002, p. 124). Significantly, according to Weinreich, the "pure" form of a language also commonly acts as a symbol of group "integrity" – read, *identity* – and

thus engenders more intense feelings of loyalty (1966, p. 100). Ultimately, whether or not the Röschtigraben exists tangibly in the everyday reality of all French-speaking Swiss matters not so much as the fact that it evidently exists in the social imaginary and collective consciousness of the linguistic community.

Yet another concrete manifestation of sociolinguistic tensions between the francophone and germanophone regions is that of the 'question jurassienne'. The 'Jura question' references the decades-long sentiment of Jurassic separatism in the Jura bernois region, a French-speaking minority in the mostly German-speaking canton of Bern. Scholars have indicated that tensions between French- and German-speakers in Bern grew after the end of World War II (Jenkin, 1986), culminating in riots and violence during the 1970's, as separatist factions of the French-speaking population of one of Switzerland's largest and most powerful cantons, Bern, demanded the separation of francophone areas from Bern to form the new canton of Jura (Jenkin, 1986). This movement was divisive and contentious not only within Bern, but also amongst the French-speaking inhabitants of the regions in question. Following referenda in 1974 and 1975, in which the separatists won with a narrow margin of 52% of the vote, the new monolingual, francophone canton Jura was officially created in 1979 (Jenkin, 1986). However, just three of the original seven districts of the Bernese Jura region, Delémont, Porrentruy and Franches-Montagnes, the northern-most districts, opted to secede to the new canton. Courtelary, La Neuveville, Moutier and Laufon, situated further south, voted to stay with the canton of Bern (Jenkin, 1986). These districts form a minority French-speaking region of Bern known as the Jura bernois. The lack of unity across the francophone regions and the subsequent fault lines in referenda on the 'question jurassienne' indicates that there is much more at play than simply a language barrier between French and German speakers. Recently, a small French-speaking town, Moutier, voted to leave Bern and secede to Jura (Kuenzi, 2017). Moutier is just the second originally-bernois town to do so since the canton was established 38 years earlier, proving that the 'Jura question' continues to weigh heavily in the collective consciousness of the towns and regions implicated. The Jura "flame", to use the mayor of Moutier's term (Thelocal.ch, 2017), did not go out with Jura's creation, but evidently continues to burn in these parts of Switzerland. Still others claim that the Moutier vote has, in fact, set into motion the inevitable joining of the Bernese Jura region with the canton of Jura, long-held aim of the separatists (Kuenzi, 2017); the 'question jurassienne' may never be fully answered.

Underlying the 'Jura question' posed to the French-speaking peoples of the Bernese Jura districts are not only the issues of linguistic separatism between French- and German-speaking Switzerland, but also those implicated in the concept of the Röschtigraben: perceived social, cultural, and political differences with germanophones and, perhaps most significantly, the perceived threat to French

identity and language by the dominant German-speaking majority. Evidently, francophone Swiss, and particularly those involved in the issue of Jurassic separatism, feel that a canton in which German is the dominant language is one in which they as French-speakers cannot fully function, nor are their interests – their particular interests as French-speakers with a contrasting worldview – fully represented. Siroky, Mueller, and Hechter (2017), articulate this sentiment in their discussion of ‘rational’ understanding of reasons underlying secession movements, stating that “the political salience of the subordinate cultural marker”, here perceived as being French-speaking in a predominantly germanophone space, is intensified when a group feels they are “relegated to a subordinate position in the stratification and political systems” (p. 6). Therefore, “when full inclusion appears unlikely or cannot be credibly offered, the subordinate group may demand for more self-rule”, the driving linguistic motivation of the separatist sentiment in the Jura bernois region (Siroky, Mueller, & Hechter, 2017, p. 6). This phenomenon illustrates the marked divide between French and German-speaking Switzerland, which is today manifested in the divergent approaches and attitudes toward feminist language reform and policy of the two populations in Bern, in the Suisse romande region, and in the country itself.

These historical tensions between French- and German-speaking Switzerland, and the modern-day phenomena of the question jurassienne, Röschtigraben, and language loyalty at the French-German linguistic border, are manifestations of the Swiss-French anxiety concerning their identity, which appear to be linguistically driven. Discussion of these concepts therefore necessitates further exploration of the relationship between language and identity. In the context of Swiss plurilingualism, coupled with the executive federalism of the cantonal system that entails little direct linguistic contact and interaction between linguistic groups, exploring key theoretical frameworks regarding the link between identity and language from a francophone Swiss perspective is especially relevant for this project.

Exploration of language as identity

So, what is ‘identity’? According to John Edwards, a prominent social psychologist in the field of multilingualism, “the essence of identity is similarity: things that are identical are the same” (2009, p. 19). On the other hand, linguists Mike Holt and Paul Gubbins state that “identity involves not only ‘sameness’ but by extension ‘otherness’” (2002, p. 4). In many ways, both statements are equally true. A concept of infinite definitional nuance, identity can be defined as given characteristics that bind a group together, but also, in a Derridean gesture, through *différance*: meaning is made in opposition to what we are not (Derrida, 1997). In this way, identity becomes simultaneously our individual and subjective sense of self, “markers” used to delineate “group membership” (Edwards,

2009, p. 16), and what separates and differentiates us from 'others' constructed through the process of assuming an identity.

Language, according to Joshua Fishman (1989), is an extremely powerful tool through which identity, ethnic, national, cultural, or personal, is constructed. It becomes "part of the secular religion", binds society together, and contributes to a sense of 'group', or "peoplehood" (cited in Schmid, 2001, p. 9, 15). Benedict Anderson (1991) posits that language is essential to the origins of nationalism – it has become an increasingly salient feature of identity, and, in considering the modern nation-state, is ever more important in tying together ethnic groups. Language's most important attribute, Anderson states, is "its capacity for generating *imagined communities*, building... solidarities" (1991, p. 133, my emphasis). Tony Judt and Denis Lacorne (2004) consider France and the United States to be two nation-states in which the 'monolith' of monolingualism has triumphed – language is not just a medium through which to transmit unifying, standardised ideas of the nation and of the 'group', but "in its integrative function, it embodies the dream" (p. 1). Carol Schmid (2001), echoing Anderson's sentiment of the imaginary element of a group or national identity, adds that it is through this process that "nations are 'imagined' by many people, and linguistic nationalism takes root" (p. 9). In this way, a common language becomes a "marker", to use Edwards' term (2009, p. 21), through which boundaries between "ingroups and outgroups" are established (Fishman, 1989, p. 1, 56).

But if language identity is so key in constructing a national identity, what of individuals and nations that are multilingual? In her book, *The Language Imperative*, Suzette Haden Elgin questioned whether multilingual survey respondents "felt like a different person" when speaking one or another of their languages (2000, p. 97). Her results were mixed, and fell into two distinct groups. One, she said, answered "Of course!" The other? "Of course not!" (Haden Elgin, 2000, p. 97). Is it true that multilinguals assume a different identity for each different language they can speak? A relevant concept here is Holt and Gubbins' "hybrid identities" (2002, p. 4), which go beyond these typical boundaries of language or nation. Hybrid identities – an important concept borrowed from post-colonial theories of language and identity – affiliated with multiple languages become "an attempt to link... the past in the light of a different cultural environment" (Holt & Gubbins, 2002, p. 4), rather than a betrayal by shifting from one fixed identity to another. This theory is useful in conceptualising the concentric markers through which multilingual identities of communities and individuals are built. Rather than Haden Elgin's suggestion of entirely separate imaginaries and identities relative to each separate linguistic code, Holt and Gubbins' discussion of hybridity in the context of multilingualism allows us to conceive of the plurilingual identity multi-dimensionally. In this way, the multilingual identity of an individual or community can be seen as not disjointed or bifurcated, but

as “*additive*” and multi-faceted, going beyond “ordinary notions of boundary” (Holt and Gubbins, p. 4, my emphasis). Decoteau (2013), in her chapter on postcolonial re-readings of sociological theories of practice, also acknowledges the “additive” nature of hybrid identities and references the “porous or invisible borders” of hybridity that disturb traditional (i.e., colonial) discourses of “unified... alterity” (p. 283).

Scholars have also long grappled with concepts of multilingual language identity in terms of ‘peoplehood’, or nationhood. Schmid adds that language is a significant factor in power relations between dominant and subordinate groups, and that multilingualism or linguistic pluralism is related to the “willingness” of dominant groups to “cultural and linguistic variability”, but this is on the condition that this variability does not threaten or render unstable the cohesion of the national group (2001, p. 10). Matser et al. (2010) explain that linguistic minority groups within a nation often feel threatened by the linguistic majority, and thus attempt to attenuate the perceived threat to their identity by evaluating the larger group negatively. This thus reduces the threat “by making the comparison between the two linguistic groups less compelling” and emphasising the smaller group’s “positive distinctness” (p. 146, 148). Identity, and language identity in multilingual people and nations, can therefore be understood not as a binary (or ternary, etc.) opposition, but a series of overlapping and constantly interacting sets of characteristics that defy the one-dimensional notion of fixed ingroups and outgroups. It is these boundaries that need to be constantly redefined and negotiated in determining an individual or national multilingual identity.

Conceptions surrounding the French, Swiss, and Swiss-French languages

This discussion therefore leads us to explore the particular identities and conceptions bound up in particular languages: relevant to this research are those of French, Swiss, and Swiss-French. These languages hold intrinsic and often unconscious conceptions of linguistic identity to their speakers, contribute to the unique identity of the countries and regions in which they are spoken, and will interact differently in given multilingual settings. As discussed, Swiss languages include French, German, Italian, and Romansh. The French language, in particular, has long carried with it preconceived notions of identity, both for the ‘standard’ French of France and other regions of the Francophonie. The relationship of the French-speaking Swiss to their language therefore holds an additional cultural weight. The national consciousness of Switzerland itself also holds deep-seated conceptions of its languages and its status of linguistic pluralism. These, too, contribute to the unique way the Swiss-French experience the world, their country, and their policy through their language. Focussing on the unique conceptions and identities relating to Swiss-French, it is first necessary to look at the French language globally, and to re-introduce the idea of the collective

national consciousness. National consciousness relates to a collective sense of national identity and understanding: a shared social imaginary. Anderson's concept of the "imagined community" is useful here as explanation of how this "image of... communion" is invented in the minds of groups with "profound emotional legitimacy" (1991, p. 4, 6). As previously mentioned, language is an integral part in the creation of this collective imaginary, this 'imagined community', not only transmitting ideas of the nation, but embodying them (Schmid, 2001). These themes of nationalism and identity are particularly relevant to the French perspective of their language. Let us therefore examine the ideology that surrounds the French language itself.

According to Séverine Rebourcet, a prominent scholar in francophone studies, "Le français est un patrimoine national qui doit rester intouché et défendu contre tout emprunt extérieur" (2008, p. 107-8). This "précellence" – to use Henri Estienne's sixteenth-century expression (1579, p. 11) – of the French language is evidenced in numerous works, including those of Antoine Rivarol, who wrote in 1784 that French should be a 'koinè', or a universal language, over all other European languages due to its superiority. Standard French – meaning the French of Paris, not a dialect or patois – has become a symbol of French culture, of prestige, and represents "the values of national identity" (Rebourcet, 2008, p. 111). This symbolic function of the language is linked to unification, "a national solidarity, an internal cohesion" (Rebourcet, p. 109), and implies a form of patriotism through the pride and nationalism in this conception of language. In this way, the French language becomes a symbol of purity in the social imaginary, to be protected against all foreign threats and influences. These ideas of the universality and supremacy of the standard French language have far greater repercussions underlying their unifying function, and enduring positive perception of this. Born from the "œuvre de la prépondérance française" is the colonial narrative of the "mission civilisatrice" (Baudrillart, 1935), in which the French language becomes a means through which to "civiliser les races inférieures" (Ferry, 1885). This rhetoric was used to justify France's colonial expansion, and the French language, "langue d'une nation civilisée pour faire sortir le colonisé de sa barbarie primitive", is transformed in the social imaginary to a symbolic "don humanitaire et civilisateur" (Kherfouche, 2016). This moralised gesture of the "gift" of the French language to "inferior" colonised peoples develops a narrative in which dialects, patois, and foreign creoles are "contaminated" versions of French and thus contribute to the "banalisation", or vulgarisation, of the French language (Ferry, 1885; Carrère d'Encausse, 2008). We can therefore see the intense moralisation of the French language within the French national consciousness, as the language is transformed into a symbol of purity, whiteness, universality – of superiority.

As well as colonial history and thought, conceptions of the French language are also linked with the idea of purism due to other historical events, such as the purification of the language by

grammarians during the 16th Century, and language policies aimed at eradicating regional dialects (Rebourcet, 2008). In light of this conception of the French language, certain language policy decisions or positions taken by the governments and language institutions of France become clearer. For example, the 'anti-patois' language policy advanced by Abbé Grégoire in the late 1700's was conducted in the name of national unification – here we see again the significance of the “UN état avec UNE langue” ideal, as well as the values of correctness, “bon usage”, and the “parfaite” quality of the most standard, pure form of the French language (Rebourcet, 2008, p. 112). Simultaneously, we can see that this standardisation and valorisation of 'pure' French, intended to unify, naturally entails linguistic and sociocultural discrimination against the linguistic varieties and dialects of communities not selected as part of this 'prestige form' (Rebourcet, 2008). It is also evident that in the social imaginary of French-speakers will be the concept of a fixed linguistic ideal. This therefore explains the attitude of the Académie Française, the influential French institution charged with the 'protection' of French, towards modern developments in the language, such as linguistic borrowing from English, and, of course, feminist language reform. These linguistic developments are not seen by the institution as natural, but as direct threats on both the purity and ideal form of French, and subsequently the very unity of France's national identity.

Language takes an equally primordial place in the forefront of the Swiss national consciousness. Switzerland, a country well-known for its quadrilingualism, must take up the construction of a national consciousness from a different angle. Historically, the idea of the 'nation state' was built around the perceived strength and cohesion of one language, one culture (hence the plethora of anti-dialect policies in numerous 'monolingual' nations, France an aforementioned and notable example) (Judt & Lacorne, 2004). However, with four individual, and largely geographically delineated, languages, the Swiss national consciousness is built around a conception of plurilingualism, not monolingualism, as strength. According to Henri de Torrenté, a former Minister of Switzerland, the “diversity of languages” is considered to be the “stoutest support” of the national consciousness (1957, p. 30), as the Swiss dialects of German, French, and Italian differ from their 'official' neighbouring languages enough that the perceived identity 'boundary' is in fact not within Switzerland, but, de Torrenté claims, a barrier with exterior nations (1957). Evidence for this theory can be seen in the lack of francophone independence movements from the country as a whole; while the 'question jurassienne' inspired at times violent separatist sentiments, the French speakers of what is now Jura merely wished for their own French-speaking state, not for independence from the entire nation of Swiss German-speakers. This is a marked contrast to other francophone separatist movements both in Europe and further abroad, such as the Mouvement souverainiste du Québec, and the 'rattachisme' of Belgian French-speakers, les Wallons: both, like Jurassic

separatism, are driven by perceived linguistic and sociocultural differences, and yet unlike the Jura bernois, both Québec and la Wallonie seek complete political independence from their respective countries (Erk, 2002). Additionally, Schmid's (2001) suggestion that linguistic variability is dependent on a dominant group's willingness to "permit" it is useful here (p. 10); evidently Switzerland's stability is not sufficiently threatened by the presence of multiple languages that the cohesion of the country is irretrievably affected, and neither does the country's German-speaking majority demand linguistic assimilation from minority groups.

Conceptions of Swiss language and identity have another dimension of hybridity: the independence of its cantons. As previously mentioned, each individual canton has an equal level of independence, and the Swiss recognise the co-operation of these small, independent states as the reason for the existence of the Swiss nation (de Torrenté, 1957). Again, this indicates multiple layers of identity hybridity – a Swiss citizen first belongs to his or her commune (which often speak individual dialects), canton, region of Switzerland, and belongs lastly to the country itself. In this way, the sense of cultural commonality within the cantons of Switzerland grants them territorial recognition of identity, and it is precisely this recognition and independence which "resists attempts to use the same principle to pull them apart" (Holt & Gubbins, 2002, p. 6). In keeping the same tradition of cantonal autonomy that Switzerland has always known, the nation conversely prevents fragmentation. François Grin, in a conference paper on Swiss multilingualism, therefore dismisses perceived "centrifugal tendencies" in Switzerland as "absurd" (1998, p. 3). Although it is true that the Swiss romands do not seek political links or annexing to France (unlike the aforementioned "rattachisme" experienced by the French-speaking Walloons in Belgium, Grin's example of a centrifugal fragmenting force) (1998, p. 3), the fact that the 'question jurassienne' is a question posed at all speaks to the fact that the lived reality of the French-speaking Swiss is not as harmonious as the common tenets of the country's national consciousness would imply. Moreover, the aforementioned cultural myth of 'Röschti graben' is a common example of not hybrid, but fractured, identity in the Swiss nation.

This divide is evidenced in Matser et al.'s (2010) aforementioned psychological study which examined the "intra- and intergroup attitudes" of nations either sharing a language or with a different language (p. 143). In investigating the French-speaking and German-speaking Swiss as linguistic groups within the nation, Matser et al. demonstrated that, in fact, French-speaking Swiss tend to align themselves with France, rather than with the German-speaking Swiss of their own country, as they perceive the 'alemannic Swiss' as a more direct, in-country threat to their identity, and thus acknowledge their linguistic similarity with the larger nation, France, for support (2010). In contrast, the German-speaking Swiss, as the dominant linguistic group, tended to evaluate the

French-speaking Swiss more positively than the French Swiss evaluated them. As they are in a more dominant position, Matser et al. posited that this was because the German-speaking Swiss are less conscious of the French-speaking Swiss' struggle for identity and recognition (2010). These findings are significant as they may indicate the influence of their identity as a minority language group in the Swiss-French navigation of conflict and language issues, illustrated in the francophone reaction to germanophone feminist language policies.

An important concept to fully introduce here is that of the social imaginary, as presented by Castoriadis. An influential Greek-French philosopher and social critic, Castoriadis theorized the social imaginary and its autonomy. Castoriadis establishes the imaginary not as a mere reflection of "what is already there" in a given society, but what *renders possible* any relation to or understanding of an object or image; without the imaginary, there would be nothing to reflect in the first place (Castoriadis, 1975; Thompson, 1982, p. 664). Thompson, in his 1982 discussion of Castoriadis' work on ideology and the social imaginary, therefore states that Castoriadis' theory of the imaginary "accounts for the orientation of social institutions, for the constitution of motives and needs, for the existence of symbolism, tradition, and *myth*" in a given socio-historical and psychic world (p. 664, my emphasis). Castoriadis himself, of course, explains it best:

This element, which endows the functionality of each institutional system with its specific orientation, which overdetermines the choice and connections of symbolic networks, which creates for each historical period its singular way of living, seeing and making its own existence, its world and its relations to it, this originary structuring, this central signifier-signified, source of what is each time given as indisputable and undisputed sense, support of the articulations and distinctions of what matters and of what does not, origin of the augmented being (*surcroît d'être*) of the individual or collective objects of practical, affective and intellectual investment—this element is nothing other than the *imaginary* of the society or period concerned (1975, p. 203).

In this way, we see precisely how previously discussed symbols and ideas, such as that of the Röschtigraben, take on a life of their own, or in Castoriadis' terms, become autonomous, instituted symbols in a given society (1975). The French-speaking Swiss do not all carry the exact same feelings towards their language or conceive of their identity as francophone Swiss in the same way, and neither, of course, does the entire population use language in the same way – naturally there are linguistic differences on levels from individual to cantonal. The theory of the social imaginary (which naturally also extends to the idea of the collective consciousness or national myth) therefore allows

us to account for the fact that these shared narratives of a profound socio-cultural and linguistic divide between French-speaking and German-speaking Swiss no longer reflect the 'real' (i.e., a tangible socio-cultural difference between French speakers and German speakers in Switzerland), but define what *is* real for these groups (1975). Each society's distinct and powerful social imaginary will necessarily be reflected in their contrasting feminist language policies.

The relationship between language and lived reality

Discussion of the creation of a 'national consciousness' and the influences of a given language on this construct necessarily invites discussion of language not only as a form of identity, but as a pervasive and influential aspect of our everyday lived reality. Many scholars have posed theories on the extent to which, or even if, language affects reality. The linguistic ideology to which one subscribes will have significant bearing on how one views and analyses linguistic conflicts, that of feminist language reform being particularly relevant in this context. These theoretical frameworks will therefore add significant insight in the contexts of both Switzerland's linguistic pluralism and feminist language planning. A range of positions exists in terms of the nature of the relationship between language and reality.

One key theoretical framework through which to consider the nature of this relationship is the structuralist theory on language as a system of arbitrary signs. Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, posits in his iconic *Cours de linguistique générale* that language is a system of signs. Principle throughout Saussure's work is the idea of the 'sign' in language, each sign possessing two distinct elements – the concept, and the sound-image, which are "intimately united", and each automatically evokes the other (1916, p. 66). A key figure in the structuralist school of thought, a Saussurean conception of language views the sign, or word, as composed of the signified, being the concept or meaning, and the signifier, being the word used to refer to it or the 'sound-image' (Saussure, with Bally & Sechehaye, 1959). To drastically (although apologetically) simplify, one of Saussure's key points is the arbitrary nature of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. To use Saussure's own example, the word "sister", the signified, does not possess an inextricable or innate relationship to its "succession of sounds", its signifier (1959, p. 67). How we understand language and meaning naturally has a bearing on how, or if, we go about language change. Due to its arbitrary nature, the relationship between a given signifier and signified *could* be changed. However, Saussure suggests that signs are in a sense immutable *because* they are arbitrary – there is no basis for discussion, as there is no reason why 'sister' would be chosen over, for example, 'sœur'. Interestingly, he also adds that language specialists and grammarians have conceived of language change, but that their past "meddlings" have failed, due to the complexity of

the system and the “inability of the masses to transform it” (1959 p. 73). Therefore, in a Saussurean language system of signs possessing both mutable and immutable qualities, although language change is technically possible, it is not *necessary*.

In this case, it logically follows that if language is considered to be an arbitrary system of signs, language would not have an effect on reality, and thus to consider this theory in a context relevant to this research, language policies aimed at improving linguistic parity or resolving linguistically motivated conflicts would simply not be necessary. If the language authorities in a given canton were of the opinion, for example, that language was simply a system of arbitrary signs, used to represent reality but that do not affect it, the language policy adopted by this canton would be one which rejects the correlation between linguistic sexism and sexism in a society (Pauwels, 1998), or which might reject giving special status to speakers of minority languages within a given speech community. Therefore, those against changing inequalities in or across languages tend to accept ideologies of language as an arbitrary and neutral (and therefore, equal) system. This linguistic ideology presents itself in several of the language policies to be analysed later in this research.

In contrast, numerous other scholars have theorised that there is, in fact, a clear relationship between language and reality; language may reflect, change, or even (to some extent) designate reality. Firstly, the ideology that language is reflective of reality signifies that linguistic usage and structures are completely inspired by the societies and communities in which we exist. In his early work, Wittgenstein was a proponent of this theory. Wittgenstein advanced in his key work, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922), the theory that language was a mirror of the world and reality, known as his Picture Theory of Language (Wittgenstein, 1922). Simply put, the theory accounts for the relation between an individual word and what it refers to in an external environment, or reality, with Wittgenstein positing that propositions make “pictures” of the world, the world in turn being made up of interconnected facts (Allott, 2003; Wittgenstein, 1922). Pictures, as standards of reality, represent these facts in that they possess the same logical structure. In this way, language therefore becomes a projection or reflection of these facts, with meaning anchored in reality, not (in an anti-Saussurean gesture), the relationship of words with other words.

In terms of feminist language planning, this position implies that a first mandate should be to eradicate sexism in societies in order to do the same with language, indicating a claim that linguistic changes will not affect gender inequality: we need to change society in order to be able to change language. For example, Robin Lakoff, a scholar in sociolinguistics and gender, states that “it should be recognised that social change creates language change, not the reverse” (1975, p. 59). According to proponents of this theory, this is because the inferior status of women is not determined by

language use, nor linguistic characteristics that are not gender-fair: it is only reflected by these linguistic practices. This linguistic ideology would not, similarly, call for special treatment or status for Swiss French-speakers as a linguistic minority in Switzerland, as, regardless of language differences, words across languages would refer to the same reality.

A second perspective is the well-known Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, according to which language structures thought, and determines the construction and conception of the social and concrete world – this is also known as “linguistic determinism” (Whorf, 1956). According to Whorf, it is probable that those who were raised with different native languages will build, and see, reality in different ways (1956). This view has significant implications for countries with several official languages, such as Switzerland, and illuminates the earlier discussion of speakers’ conceptions of their language, and language as a salient feature of identity. For example, French-speaking Swiss conceiving of their language in an entirely different way to Swiss germanophones, and an entirely different set of values and identities being bound up in this conception, indeed implicates a unique Swiss-French experience of society and reality. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is most often supported in its ‘weak’ version, which posits that language *helps* to construct thought (Pauwels, 1998, p. 83). On the other hand, a ‘strong’ version of this theory would indicate that language is in fact a dominant cause of inequality, for both women and linguistic minorities in a plurilingual setting, such as French-speaking Swiss. Those that support feminist language planning initiatives advance the premise that one of the *causes* of female oppression is sexist language. According to Baider, Khaznadar, and Moreau (2007)

Le symbolisme social étant véhiculé, structuré par le langage, c’est toute une conception du monde qui est impliquée. Les travaux en psychologie sociale ont montré que le genre grammatical influence la représentation qu’on se fait des métiers. L’utilisation du masculin dit générique biaise la représentation sociale des genres en défaveur des femmes... (p. 5)

Numerous scholars, such as Dale Spender (1990), Deborah Cameron (1992), and Luce Irigaray (1977), have remarked on the possibilities of improving the experiences of women through feminist language planning, upon which I will elaborate shortly. In the words of Cameron, the “silence, alienation, and oppression” of women in language, which is conceived androcentrically, affects what can be expressed, and even achieved, by women (1992, p. 128, 131). In this way, in employing a ‘strong’ version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, supporters of feminist language planning and language change claim that language is a dominant force in creating and maintaining the unequal

treatment of the sexes in society (1992, p. 86). Furthermore, Spender claims that “language is a human product” (1990, p. 3), that can therefore be changed and modified, with perseverance.

Anne Pauwels posits the existence of a third, “interactionist”, position (1998, p. 84): a relation of circular causality in which language not only reflects reality, but also helps to construct it. In the context of feminist language planning, this view explains the ways in which language both facilitates the construction of inequalities, and reflects their existence in society. Interactionist theories of language affecting our lived reality are particularly important in the context of Switzerland. It follows that if we subscribe to the notion that language shapes the way one views the world, Switzerland will have four groups (French-speakers, German-speakers, Italian-speakers, and Romansh-speakers) that view and experience the world in different ways according to which of the official languages they speak. As previously discussed, these speech communities are not only geographically delineated, but also have surprisingly little contact. For example, the most recent Swiss census data indicates that in la Suisse alémanique, 97% of the population frequently speak German. In la Suisse romande, French is almost universally used, at 99% of the population. A comparable 98% of the population of la Suisse italienne speak Italian regularly (de Flaugergues, 2016). This is extremely important to take into account when considering the differences in French-speaking and German-speaking Swiss policies on feminist language reform, and the potential for conflict within a multilingual community. These theories are also important to consider in light of the varying attitudes and strategies of different linguistic communities towards feminist language planning. Having considered a range of theories positing that there is indeed a relationship between language and reality, that language does affect the ways in which our understanding of the world around us is facilitated, we can hypothesise that German and French-speaking Switzerland will have different approaches to language planning, and different motivations for the policies and strategies chosen.

As we have seen, language is key to both personal and global senses of identity. Preconceptions and feelings of cultural or national heritage, bound up in a given language, create the sense of a ‘national consciousness’ and shared social imaginary. As seen in Switzerland, language policies implemented aim to foster this sense of cantonal and national identity. Conceptions and consciousnesses surrounding a language can also affect the willingness of a given government or institution to introduce policies reforming or changing the language to which they are so strongly attached, which, as we will see, is particularly true of the French language. While a range of theories exist on the relationship between language and reality, it matters less which theory is most accurately representative of this relationship, but rather which informs and influences the policy decisions of a given community’s institutions and how this theory manifests itself in the policy. However, the existence of policies protecting the status of minority languages and promoting non-sexist language

use does indicate that these groups have specific linguistic needs due to perceived greater social disadvantage: public and institutional needs determine public policy, and perceived public needs are determined by how one experiences or perceives reality. If theories such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and linguistic determinism are right about the relationship between language and reality, feminist language policies aimed at increasing language parity will have real-world effects and value, and these will be specific to the languages in which they are conducted. Therefore, if we accept that language is what constructs and determines, at least partially, our lived reality or our perception of it, then policies on language structure and use will have a significant effect on the experiences of both men and women, as well as the experiences of speakers of different languages and linguistic minorities.

Feminist language theories

As feminist language policy is lens through which I will examine ideologies of language and identity in French-speaking Switzerland, the prior discussion of linguistic ideologies necessarily invites exploration of literature surrounding feminist theories on language, and feminist language planning.

Feminist language planning (also called feminist, or non-sexist, language reform), and its place in the wider context of feminist linguistics and feminist language theory, is defined as the intentional changes to a language and its use made by organisations, governments, and individuals, with specific aims (Pauwels, 1998). My research will focus on language planning activities undertaken by federal governmental organisations and language regulating bodies, and regional governments, governmental departments, and non-governmental organisations in individual cantons. However, I must underline the fact that multiple and varied cases of language planning exist outside of official organisations. A distinction is made between two main types of language planning: ‘corpus’ planning, and ‘status’ planning (Pauwels, 1998, p. 4). Status planning concerns policy – selecting a language as an official language, allocating specific functions of different languages in a multilingual country or community, or making decisions on language usage and linguistic codes. One case of status planning, for example, was the National Assembly of Quebec’s 1974 adoption of Bill 22, also known as the *Official Language Act (Loi sur la langue officielle)* (Légis Québec, 2017). The bill declared French the official language of the Quebec region in public administration, legislation and justice, education, and in the workplace (Légis Québec, 2017). Corpus planning concerns the regulation of a language through orthographic and grammatical reforms or coining of new words (Pauwels, 1998).

As feminist language planning is a form of linguistic modification aimed at eliminating sexist language and representation biased towards men, as well as promoting the use of non-sexist or

gender-neutral language (Pauwels, 1998), it can therefore be considered as an example of corpus planning. Corpus planning contains several sub-types: graphisation, codification, and modernisation (also called elaboration) (Pauwels, 1998). Modernisation is the process through which a language is modified to fulfil new functions, permit discussion of new subjects, and to better express developing discourses and fields. This sub-type of corpus planning describes a significant portion of feminist language planning efforts, which strive to replace both sexist practices and words with non-sexist ones, or to create new methods of expression that do not perpetuate sexist language. Feminist language reforms therefore refer to the efforts, initiatives, and actions of individuals and governments aimed at changing the biased or unequal representation of the sexes in language, in both its oral and written forms. This gender bias is linked to men being linguistically considered the 'norm' or standard, as is often evidenced in use of the 'generic masculine' in English, French, and numerous other languages of the world (Pauwels, 1998). This reality of linguistic sexism is also called "androcentrism" (Spender, 1990, p.14). Therefore, feminist language planning is a strategy and potential solution to perceived language problems advocated by many feminist linguists; as we become conscious of sexism (either grammatical or vocabular) in language, we must attempt to change this. However, as discussed, whether or not one believes that feminist language planning is necessary, or will aid in increasing equality, depends on one's linguistic ideology and conception of the function of language.

Although much of the literature in feminist linguistics and feminist language planning discussed is both anglophone and anglo-centric, meaning that it pertains only to English-speaking communities, or only considers strategies and examples viable for English language varieties, I have also attempted to explore feminist language theories and planning strategies specific to French, and written by French or francophone scholars. Many French feminist scholars discuss themes similar to their anglophone counterparts, but it would of course be disingenuous to examine issues in a francophone context without consulting an equally significant body of francophone literature on this topic. Moreover, different cultures have different conceptions of gender and different ways of expressing these (Fassin, 1999). These must be taken into account in analysing feminist language theories and policies through the prism of the French language, as well as from the point of view of the French speaker, particularly the French-speaker as a linguistic minority in Switzerland.

The fields of feminist language planning and feminist linguistics are still relatively new, and find their roots in the burgeoning feminist movement of the 1950's, 60's, and 70's. Associated with second wave feminism, the field saw the publication of several works highlighting the androcentric nature of language, such as Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949). De Beauvoir is, of course, a key pillar in not only French feminist literature, but feminist scholarship as a whole, and *Le Deuxième*

Sexe is one of her most famous texts. Originally published in two volumes, *Facts and Myths* and *Lived Experience*, the work discusses the treatment of women throughout history and considers reasons for their subordination. In this, and her later work, de Beauvoir explores women's status as 'Other' relative to men, who are the default, the neutral. Women as Other is encoded in language, and "set up as a supreme truth" (Scholz, 2000, p. 216). According to de Beauvoir, "representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth" (1952, p. 133). In this way, de Beauvoir sees language as perpetuating the myth of men as normative. Although de Beauvoir's earlier work later attracted much criticism, *Le Deuxième Sexe* in particular is seen as a cornerstone of feminist theory. Feminist language scholarship, which also saw published Edgar Gregersen's *Sexual Linguistics* (1979), *Language and Women's Place* by Robin Lakoff (1975), and Charlotte Furth's editorial *The Language of Inequality* (1974), revealed that language was dominated by masculine norms: men both made the norms and functioned as the supposedly neutral subject of language. Demystified, language was shown to be androcentric.

Language and Women's Place is a significant study published in 1975 by Robin Lakoff, focussing on the impact of gendered language. This text remains a significant point of reference for later authors in many related fields, especially those in feminist linguistics and social psychology. Her study discusses themes that continually resurface in feminist language scholarship: men's dominance and women's consequent deference, and the disparate ways in which language is used by the sexes, and in which the sexes are used by language. For example, Lakoff alleges that women are expected to be politer in language than men, and also suggests that in "appropriate" women's speech, women typically express more uncertainty, through greater use of linguistic constructions such as tag questions and hedging (p. 45). She posits that through this 'women's language', in which women are treated as "object[s] – sexual or otherwise", are not taken seriously (and are thus in a sense "less than fully human"), and are criticised if they do not conform to typical feminine speech characteristics, the "personal identity of women thus is linguistically submerged" (p. 48) – significant when we consider prior discussion of identity construction and meaning in and through language. The effect of these linguistic expectations and inequalities is, according to Lakoff, that women are "systematically denied access to power" – this "marginality and powerlessness" is reflected in both how women are expected to speak and how they are spoken of (p. 45, 48). The ways in which women are constantly sexualised in language or defined in relation to men also illustrates typical male dominance in language, Lakoff adding that the linguistic disparities reflect "social discrepancy in the positions of men and women in our society" (p. 76). Although later scholars in this field have critiqued Lakoff for her confirmation bias in using largely anecdotal evidence, the significance of this

work, from which numerous developments and discoveries in the field have sprung, must be recognised.

One such development is found in Muriel Schulz's chapter *The Semantic Derogation of Women*, published in 1975, a significant contribution to the field. Her text focusses not on how language is used by women, but how women are represented in and by language. Her findings indicate that many words and metaphors used to designate women, despite their original innocent meanings, acquire derogative and negative connotations that are most often sexual. Schulz therefore hypothesises that there exists a semantic imbalance in language, since women regularly acquire the most negative meaning in comparison to men (1975). The results of her work have since been affirmed many times, and in numerous languages (Fontecha & Catalan, 2003). Just a year earlier, Charlotte Furth's editorial, *The Language of Inequality*, in the *Journal of Asian studies* highlighted the androcentric nature of language, and explicitly stated her support for feminist language reform (1974). Furth suggests that use of the generic masculine and use of male-centred language (particularly in anthropological and historical scholarship) has a significant, unconscious psychological impact on both men and women. Using 'he/his' as a generic gender marker when referring to both sexes indicates that "human personality is a male attribute which women share in only marginally", and thus renders women subordinate, inferior, and invisible, as well as contributing to, and perpetuating linguistically, generalisations and stereotypes concerning "female irrelevance" (1974, p. 5-6). Ann Bodine's aptly titled *Androcentrism in prescriptive grammar: singular 'they', sex-indefinite 'he', and 'he or she'*, also published in 1975, draws similar conclusions. Furth's support for language reform and its "contribution... to a social transformation" indicates a position that language plays a role in both the inferior status – and thus the potential to combat this – of women in society (p. 5), a position which will become extremely significant to this research, and which will be further explored shortly.

Feminist language scholarship, having established and thoroughly discussed the traditional themes of 'dominance/difference/deference' in the language of men and women, explored new, and often more radical, topics in the following decades. Dale Spender's iconic and radical text, *Man-Made Language* (1990), discusses that while we are led to believe that "rules for meaning, which are part of language, are... natural", they are in fact constructed by men, and reflect a male world-view, and that this was done deliberately and specifically in their own interest (p. 2-3). For Spender, the male bias in the structures of both language and society is conscious. The Australian feminist writer claims that this affects what women are able to achieve at all, due to their entrapment in a male-biased and male-controlled language and society, indicating a belief in an aforementioned linguistic ideology of linguistic determinism. Suzette Haden Elgin, in this vein, advocated for a new language

created for women, by women, as she felt that women were unable to communicate optimally in androcentric languages better suited to expressing a male worldview (1984). In her novel, *Native Tongue*, a group of women secretly develop a language to challenge patriarchal oppression – the feminist language Láadan. Elgin suggests that Láadan allows for the complete expression of women’s feelings and experiences, which are not able to be accurately or fully conveyed in English. She creates specific words for uniquely female experiences, such as husháana (to menstruate painfully) (Okrent, 2010). Elgin, like Spender, calls into question the androcentric nature of language, which structures the world that is male in conception and perception, but proposes a radical strategy – the creation of a female-centric language – in order for women to escape this. In a French context, the concept of ‘écriture féminine’ emerged, with notable French feminist theorists such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray approaching feminism through this idea of ‘female, or feminine, writing’. Cixous’ most famous essay, *The Laugh of the Medusa (Le Rire de la Méduse)* (1975), affirms traditional feminist language theories surrounding women’s inability to fully express themselves in an androcentrically conceived and structured language. However, Cixous moves beyond this assertion, arguing that ‘writing from the body’, using the individuality of the female body, would allow women to escape linguistic entrapment. This is ‘écriture féminine’. She posits that this type of writing allows women to express themselves and their needs outside of linguistic patriarchal systems, and explores the relationship between the female body, female authorship, and female power.

From the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, feminist language scholarship, and the feminist movement itself, gradually became more intersectional. In terms of literature on language planning in particular, Ann Pauwels made an enormous contribution to the field over this period. Her 1998 book *Women Changing Language* provides wide-ranging and comparative treatment of practices in feminist language reform. Pauwels discusses feminist language planning more in a more contemporary, intersectional manner, presenting the topic through a global worldview and with references to feminist language planning initiatives in many language varieties. This is in stark opposition to the traditionally white, Western, ‘default’ focus of literature on feminist language planning of previous years.

Sara Mills, who has written extensively on gender and politeness, discussed feminism and naming practices in 2003. While this topic had been treated previously in regard to androcentrism in language excluding women from the naming process and thus alienating them from their identities, Mills employs a more complex theoretical approach through using feminist appropriations of Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* to explore the negotiations undertaken by women when choosing surnames and titles. Names, to re-introduce Spender, “are essential for the construction of reality”

(1990, p. 84). Mills therefore analyses the discourses of what she terms as sexism, anti-sexism, and 'political correctness' respectively, hypothesising each of these as positions negotiated by women. The interaction of these discourses can be seen in women's choices and justifications on whether or not to change their name to their husband's, whether to use Ms, Mrs, or Miss as their title, and how they negotiate these "conflicting pressures" (2003a, p. 96). Mills also returns to the feminist notion of 'reclaiming', or appropriating gestures that may be seen as sexist, imbuing them with new meaning and leading to potential changes in the way these gestures are viewed. In a paper on Third Wave feminist linguistics published the same year, Mills also challenges the 'Second Wave' approach to linguistics as analysing the language of women and men as "homogenous groups", and assuming that men and women speak in different and stereotypical ways (2003b, p. 1). A Third Wave feminist linguistics approach is anti-essentialist, and focusses not only on the individual speaker, but also on their social groups, and the social constructs stemming from these groups (2003b). This approach can therefore be considered "more locally-oriented and context-specific" (2003b, p. 1). In this way, more recent developments in feminist language theory build upon previously established analyses of sexism in language, and challenge previously accepted and assumed concepts; contemporary scholarship is often poststructuralist, and aims to deconstruct or re-think traditional assumptions and hierarchies.

In this way, we can see why and how scholars, many of them women, have begun to advocate for new norms and strategies to counter the androcentricity of language through the formulation of proposals and guidelines for non-sexist language (Pauwels, 1998). Over time, feminist language planning has come to focus on several strategies to mitigate gender inequality in language, specific to given languages and situations. In a French-language context, French being a language with grammatical gender, this often means promoting language strategies that render women more explicitly visible in language. Use of the 'generic' masculine, and lack of feminised forms of job titles, for example, are two particular linguistic features of the French language that have inspired feminist language planning initiatives and debates. For example, any part of speech that refers to both males and females becomes masculine in French grammatical convention, as it is masculine which is the 'dominant' gender – 'ils' (masculine form of 'they') will be used instead of 'elles' (the feminine form) when there is a mixed group of males and females present in a given linguistic situation, regardless of whether or not the men are outnumbered (Corréard, 2013). As this literature has shown, time and time again, this 'generic' masculine effaces women in language, and is not as universal as claimed.

An array of feminist language planning strategies exists, including feminisation, gender neutralisation, and more radical strategies, such as 'écriture féminine', or the creation of a new,

female-centric language – a suggestion proposed by aforementioned French feminist writers Hélène Cixous (1976) and Luce Irigaray (1977), as well as by Suzette Haden Elgin (1984). The less extreme strategies, feminisation and neutralisation, are often more viable as they do not cause major structural linguistic disruptions (Pauwels, 1998). Neutralisation aims to obtain language parity through reducing gender-specific elements of language: for example, replacing “Homme” (Man) with “human being” (être humain). In contrast, the feminist language planning strategy of feminisation specifically delineates the presence of women in a given linguistic situation. In a French context, this often necessitates neologisms – new, feminised forms of words – such as *la présidente* instead of *le président*, the masculine form. The result of feminisation is the increased visibility of women in language, and less “silence” (Cameron, 1992, p. 128). Nevertheless, numerous languages possess asymmetrical gender-suffixing (Pauwels, 1998), which can lead to problems regarding feminised forms. In French, for example, some feminised homonyms actually mean something entirely different: *la médecine* (medicine) vs *le médecin* (doctor), for example, or in fact refer to “the spouse of he who holds the position”, such as *le maire* (mayor), *la mairesse* (the mayor’s wife) (Institut national de la langue française, 1999, p. 11). Additionally, many feminine suffixes are either diminutives: *un camion*, *une camionette*, or have pejorative connotations (Baider, Khaznadar, and Moreau, 2007). For instance, *un gagnant* means ‘winner’, but *une gagneuse*, the feminine form, is also a word for ‘prostitute’. In any case, each language, country, and region has an individual and unique approach to feminist language reform and non-sexist language policy, due to the individual and unique social, political, cultural, and linguistic circumstances that motivate and influence a given language planning initiative – or lack of one – which we will later see in discussion of feminist language planning across various Swiss cantons.

Through discussion of these feminist theories of language and language planning, we can see the basis upon which contemporary feminist language policies, especially those of French-speaking Switzerland, are built. Scholars such as Daniel Elmiger, Verena Tunger, Eva Schaeffer-Lacroix, Marinette Matthey, and Thérèse Moreau have produced detailed work in the field of francophone positions on non-sexist language and language planning, particularly in the context of francophone Europe, over the past two decades. There is, however, little modern literature that attempts to account for the extra-linguistic, and particularly social, ideologies and influences underlying the issue of feminist language reform in Switzerland, and even less that analyses markers of group identity through a feminist language planning lens. This research therefore aims to fill this gap with a policy-based socio-linguistic analysis of the Suisse romande identity, with a focus on precisely what influences and ideologies are revealed to the analyst by these policies in this Swiss-French context.

However, before beginning with comparative analysis of francophone and germanophone federal-level feminist language policy in Switzerland, it is important to briefly discuss the range of documents analysed, including the types of policy that they contain and the extent to which these policies can be enforced. Although all primary sources discussed in this thesis deal with the themes of non-sexist language use, language parity, or feminist language reform, many are contrasting in terms of their status and fields of application. Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix (2017) distinguish between two main types of feminist language legislation and policy in Switzerland: regulatory documents, and language guides. Regulatory documents have specific, legal objectives, and are issued or adopted by government bureaux, such as the Conseil federal or the Conseil-exécutif of a canton. Some examples of texts belonging to this policy category include constitutions, laws, regulations, and directives. According to Elmiger et al., despite these sorts of documents aiming to control certain usages of language, it is not always possible to know in what way – and if so, by what means – these policies are implemented, or to which groups of language users they apply (2017). Language guides, on the other hand, are designed as ‘tools’ for practical language use, and usually include explanation of general principles of feminist or non-sexist language use, and lists of strategies and examples that are either recommended or advised against. Again, not all guides explicitly state whether or not their content is binding, nor for whom they are intended. While many language guides are published by government departments, some are issued by other institutions or groups. This research discusses guides by several cantonal tertiary education providers in Chapter 4, but trade unions, churches, and feminist groups have all published their own official feminist language guidelines in Switzerland (Elmiger, Tunger, & Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017). Other texts mentioned or analysed throughout this thesis include parliamentary or commissioned reports, motions, and postulates. However, I shall first begin by discussing French-language feminist language planning in Switzerland at the widest scope possible: on a federal level, before analysing regional, and lastly cantonal language policies.

Chapter 2: A comparative analysis of federal-level feminist language planning in French-speaking Switzerland

At every political level, cantonal, regional, and federal, la Suisse romande has indicated, both implicitly and explicitly, its reluctance to follow exactly the strategies and suggestions on feminist language policy made by German-speaking Switzerland for numerous reasons. Particularly when the debate surrounding questions of non-sexist language reform at a federal level began, nationally applicable Swiss-French policies and decisions could even have been considered as a reaction against those chosen by German-speaking Switzerland. In this way, official feminist language policies in French-speaking Switzerland also function as a medium through which la Suisse romande aims to affirm its separate identity and conservatism in opposition to that of German-speaking Switzerland. In doing so, the region often finds itself drawing stronger parallels with France than with other regions of Switzerland itself, particularly evident in the tendency of la Suisse romande and francophones towards linguistic conservatism, and a seemingly collective cultural hesitance, or even reluctance, to engage in language reform. It is in federal-level feminist language policy that we see some of the most marked differences between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland on this linguistic issue.

Federal-level feminist language policy for French-speaking Switzerland

The official, nationally applicable feminist language policy of French-speaking Switzerland was established in December 2000. The publication of *Guide de formulation non sexiste des textes administratifs et législatifs de la Confédération* by the Federal Chancellery was a significant event, as until that moment, there had been no nationally applicable official language recommendations for French-speaking Switzerland (Elmiger & Tunger, 2014). Just over a decade before the guide's publication, the debate around language parity in Switzerland burst visibly into the public sphere with the election of Elizabeth Kopp to the Conseil fédéral in 1984, just twelve years after Swiss women obtained the right to vote at a federal level (Jaberg, 2016). The first woman to hold a position of this level, it quickly became apparent that feminised versions of official names, titles, and descriptions did not exist in this domain (Moser et al., 2011). Following the debate that surrounded the novel presence of women in government, and how to approach the linguistic conundrums this posed, the *Feuille Fédérale*, official publication for texts and news of the Federal Chancellery, published a report in 1986 underlining "terminological inequalities" in current language use, as well as the political commitment to avoid linguistic discrimination against women, and promoting language parity (Archives fédérales suisses Publications officielles numérisées, 1986, p. 1140).

Ainsi, dans tous les actes législatifs applicables indifféremment aux hommes et aux femmes, il paraît judicieux d'opter, dans la mesure du possible, pour une terminologie qui, elle non plus, ne fasse pas de différence entre les sexes. S'il existe des termes neutres, il faut les employer, notamment pour désigner les charges et les fonctions. Dans la version allemande des textes légaux, il convient par exemple d'utiliser le terme « Ersatzmitglied » plutôt que « Ersatzmann ». Dans d'autre[s] cas, par contre, il peut s'avérer nécessaire de mentionner charges et fonctions au masculin et au féminin (p. 1141).

The text also indicated that federal directives on legislative technique would give “instructions on terms to use in legal texts” (Archives fédérales suisses, 1986, p. 1142), which led to the creation of an interdepartmental working group. *La formulation non sexiste des textes législatifs et administratifs* was the final report of this group, published in 1991, and also appeared in the two other official languages of Switzerland, German and Italian (Elmiger, 2011). It is therefore possible to see the initial political will for cohesion across feminist language solutions in all national languages. The recommendations formulated by the working group and presented in *La formulation non sexiste des textes législatifs et administratifs* focus on “la solution dite creative” (Elmiger, Tunger, & Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017, p. 211). This feminist language planning strategy is characterised by flexibility: les doublets intégraux (les enseignants et les enseignantes ou les enseignant-e-s), neutral terms (le corps enseignant), and new formulations (les personnes qui dispensent des cours à l'école) can all be combined to ensure a text is comprehensible, stylistically appropriate, and applies the principles of non-sexist formulation (Maury Pasquier, 2006). All new legislative acts and acts subject to full revision were to be drafted according to these principles, at all levels, and in all official languages (Maury Pasquier, 2006).

However, the division between the language policies of French-speaking Switzerland and German-speaking Switzerland soon became apparent, and the text found strong opposition in romance-language (francophone and italophone) cantons (Elmiger, 2011). In 1992, the Commission parlementaire de rédaction found that the ‘creative solution’ “posed insurmountable problems in Italian and French” (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). This much more conservative decision was endorsed by the Conseil fédéral (Maury Pasquier, 2006). Ultimately, only German-language legislative acts would be drafted in accordance with the gender-neutral principles and solutions initially recommended for *all* languages in the 1991 text (Elmiger, Tunger, & Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017). Four years on from the decision to halt the application of the 1991 non-sexist language recommendations to French and Italian, the Federal Chancellery published a comprehensive guide on gender-neutral formulation of texts in German, *Leitfaden zum geschlechtergerechten Formulieren*

(Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 1996). The same year, Doris Stump, a politician from the Swiss socialist party, argued in a postulate submitted to the Conseil national that this text should not only be made more readily available to the public, but that parallel guidelines for French, Italian, and Romansch should also be developed (Das Schweizer Parlament, 1996). This postulate was challenged by the president of the Conseil national at the time, Jean-François Leuba, and although the Council indicated its “readiness” to accept the postulate, it ultimately postponed further discussion, as “pour les langues latines ne sont envisageables que des solutions particulières” (Das Schweizer Parlament, 1996). Already, the differences in attitudes and engagement on the issue of feminist language reform and language parity between French-speaking and German-speaking Swiss are extremely obvious, even before comparative analysis of the language guides themselves. This Latin reluctance, and the reasons behind it, will be further explored throughout this chapter.

It was not until the year 2000 that a document specifically applicable to French-speaking Swiss on language parity and non-sexist formulation of official texts was published at a federal level. However, the adoption of this guide was hotly contested by the Conseil national (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). In 1999, Lilian Maury Pasquier, also a member of the Swiss socialist party, submitted a postulate to the Council on non-sexist language use and the “implementation of the recommendations of [its] application” (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). She proposed that the recommendations made in 1991 be applied to all national languages, not just to German (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). However, the motion of the federal council was to reject the postulate. The reason for this rejection was that, according to the council, “the situation has not fundamentally changed since [1991]”, when the Commission de rédaction decided not to apply the official recommendations to French or Italian (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). In response, Maury Pasquier argued that “things have changed, language has evolved, and feminine terms of function or profession have become common” (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). Significantly, she notes that even France has taken up the challenge of feminisation – “et ce n’est pas rien” (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). In this way, we see an indication that the language policies and plans of France have an influence on other French-speaking countries, especially those so closely neighbouring as Switzerland.

The postulate was supported by Paul Günther, another member of the Conseil national and the groupe socialiste (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000), who discussed the linguistic solutions and strategies already found by other francophone countries in their non-sexist language initiatives, and, in a second reference to the example of France, accused the Federal Chancellery of having the same reasons against feminisation as the “masculine sexism” of the Académie française (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). On the other hand, Annemarie Huber-Hotz, a member of the

centre-right radical-democratic party and the federal chancellor of the time, opposed the postulate (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). She advocated for more flexibility, in order to find not only “gender-neutral formulations”, but also “alternative solutions” (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). Despite the contention surrounding the postulate, the Conseil national decided marginally upon its adoption: 68 votes in favour, 66 against (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). We therefore have a concrete expression of the extremely divided positions of officials on the matter of feminist and non-sexist language policy.

It was this debate that finally led to the *Guide de formulation non sexiste des textes administratifs et législatifs de la Confédération* being published by the Federal Chancellery in December 2000, six months after the vote to adopt the recommendations initially made in almost a decade prior in 1991 (Chancellerie fédérale, 2000). Just 25 pages, the French guide is much shorter and much less detailed than that of German-speaking Switzerland. The introduction of the text sketches the chain of events leading to the guide, as well as a brief explanation of its objectives. The guide aims to provide a “synthesis of possible solutions for the French language”, and to encourage “more frequent and more ordered use of the principles of non-sexist formulation” (2000, p. 3). These suggestions are presented in a deliberate manner, with the most strongly recommended strategies at the beginning. For French-speaking Switzerland, these are use of ‘epicene’ or gender-neutral terms, use of doublets, either feminising, doubling, or removing articles, and use of gender-neutral singular collectives. The text also makes official recommendations on gender-neutral, non-personalised, and passive plural forms. Each section contains a list of text types in which a strategy may best be employed, as well as examples, variants, special cases, and limits of application of each strategy. Near the end of the text, the guide advises against the use of the forward slash and hyphens within words. In this way, although both masculine and feminine forms would be present in writing, adjectival agreement would still be masculine alone. To use the guide’s examples, neither “les collaborateurs/trices chargé/es d’examiner...”, nor “les candidat-e-s sont invité-e-s...” would be acceptable solutions (p. 23). Moreover, the guide permits the strategy of a small note in a given text indicating that a generic masculine term refers to both sexes, although use of the generic masculine “should not systematically replace all other solutions” (p. 25).

More recently, a modification was made to the Swiss-French guide in 2006, concerning an example on “droits de la personne” in the section on epicene terms (Chancellerie fédérale, 2000, p. 5). In 18 years, this is the only revision that has been made to the nationally applicable French-language guide to non-sexist language use in official texts, despite the parallel German and Italian-language versions being far more recent, and despite the numerous changes in the field of feminist language planning over the past two decades. In this way, although we cannot deny the magnitude of such a step

towards language parity in French-speaking Switzerland, it is evident that the federal-level official text on non-sexist language use is conservative in its recommendations, and is no longer modern or up-to-date. From this we can infer comparatively lower 'commitment' to feminist language planning and policies on the part of the French-speaking Swiss, and that this linguistic issue is not taken as seriously, nor given as much weight, in the speech community when compared to German-speaking Switzerland. Furthermore, even if these forms and strategies are recommended, they are not binding (Elmiger, 2009). Although the guide is easy to find and access on the website of the Federal Chancellery, the explanatory text of the document on this site announces that the French guide "authorises less fanciful solutions than German" (Chancellerie fédérale ChF, 2006). According to Elmiger, the use of this adjective, "fantaisiste", betrays the presence of negative, or even sceptical, attitudes to formulating non-sexist texts on the part of the French-speaking Swiss (2009, p. 61), as well as a similarly sceptical attitude to the chosen approach of German-speaking Switzerland regarding feminist language reforms.

Suisse romande contrast to alémanique policy

Both the paths towards official guides, and even the guides themselves, appear very different between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland. The solutions vary according to official language, and, as mentioned, the French-language guide authorises far fewer strategies than its German-language counterpart. In comparison to the 25 pages of the French guide, the most recent German version is 192 pages long. Already, this disparity indicates that the original reluctance to agree to language change expressed by Swiss-French officials had an effect on the significantly reduced content and depth of the French-language guide. We can therefore infer a stronger level of engagement to the cause of language parity in German-speaking Switzerland. Elmiger confirms this in his 2000 analysis of the corpus of francophone and germanophone non-sexist language guides, stating that such guides are "beaucoup plus nombreux en Suisse alémanique qu'en Suisse romande, et qu'ils relèvent pour la plupart d'une organisation politique ou institutionnelle" (p. 211).

The original German version of the federal guide, *Leitfaden zur sprachlichen Gleichbehandlung im Deutschen*, was published in 1996, four years earlier than that of French-speaking Switzerland (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 1996). As discussed, German-speaking Switzerland accepted the initial recommendations made in 1991 by the interdepartmental working-group for the non-sexist formulation of legal and administrative texts, while the French-speaking Swiss found "insurmountable" problems within these recommendations (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). This would have contributed to la Suisse alémanique's 'head-start' on feminist language reform compared to its romance-language counterparts. The current version of Germany's feminist

language guide was revised in 2009 and contains three main sections: possibilities offered by the German language to implement equal treatment of women and men in language, advantages and rules of non-sexist formulation, and a reference guide for particular themes, forms, and words that can pose difficulty (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 2009). This reveals that official language bodies involved in the development of the Swiss-German guides have made a concrete commitment to ensure that real language change takes place in official texts, and that there is a responsibility to not just promote, but apply, linguistic ideals of non-sexist and gender-fair writing (forthcoming in Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, & Tunger, 2018).

The other romance language of Switzerland, Italian, also possesses a longer and more detailed document on non-sexist language use, compared to that of la Suisse romande. The *Guida al pari trattamento linguistico di donna e uomo* is 64 pages long, but was published comparatively recently, in 2012 (Cancelleria federale, Servizi linguistici centrali, 2012). The country's official language with the fewest speakers (Romansch excepted), Italian-speaking Swiss received a guide that emphasises the State's responsibility to its population to provide reasonable use ("un uso... congruo") of official languages, which now includes using language in a non-sexist way (2012, p. 9). Although the central linguistic services of the Federal Chancellery underlined the fact that they are unable to "impose" language choices, the Italian guide recognises the influence of the work of public authorities in the interest of the public, and therefore states that the guide's content should be considered as "directives" (2012, p. 9). In this way, we also see that within Switzerland, the French guide on non-sexist formulation is both the least detailed, the least recent, and, seemingly, reflects comparatively lower levels of commitment and engagement by authorities to the cause. This is indicative of a specifically French conception of their language as hindering progress for federal-level feminist language reform; it was not merely a linguistic challenge for 'Latin' languages in Switzerland that prevented policy on language change, as evidently, although the publication of an italophone feminist language guide was more delayed, it is the French guide that reflects the greatest hesitance and scepticism concerning feminist language use.

An interesting element that is present in the official text of German-speaking Switzerland is a preface by a national authority – in the revised version of the Swiss-German text, federal chancellor Corina Casanova wrote an open letter to the guide's readers by way of introduction (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 2009). The absence of validation by a national leader or authority in the Swiss-French guide therefore gives the text less legitimacy; the reader is given no convincing indication of personal investment. If the Swiss-French initiative seems less convincing than that of German-speaking Switzerland, this sentiment is confirmed in the final paragraph of the guide's introduction, with the admission of the guide's "silences" (Chancellerie fédérale, 2000, p. 3). Ironically, the

principles of feminist language planning aim to give more of a voice, presence, and visibility to women in language, leading us to question whether the national Swiss-French policy goes far enough to have any concrete impact on language change or society – but, given the traditional attitudes of the French-speaking Swiss to their language, and the reluctance to implement these changes on a national level, perhaps this is exactly the point.

This lower level of commitment to feminist language planning in French-speaking Switzerland is evidenced not only in the non-sexist language guides themselves, but in their application and implementation. Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, and Tunger explore this in their forthcoming article *La rédaction non-sexiste en Suisse : Pluralité des discours et des pratiques* (2018). Their study includes empirical analysis of “un langage non-sexist ou inclusif” in the corpus of the *Bundesblatt* and *Feuille fédérale* (forthcoming in Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, & Tunger, 2018, p. 3), archives for all texts published by the Swiss Federal Chancellery between 1849 and 2014. The French- and German-language corpuses together comprise of over 400,000,000 words. While their analysis revealed a light trend towards non-sexist language use in the *Feuille fédérale*, this was much less prevalent than in the German-language equivalent, the *Bundesblatt* (Elmiger et al., 2018). For example, the number of times “citoyen et citoyenne” appeared in any *Feuille fédérale* text was far less than the German form “Bürger und Bürgerinnen” in the *Bundesblatt*, with the frequency of use for the French doublets regressing after already weak growth in the 90’s, compared to the exponential and constant increase seen in German (p. 5). Furthermore, Elmiger et al. found that generic masculine forms were used at least nine times more frequently than doublets in the French corpus (2018). While we were aware of these linguistics trends and attitudes, it is significant that this study was able to confirm these empirically. As part of their research, the authors also conducted interviews with both French- and German-speakers in the gender equality and terminology departments of the Federal Chancellery, in order to more accurately examine attitudes towards feminist language planning. These interviews revealed two very different attitudes to federal non-sexist or gender-fair language use: one, held by francophones, that not always using non-sexist or gender-fair language is acceptable, and the other, held by German-speakers, that texts must *always* be gender-sensitive and not applying non-sexist language principles and strategies is not tolerated (Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, & Tunger, 2018). For example, an employee of the terminology division of the Federal Chancellery stated that “les germanophones sont beaucoup plus strict-e-s”, and, unlike francophones, make use of feminist language strategies “systématiquement” (p. 10). The study also discusses the federal-level feminist language guides of French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland. According to Elmiger et al., the French-language *Guide de formulation non sexiste des textes administratifs et législatifs de la Confédération*

...ne semble guère être considéré comme modèle : mentionné deux fois seulement, il serait perçu comme un document dont les solutions proposées pour le français n'iraient pas assez loin et ne seraient pas assez utiles dans le travail rédactionnel quotidien. Ceci contraste avec la Suisse alémanique, où le guide linguistique très détaillé de la section germanophone de la Chancellerie fédérale (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 2009) fonctionne clairement comme un ouvrage de référence (p. 8).

Ultimately, Elmiger et al. observe that the texts emanating from the Chancellerie fédérale tend to privilege “un usage très traditionnel du langage – en recourant notamment à des formes masculines à valeur générique” (2018, p. 13). This is, in fact, indicative of the influence and conception of language of the French of France, which will be explored at length later in this chapter.

The question remains, however: why is the feminist language policy of French-speaking Switzerland so different to the policies of the country's other regions? Although France, as will be discussed shortly, as a larger nation with a language common to la Suisse romande, is a significant exterior influence on the region, this does not fully account for the marked disparity between the official approaches of the three languages in which legislative and administrative texts are written in Switzerland. The Röschtigraben, an aforementioned national ‘myth’ that references the undeniable socio-cultural and political dissimilarities between the French-speaking and German-speaking regions of Switzerland (Rash, 2002), helps to explain some of the social forces that have shaped the unique Suisse-romande approach to and policy on feminist language reform. The two sides of this ‘border’ often have diverging visions of how best to navigate issues, including that of language parity. In this way, the official Swiss-French language policy reflects both the influence of France, and the cultural, linguistic, and historical differences with German-speaking Switzerland, which here are translated into a contrasting language policy on non-sexist language use. This is a significant trend throughout all comparative analyses of feminist language policy of French-speaking Switzerland. The German guide also explicitly recognises the difference between the attitudes towards feminist language reform of German-speaking Switzerland compared to those of the Swiss romance languages. Corina Casanova, the federal chancellor in 2009, stated in her introduction to the German guide that, “im deutschen Sprachraum, und ganz besonders in der Deutschschweiz”, it would no longer be acceptable for texts to not treat men and women “in gleicher Weise” (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 2009, p. 7). This sentiment contrasts the will and enthusiasm of German-speaking Switzerland with French-speaking Switzerland, and indicates that both speakers of each language and political bodies are conscious of this division and disparity between the respective Swiss-German and Swiss-French approaches to non-sexist language use. These differences speak to, among other factors, divergent conceptions of the role of language in society.

In terms of linguistic ideology, the official germanophone guide contains recognition of the fact that language pervades every aspect of society (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 2009). The federal guide expresses the importance of rendering women more linguistically visible and naming them explicitly, and, in this way, “geschlechtergerechte Formulierungen [leisten] einen... Beitrag zur tatsächlichen Gleichstellung” (2009, p. 13). This concrete connection between language and social reality made in the Swiss-German guide indicates the presence of an ideology of linguistic relativity – that language possesses the capability to influence thought, and therefore, to a certain extent, reality. Further analysis indicates elements of ideological linguistic determinism in the German version of the official guide, with its emphasis on the links between linguistic changes and social ones, as well as the primacy of language in this hierarchy of both changes and acts of change (Pauwels, 1998). A dialogue is therefore entered into, a relation of circular causality in which our ideas and thoughts are influenced by language, and, reciprocally, our ideas and ways of thinking affect our linguistic expression and language use. This ideology was very clearly not present in the federal francophone guide.

The position taken by the Federal Chancellery on language parity in the French of Switzerland indicates a Swiss-French reaction against or opposition to the Swiss-German approaches to this issue, as well as a number of influences underlying the policies themselves, such as the French influence on French-speaking Switzerland, as well as the impact of the cantonal system on legislation (or even the capability, or necessity, to legislate at the federal level). As la Suisse romande seemed to express its desire to move away from German-speaking Switzerland’s approach to the linguistic issue of non-sexist language policy, the francophone region’s alignment with France on this issue becomes increasingly apparent.

Distance from Swiss-German policy, alignment with France

France’s official policy on language parity is found in the document *Femme, j’écris ton nom... : guide d’aide à la féminisation des noms des métiers, titres, grades, et fonctions*. It was published in December 1999, exactly one year prior to the federal-level Swiss-French equivalent, by le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and l’Institut National de la Langue Française. The document is a policy framework encouraging the use of feminised forms in official documents in France. Interestingly, the guide includes a preface written by then Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, who underlines the social evolution influential in sparking both more official and concerted feminisation efforts. The French policy therefore demonstrates that the government in this period was cognisant of the social effects of such guiding documents, as well as the need in both the workforce and language for increased visibility for women.

Although France was one of the first European countries to establish official regulations for feminisation (Burr, 2003), the road to the guide's official publication was long and difficult. In 1984, Yvette Roudy, the minister for women's rights at the time, proposed a law against the discrimination and defamation of women, and created a terminology commission for "vocabulaire concernant les activités des femmes" (Institut National de la langue française, 1999, p. 16). This exploration of the modern state of representation of women in the French language was one of the first steps towards an official policy in favour of feminisation in France (Burr, 2003). The terminology commission was led by Benoîte Groult, who investigated, among numerous other sources, dictionaries, grammar books, language used in the media, and the work of linguists in other francophone countries in order to examine the potential for the feminisation of certain job titles, as well as researching possible linguistic reforms to reduce discrimination and promote women's visibility (Burr, 2003). The commission put forward that all professional terms should be feminised, through use of doublets or derivations of both new and existing nouns (2003). In 1986, these propositions were accepted, and the Prime Minister of the time, Laurent Fabius, penned a circular in le Journal Officiel de la République Française, discussing these new rules and strategies for feminisation (Journal Officiel de la République Française, 1986). The circular underlined the aim to "adapter la langue à cette évolution sociale" (1986, p. 4267), referencing the increasing number of women in an ever-growing number and variety of positions in the workforce during this period. In this way, we can see that Fabius and the French government subscribed to the ideology that language is reflective of reality, and in the case of women in the workforce, governmental language planning was necessary to ensure that working women are reflected in real, used language. However, the momentum of feminist language planning efforts slowed with the accession of the political right to power (Burr, 2003). With frequent political changes throughout the following decade, it was not until 1998 that Lionel Jospin, leftist Prime Minister (in 'cohabitation' with President Jacques Chirac of the right), discussed anew the topic of linguistic parity (Gouvernement.fr, n.d.). A second circular was published in which Jospin deplored the inattention of his predecessors to this issue, reiterated the content of the circular published 12 years earlier, and vowed to ensure that feminisation entered "irrévocablement dans nos mœurs" (Journal Officiel de la République Française, 1998, p. 3565).

The work of l'Institut national de la langue française, the text *Femme, j'écris ton nom... : guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms des métiers, titres, grades, et fonctions* was published a year after the second circular, to a very mixed reception (Burr, 2003). A substantial 119 pages in length, the document explains the history of feminisation and highlights the existence of feminised forms dating back to the 12th Century, discusses objections both linguistic and sociocultural in nature against feminisation, and provides a variety of sources and expansive repertoire of feminine noun forms. A

suggestion on the masculinisation of typically feminine noun forms (such as sage-femme) also features (Institut national de la langue française, 1999). However, discussion surrounding the importance and meaning of feminisation and feminist language planning efforts, particularly in the workforce, is very limited in the French text, and focus remains centred on language reflecting social realities, or “la capacité [de la langue] de s’adapter aux évolutions de la société” (1999, p. 53). Furthermore, the document support use of the generic masculine in both plural form and in singular form for general contexts – for example, “Le ministre de la culture a dans ses attributions” is considered the appropriate form to employ in an official text, regardless of the gender of the minister in question (1999, p. 38, my emphasis). *Femme, j’écris ton nom... : guide d’aide à la féminisation des noms des métiers, titres, grades, et fonctions* did, however, advise against using a generic masculine form for any reference to a specific woman.

Although much lengthier and more detailed than its Swiss-French counterpart, the French guide was met with immense opposition from the Académie française, an official language authority charged with maintaining and conserving the standard French language for almost 400 years (Académie française, n.d.). The language body rejected the concept of feminisation and feminist language planning initiatives entirely, meaningful as this rejection is representative of the ideological fracture between linguistic purity and linguistic parity between men and women, and also speaks to the level of significance French speakers place on their language. Just as the Swiss are subject to significant differences in official feminist language planning policies across cantons and national languages, so too were the French given linguistic recommendations completely in opposition to each other by their two official language authorities – the Académie française and the Institut national de la langue française, which led to confusion surrounding usage and application (Baider, Khaznadar, & Moreau, 2007).

Founded in 1635 by the cardinal Richelieu, the Académie française acts as an official language authority in France, and publishes official dictionaries. Its goal is, above all, “la défense de la langue française” (Académie française, n.d.). This almost militaristic aim is expressed through the provision of precise rules and regulations on French grammar, spelling, literature, and “le bon usage” of the language in general (Académie française, n.d.). Despite the history and prestige of the institution, its recommendations are not politically binding, and the Head of State (the Prime Minister) functions as its protector – this makes the rift between the actions of the government to institute binding policy on language parity and the Académie’s complete rejection of their initiatives all the more significant, and worthy of analysis. Today the language body is composed of 40 members, “Les Immortels” (noting the usage of the generic masculine in this title, an indication of its position on the issue of gender-neutral language and feminisation), elected by their peers, who in turn elect a “Secrétaire

perpétuel” (Académie française, n.d.). Historically, the Académie française only accepted French men to its ranks; today the institution is more diverse than ever before, with four men of non-French origin and four women seated on the famous “fauteuils” (Académie française, n.d.). The language body takes conservative and protectionist positions on language issues extremely often, not only against feminisation and feminist language planning strategies, but also on policy concerning regional languages and dialects (Carrère d’Encausse, 2008). These priorities of ‘protection’ and ‘defence’ have led to a language authority that discourages almost any effort to ensure the French language changes with the times. When the terminology commission for vocabulary concerning women’s activities was formed by Yvette Roudy, the Académie immediately published a declaration stating its objection (Dumézil & Lévi-Strauss, 1984).

The institution’s arguments against France’s first tentative steps towards improving language parity contained several telling themes, although presented under the guise of purely linguistic concern. Firstly, the Académie française stated that there exists “aucun rapport d’équivalence... entre le genre grammatical et le genre naturel”, as the function of the gender known as ‘masculine’ is “genre non-marqué”, whereas the ‘feminine’ is the “marked” gender (Dumézil & Lévi-Strauss, 1984). Therefore, as the unmarked (masculine) gender is less discriminatory than the marked (feminine) gender, the Académie’s linguistic preference is to prioritise use of the masculine. Secondly, the language authority deplores the “clumsy” formation of feminised forms, which come across so due to the fact that the unmarked gender renders them superfluous as it already fulfils their function. Furthermore, some feminised noun forms carry a “nuance dépréciative” due to their “formation artificielle”, according to Dumézil and Lévi-Strauss (1984). Lastly, ‘Les immortels’ warn that changes made carelessly to the French language risk serious repercussions, particularly linguistic confusion and disorder. Evidently, it is extremely difficult to accept the notion of ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ gender when the language itself does not allow the Académie française to express this without using the terms ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. It is, of course, impossible for a grammatical gender to be simultaneously masculine and unmarked, just as it is impossible for gender in the French language to be neither feminine or masculine, particularly as the Académie française has always been extremely concerned with French’s Latin heritage. Further, we must question, logically, if any so-called “nuance dépréciative” of feminine forms of titles and functions is truly due to their ‘artificial’ or unnatural construction, or rather due to misogynistic stereotypes perpetuated in language and discourse. Language itself betrays the precarious base upon which the Académie française arguments are built.

The precarity of its purportedly linguistic arguments nonetheless, the language body continued to protest loudly against feminist language planning policy and initiatives in France throughout the period leading up to the publication of the official national guide by l’Institut National de la langue

française in 1999, periodically throughout the next two decades, and even as recently as 2017 (Académie française, 2017). The second circular on feminisation, published in 1998 by Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, was also denounced by the Académie française (Académie française, 2002). Around this time, Jospin also began to call his female cabinet ministers “Madame *la* ministre” (Burr, 2003, p. 1). However, the Immortels were shocked by politicians “qui s’occupent de la néologie” – an area, of course, that the Académie française sees as their responsibility alone (Wenz-Dumas, 1998). Jean Dutourd, an Immortel since 1978, responded to this phenomenon using extremely gendered language, complaining of “les effets de la polygamie de Jospin”, a man “entouré des sultanes”, and alleging that Jospin had revived efforts to establish feminisation in official texts just to “faire plaisir à son harem” (Wenz-Dumas, 1998). This interesting characterisation of supporters of feminist language planning as polygamists is in total opposition to the traditional values of the Académie française and illustrates precisely the linguistic pretexts behind which the institution attempts to mask its clearly social prejudices.

While Switzerland does not have a language body charged with ‘protecting’ or ‘conserving’ standard versions of their languages such as the Académie française, nor an institution that has responded to feminist language planning policies or initiatives with such vehemence, the Académie française has nevertheless had an enormous influence in France and in the Francophonie. There are numerous instances throughout the struggle for official feminist language policy in French-speaking Switzerland that the influences of France, and particularly the Académie française, have been mentioned. For example, as discussed, Liliane Maury Pasquier recognised the significance of French steps towards official policies on feminisation despite the objection from institutions within the country in the 1999 postulate submitted to the Conseil national (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). She used this to argue that French-speaking and Italian-speaking Switzerland deserved the application of the feminist language recommendations made almost a decade prior, as even France had already taken up the challenge of feminisation, and as language had evolved not only in Switzerland but in neighbouring French-speaking countries (2000). In this way, we see an indication that the language policies and initiative undertaken in France indeed have an influence on other French-speaking countries, and that this dominant French influence is particularly strong in Switzerland, being a much smaller, close-neighbouring francophone population. The same postulate was supported by Paul Günther, who, as mentioned, discussed the steps taken by other French-speaking countries towards language parity, and made another significant reference to the example set in France (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). Günther argued that when the Federal Chancellery chose not to apply the aforementioned feminist language recommendations made by the 1991 working group, they did so with the same “sexisme masculine” of the Académie française (Official Bulletin | Swiss

Parliament, 2000). As previously discussed, the Académie française position draws on an ideology of standard French as pure, white, clean, neutral – to be conserved and protected. Günther also references the fact that both the Federal Chancellery and the Académie française seem to ignore that the French language was once rich in feminised forms prior to the 17th Century, and that other francophone countries, such as Québec and Belgium have already “das Problem schon längst gelöst” (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000).

Interestingly, further evidence of the values of the Académie française and the ideology surrounding the French language concerning feminist language planning efforts can be seen in Thierry de Haller’s 2006 interpellation to the Conseil d’Etat of Vaud on “the problem” of la grammaire épiciène (Grand Conseil de Canton de Vaud, 2006, p. 7221). De Haller inquires as to the Conseil d’Etat’s plans to “put an end to” texts being written systematically “de manière épiciène” by the Conseil d’Etat and l’Administration cantonale vaudoise. This is due to a postulate in 2002 by Mariela Muri-Gurales for linguistic parity in texts produced by the Administration vaudoise being narrowly rejected by the Grand Conseil: in de Haller’s opinion, therefore, no official text produced by the canton’s administration should take into account gender-neutral or non-sexist language principles (Grand Conseil de Canton de Vaud, 2006). Most tellingly, de Haller states that the “épouvantable grammaire épiciène” “a pour effet d’alourdir les textes et de défigurer de manière grave la langue française, pourtant connue comme étant l’une des plus belle et des plus légère” (p. 7222, 7225). This position illustrates clearly the presence of ideological views aligned with those of the Académie française in terms of language purity and concern for the protection and defence of a delicate and idealised version of the French language – under threat, apparently, from “[une] grammaire épiciène” and “le féminisme... de basse vulgarité” possessing “rien de féminin ou de flatteur pour la Femme” (p. 7226). According to de Haller, “une langue est constituée par son usage, lequel est constaté par Académie française”, elaborating that la grammaire épiciène should be conceived of as a dialect with no right to impinge on the national language, standard French, nor should this “forme particulière” be given priority by the Conseil d’Etat (p. 7226). Given the Académie française’s centuries-old anti-regional language rhetoric, it is unsurprising that supporters of this postulate saw the growing currency with which texts respecting non-sexist language guidelines, despite the lack of official binding directives on the matter in the canton, were being published not as progress, but “un recul” (p. 7229).

While de Haller’s resolution was refuted and refused, it is necessary to recognise the extent to which the ideologies and conceptions of language of an institution belonging to a different country pervade numerous aspects of this linguistic debate at levels both federal and cantonal. The Académie française evidently has a large influence in French-speaking Switzerland, and the institution is

representative of the attitudes of many to the French language – be it the standard French of Paris, or the French of la Suisse romande. Therefore, just as it is important to analyse language policy for its underlying influences and motivations, so too is it worthwhile deconstructing the anti-feminist language planning rhetoric stemming from the Académie française. This allows us to better understand the motivations and influences underlying its, and other institutions', rejection of this type of linguistic reform, as well as shedding greater clarity on a powerful influence on French language policy and, by extension, Swiss-French language policy. Thérèse Moreau, a Swiss writer and consultant on epicene writing and editing, also attests to this French influence. Using the example of the 2007 French presidential election campaign, in which Ségolène Royal was a candidate, Moreau states that this event "a beaucoup fait pour remettre dans le débat public l'absence de mot féminin tel que... vainqueuse" (Dumais et al., 2008, p. 176). Furthermore, she posits that, in order to ensure continued progress on language parity in Switzerland, France should be more "révolutionnaire", as "sa proximité fait que beaucoup ici veulent faire et dire comme à Paris" (2008, p. 181). It is therefore possible to see the linguistic influence of France on French-speaking Switzerland, even if this influence takes place in the collective imaginary of groups that have instituted these shared ideas of nations and their mutual identities and influences.

In this way, the 'value' assigned to the French of France – as the version of French to which all other varieties of the language are compared (and found inferior) – by institutions such as the Académie française has become an ideology that has formed a large part of any French-speaking identity. The prestige of the 'langage de Paris' is taken as an example by Switzerland, to the extent that almost all significant events leading to official language policies on language parity took place at almost exactly the same time in France as in Switzerland. For example, one of the most significant correlations in the approach to language parity in Switzerland and France is the drastic slowing of progress after initial attempts. In Switzerland, after the publication of "La formulation non sexiste des textes législatifs et administratifs" in 1991, the Commission de rédaction renounced their decision a year later, citing "insurmountable" difficulties in formulating non-sexist texts in French and Italian, and it was not until years later that these recommendations were put into practice for French-speaking Swiss (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). A similar wait for the French; after the 1986 announcement by the then Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, that official texts should take into account the principles of non-sexist language use, it was not until twelve years later that further action was taken to attain language parity. Both the French and Swiss-French guides were published within a year of each other, illustrating the influence of the French of France on the French of Switzerland. The two nations' geographic and linguistic proximity is evident in the symmetry of the

governing and official language bodies' choices on this issue, which led to the countries' parallel paths towards establishing their feminist language policies.

Unique romande influences, unique romande identity

Although the French influence on la Suisse romande is apparent in numerous aspects of the linguistic issue of feminist language policy, and the French hesitance to commit to improving equality in the language due to ideological conceptions of French held by influential language authorities such as the Académie française has had an effect on Switzerland's progress towards language parity, feminisation and rejecting use of the generic masculine were not contested to the same degree in Switzerland as in France (Armstrong & Pooley, 2010). The French of Switzerland does not have to operate under the immense cultural burden of the French of France to the same extent (Elmiger, 2011). Although French-speaking Swiss carry a certain anxiety around establishing an identity separate and distinct from the German-speaking Swiss majority (Matser et al., 2010), without this pressure of purism and unilingualism – Swiss-French contains numerous 'helvetisms', or "romandismes", without even mentioning the contact (albeit localised to very small districts in certain cantons) between French and the country's three other official languages (Talos, 2010) – it is possible to imagine that French-speaking Switzerland could make language changes, or, better, modernisations, to its language without the severity of repercussions seen in France. Ultimately, however, despite not receiving 'standard' French's valorised treatment and conception to the same degree historically and symbolically, the French of Switzerland is nonetheless influenced by and implicated in the same ideologies and identities as the French of France.

Another way in which the language parity policy in Switzerland differs to that of France is the Swiss cantonal system. Although guides for non-sexist language use and formulation of texts are available at a federal level, these texts, in order to be applicable to all cantons, contain a certain level of ambiguity. In this way, the nationally applicable policies can still be relevant at a cantonal level, and foster openness to numerous expressive possibilities in a gender-neutral or non-sexist manner. We can therefore see the necessity for not fixing or specifying regulations on feminisation and non-sexist writing in such a context; official guides and texts diverge according to canton or language spoken. The responsibility and obligation to create specific legislation and guides thus remains with the cantons, as the lack of detail in the previously discussed federal texts permits each canton to determine its own language policy and political will to create real language parity. With this level of ambiguity, the fact that the official Swiss-French federal text on non-sexist language use is not binding, and the evidence collected by Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, and Tunger just last year showing the low francophone commitment to applying the recommendations of the federal language guide,

we could doubt that Suisse romande linguistic customs or habits will ever change if they do not *have* to. However, official regulations can stipulate social change through facilitating the internalisation of norms, as well as reinforcing their application (Pauwels, 1998). In this way, even though the Swiss-French have not received specific or detailed obligations in federal texts or language guides, it is possible to infer a policy aimed at internalising norms of non-sexist language use in the speech community, and that the cantons may take up more enthusiastically the challenge of systematically implementing a given feminist language reform policy.

To conclude my analysis of federal-level feminist language policy in Switzerland, it is very clear that French-speaking Switzerland is most strongly influenced by neighbouring France. These parallels reveal themselves both in the timelines of each country's respective feminist language guides, and in their conservative approaches to non-sexist language reform. Significantly, the French-speaking identity of la Suisse romande adopts the linguistic conservatism and protectionism, oft expressed by the Académie française, and traditionally applied to the 'standard' French of France, in its response to the linguistic issue of feminist language planning. In doing so, federal French-language policy in this area becomes markedly disparate to the German-language counterpart. As we have discovered, in their concern to cultivate a separate, independent identity from the Swiss-German majority, the Swiss-French manifest, through the medium of feminist language policy, their perceived linguistic, historical, and cultural differences, significantly influential in their social imaginary, to German-speaking Swiss. It is through close analysis of language policy that these underlying ideologies and influences, linguistic and social in nature, become more clearly seen and understood.

Chapter 3: One French-speaking region, one policy: Regional feminist language policy for French-speaking Switzerland

As discussed earlier, Switzerland can be divided into three regions: la Suisse romande in the west, la Suisse italienne to the south-east, and la Suisse alémanique, the central majority (Leclerc, 2015). These regions correspond roughly to the linguistic borders found within the country and have remained largely unchanged for centuries, thus pre-dating the formation of even the earliest versions of the country (2015). Clearly demarcated, they have relatively little overlap or interaction. Although le Conseil fédéral officially recognises these linguistic regions and has committed to ensuring at least one representative from la Suisse romande and la Suisse italienne seated on the council (Le conseil fédéral, 2018), it is the official borders of cantons and communes that establish whether a given state or district is French, German, Italian, or Romansh-speaking, or in much rarer cases, bi- or trilingual.

La Suisse romande is the only region that has its own, specific feminist language planning guide. While language policy is only binding at a cantonal level, this is nevertheless significant. This chapter therefore focusses solely on analysis of the regional-level non-sexist language policy of la Suisse romande. The presence of a regional guide speaks to the cohesion and solidarity amongst the French-speaking cantons and francophone Swiss. While this can be partially attributed to their identity as a linguistic minority and the subsequent urge to protect their 'group' from the perceived threat of the German-speaking Swiss majority through unification – here on the front of the linguistic issue of feminist language planning – the fact that la Suisse italienne has not responded to its own status as an even smaller minority also indicates the presence of the unique francophone view of the French language, discussed in the previous chapter (Matser et al., 2010). Furthermore, we might also infer that the German-speaking Swiss, more secure in their identity as the dominant linguistic majority in Switzerland, may therefore feel a Suisse alémanique regional policy is unnecessary as their cohesion is already present in their global 'Swiss' identity, rather than a perceived need to emphasise their 'germanophone-ness', as the francophone Swiss do through this regional feminist language policy. These significant contributing factors to a Suisse romande identity of being both French-speaking and a linguistic minority are evident in the underlying ideological content of the region's feminist language planning policy.

In 2002, la Suisse romande received their most significant and detailed document on rédaction épïcène to date – *Ecrire les genres: guide romand d'aide à la rédaction administrative et législative épïcène*, published by les Bureaux de l'égalité romands. The offices for gender equality of all bi- and monolingual French-speaking cantons – Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel, Valais, and Vaud –

co-operated to produce the comprehensive, 48-page text. This text was ground-breaking because it is the first document cohesive across all of la Suisse romande, and one of the first French-language documents in a Swiss context conceived of as “un outil journalier” (Bureaux de l’égalité romands, 2002, p. 4), meaning that the guide deals with not only specifically legislative writing, but also applies the principles of rédaction épicière to administrative and journalistic contexts.

Telling introductions: implicit and explicit ideologies and influences

The document begins with a preface by Liliane Maury Pasquier, an important name in the history of French-language feminist language planning and reform in Switzerland, introducing the perceived reasons this particular guide was needed in la Suisse romande. The often-informal register of the preface sets the tone for *Ecrire les genres* – approachable, accessible, yet thorough. Most importantly, Maury Pasquier sets up the motivations and aims of the guide, and why the Bureaux de l’égalité romands believe that feminist language reform is necessary. This is one of the first times in an official document in French-speaking Switzerland that the motivations behind advocated feminist language planning initiatives are explicitly laid out:

Dieu, merci ! La langue n’est ni une science exacte ni un lieu d’application de théories imaginées en laboratoire. Elle est le miroir de l’évolution de la société, de ses mœurs et de son organisation et se doit donc d’être le reflet des êtres humains qui la parlent. Et si j’en appelle à des puissances supérieures, c’est qu’il est parfois difficile voire décourageant de compter sur l’ouverture et les capacités d’adaption des personnes—femmes et hommes—qui se font les gardiennes d’une langue de musée ou d’académie (2002, p. 1).

Immediately we see two key themes emerging from this introduction: Maury Pasquier introduces a discussion on the function of language, and repeatedly ties in criticism of the approaches of language ‘guardians’, who seem to conceive of language in purely scientific and academic senses. Beginning with what language is *not*, Maury Pasquier’s statement that language is neither an exact science, nor an application of theories in laboratory conditions indicates that *Ecrire les genres* is committed to providing practical language planning solutions, with real-world applications. This also reminds the reader that while the field of language planning can seem removed from the messy realities of everyday language use, the Bureaux de l’égalité romands have taken an important step in shifting the emphasis of their guide to real-world, real-time language. This sentiment is continued in her assertion that it is both ‘difficult and discouraging’ to count on the openness and adaptability of those that function as language ‘guardians’ to bring about language change, alluding to the fact that these roles are often primarily concerned with keeping language in a particular, pristine, unchanged

state, such as that 'curated' in a museum, or codified in an academic textbook or dictionary. The reader recognises that this lack of adaptability hinders language change and progress, and of course cannot help but call to mind the aforementioned Académie française during this passage.

Arguably the most important point that emerges from these opening sentences is Maury Pasquier's presentation of the view of language adopted by the guide and the Bureaux de l'égalité romands. *Ecrire les genres* operates under the linguistic ideology that language is the mirror of societal evolution, morals, and organisation, and therefore should be the reflection of the human beings that speak it. This is placed in direct opposition to the aims of language 'guardians', who argue that language should not be reformed, but protected, defended. Although Maury Pasquier does not mention the Académie française explicitly, it is clear just to which "gardiennes d'une langue de musée ou d'académie" she is referring (p. 1). As previously discussed, the view of a society, institution, or group on language varies according to the linguistic ideology to which it subscribes. Maury Pasquier's quote indicates that the Bureaux de l'égalité of la Suisse romande believe that, as language should be the mirror of society, feminist language planning initiatives and guides such as *Ecrire les genres* are necessary to aid in language 'catching up' with social realities. This linguistic ideology, presented in the most significant Suisse romande guide on rédaction épïcène, has clear links to the ideology behind the initial feminist language planning initiatives seen in France. As discussed at length in the previous chapter, a key motivation of the first steps towards creating feminist language policies and guidelines in France was the will to "adapter la langue à cette évolution sociale", because "l'accession des femmes de plus en plus nombreuses à des fonctions de plus en plus diverses est une réalité qui doit trouver sa traduction dans le vocabulaire." (Journal Officiel de la République Française, 1986, p. 4267). This explicit reference to the phenomenon of increasing numbers of women entering an increasing variety of positions in the workforce, and the lack of linguistic progress to reflect this, also indicates that the underlying motivation of government officials of France was to shape language in order for it to better reflect social reality. In this way, we can see that the French government, like the Bureaux de l'égalité of la Suisse romande, subscribe to the ideology that language reflects reality, and in the case of French women in the workforce, feminist language planning was a necessary tool utilised by the government to ensure that these working women were adequately reflected in used language. It is also evident that these language changes 'lagged behind' social changes, especially concerning second-wave feminism in the decades post-'68, which saw the entry of many women into the workforce (Burr, 2003); indicative of an important correlation between the state of society's imaginary and the state of language.

In this way, the institutions responsible for the language planning of women's representation in language in both la Suisse romande and France (the Bureaux de l'égalité romands, the Institut

national de la langue française, and the French government) subscribe to fundamentally aligned linguistic ideologies – namely that language is a mirror, or is reflective of, society, and therefore to more accurately reflect it, is in need of feminist language planning. Both are inspired by the idea that that language change “lags behind social change” (Pauwels, 1998, p. 95-6), and therefore focus on policies that amend or modify the representation of men and women in language, so that language better reflects women’s presence and condition in society, as well as the state (or reality) of society. The burden of this policy is on the governments and Bureaux de l’égalité romands to ensure that the French language is capable of evolving with the social changes of the time, behind which the government and social institutions consider it to lag. In this way, feminist language planning becomes a vehicle for linguistic changes, which in turn reflect society. Therefore, the conception of language as a mirror of societal evolution indicates a fundamentally significant parallel with the French conception of language, and thus gives the reader further insight into motivation behind the feminist language planning strategies in both *Ecrire les genres* published by the Bureaux de l’égalité romands, and in the initial language reform attempts of France. Furthermore, it is evident that in its close alignment with the French government, la Suisse romande enters into a similar ideological conflict with institutions, such as the Académie française, regarding linguistic and social aims for the French language. Chapter 2 highlighted the intimidating influence the Académie française seems to have in not just France, but the Francophonie as a whole, a point I will revisit later in this chapter.

Returning to Maury Pasquier’s preface, she also outlines the significant achievements in feminist language planning and policy in French-speaking Switzerland over the last several decades, and looks to future endeavours for feminist language reform supporters:

Reste maintenant à faire ce qui est certainement le plus dur : convaincre celles et ceux qui rédigent les textes législatifs et administratifs de la légitimité du but à atteindre et leur donner des outils concrets pour pouvoir le faire. C’est à cela que va contribuer ce guide et je m’en réjouis (p. 1).

Interestingly, Maury Pasquier highlights the reluctance of those in positions of power and influence to accept the “legitimacy” of feminist language reform initiatives. Therefore, the guide is not only a practical resource for those that draft and edit legal and administrative texts, but also a tool through which these officials might be more convinced of the necessity of language change. A second foreword, written by Marianne Frishknecht, the president of the Conférence latine des déléguées à l’égalité, reinforces both the linguistic ideology adopted throughout the guide, and the guide’s purpose. Frishknecht, like Maury Pasquier, reiterates the linguistic ideology present in *Ecrire les genres* and its aims, as well as the difficulties surrounding language change and reform.

Mais il est difficile de changer les habitudes langagières, de bousculer des coutumes bien ancrées. Les stéréotypes perdurent dans la langue et il n'est pas aisé d'admettre que l'on a pu, à son insu et contre sa volonté, exclure de son discours une partie de la population. On nous a répété si souvent et en toute circonstance que le masculin était générique, universel, que nous oublions facilement que les temps ne sont pas si lointains où "le candidat" ne pouvait signifier que "l'être mâle faisant acte de candidature". La société a changé, les femmes ont conquis les mêmes droits que les hommes : le langage doit en rendre compte (p. 2).

Most significant can be considered her stance on the function of language: that it needs to 'realise', or reflect, societal changes that have seen women achieve the same rights as men. Again, this reinforces the linguistic ideology held by officials in la Suisse romande – society has changed, and language needs feminist reform in order to catch up and to reflect the modern world. Interestingly, Frischknecht includes the myth of the 'generic' masculine in her discussion, indicating that not only is the masculine gender in the French language far from as universal as it is claimed to be, but that feminist language planning, and guides such as *Ecrire les genres*, are necessary to prevent female exclusion and invisibility in language and in texts both legislative and administrative, and to more accurately reflect the presence of both genders in society and in the workforce. However, she takes this necessity for language change one step further, arguing that "le langage, écrit ou parlé, fait partie des outils permettant l'accès à ... égalité" (p. 2). In this way we see not only an ideology similar to that of the French government in that language reflects reality, but a concept of language's function that ties in elements of the Whorfian hypothesis: that language helps to shape reality, and the world around us (Whorf, 1956).

Like Maury Pasquier, Frischknecht also highlights the difficulties of changing linguistic habits and "coutumes bien ancrées", even if one is aware of enduring stereotypes 'fossilised' or preserved within language and the ways in which we employ it. These difficulties often necessitate convincing action from "les collectivités publiques" (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002, p. 2), as Frischknecht asserts that not only the constitutional mandate for "de droit et de fait" equality of men and women (le Conseil fédéral, 1999) means that texts emanating from la Suisse romande and cantonal administrations should be written in manner respecting the principles of equality, but that, because such legislative and administrative texts will refer to and address both men and women; "il faut que chacun et chacune se reconnaissent dans tous les textes administratifs ou législatifs" (p. 2). Therefore, the guide *Ecrire les genres: guide romand d'aide à la rédaction administrative et législative épicienne* is, despite these difficulties, a necessity, as it provides solutions to questions surrounding grammar, correctness, and "barbarisme" in "une écriture épicienne" (p. 2).

Interestingly, in her brief discussion of the history of feminist language planning that facilitated the publication of the guide, it is to la Francophonie that Frischknecht makes connections. She sketches a brief history of purely *francophone* feminist language initiatives, touching on the actions of Belgium, France, and Québec. The fact that no reference at all is made to the German-speaking majority of Switzerland speaks volumes, especially considering the fact that in the cantons of Bern, Fribourg, and Valais, French and German have equal, co-official status. The feminist language planning and reform initiatives taken in these cantons – and elsewhere within Switzerland itself – would therefore have been contextually relevant to the work of the Bureaux de l'égalité romands, even if for no other reason than almost half of the involved cantons possess a significant German-speaking population. Quietly, and without justification or discussion, it is to their fellow French-speakers that the Bureaux indicate their allegiance. In fact, throughout *Ecrire les genres*, consistently strong parallels are drawn between France and la Suisse romande: an indication that 'francophone', in the case of attitude towards language change and non-sexist language, may be a stronger unifying characteristic than 'Swiss'.

Modern translations of the historical influences of the French of France in la Suisse romande

After Maury Pasquier's and Frischknecht's introductions, the guide opens with a brief roadmap of its contents, and assertion of its function of "mode d'emploi" (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002, p. 4). Significantly, a substantial portion of this introductory section focuses on historical and linguistics reasons for which "une telle démarche" has been undertaken, both in la Suisse romande and elsewhere in the Francophonie (p. 4). The introduction juxtaposes 'new' words (entered into the dictionary after 1977) such as "néonazi", "partenariat", or "liposuccion", without which "nous ne saurions aujourd'hui nous en passer" and which seem to have always existed in our vocabulary, with those, such as "amatrice" or "ambassadrice", that feel unusual or strange (p. 5). The guide posits that, not having had adequate use or opportunity for normalisation, these expressions "nous paraissent... raides, engoncés comme habit du dimanche... inélégantes" (p. 5). This indicates the Bureaux de l'égalité romands' level of commitment to deliberately distancing the guide from simply following linguistic convention for tradition's sake in cases in which they see language reform to be necessary (unlike the highly traditional and conservative Académie Française), as well as reminding the reader that countless neologisms other than new feminised forms of masculine profession and title nouns have been received with openness and acceptance in the French language.

In its detailed account of the history of feminisation and treatment of the feminine grammatical gender in the French language, *Ecrire les genres* touches on several significant themes. A fairly comprehensive historical discussion of the use of both feminised profession nouns, such as

“meunières, laitières, métayères”, and doublets (“toutes et tous; celles et ceux”), evidences that “il était important de s'adresser aux femmes comme aux hommes”. This is because, even in these historical patriarchal societies, “les femmes gardaient une certaine puissance” (p. 5). Women’s economic, political, and social participation (and presence) in society was acknowledged linguistically, as shown in texts dating from the early Middle Ages. This representation in language of “le monde dans son intégralité”, in which “toutes et tous avaient... une place distincte également assignée par le langage” (p. 5-6), indicates the presence of the French gender ideology of the ‘Gallic singularity’, even at this early historical period. Tracy Adams, in a forthcoming article, defines this deeply engrained, popular perception of the French (and held amongst the French themselves), as the harmonious relationship between the sexes, which are understood to be fundamentally and naturally different from, but *complementary to*, each other (2020). Whether it is indeed more perception than reality, this ideology of the Gallic singularity is clearly very present in the French social imaginary. With origins discernible in early medieval stories of courtly love, such as Chrétien de Troyes’ *Lancelot et Guenièvre*, the concept of the Gallic singularity involves the alignment of male and female ‘will’, the conception of women as simultaneously intellectually equal, yet legally inferior, and the innate, natural complementarity of the sexes (Adams, 2020). Adams contextually situates her historical discussion of the Gallic singularity in touching on the writing of Christine de Pizan, as well as the roles of powerful royal mistress and female regency; French women were visible, integral, valuable participants in elite social life (2020). In this way, we can see the anchoring of modern French gender relations in a long and significant past. What is most relevant to our discussion is Adams’ suggestion that, the Gallic singularity being essential to a certain type of French (and primarily masculine) identity, it is the perceived disruption of the concept’s main tenet, the complementarity of the genders, that is perceived as an attack on a uniquely French way of existing in the world, the roots of which go back to the 12th Century (2020). Feminist language planning is perceived as one such disruption of this supposed complementary relationship between the sexes through the symbolic cleavage of the feminine and the masculine: no longer can the masculine function as universal and generic, no longer is the feminine ‘equal’ (in its particularity), yet ‘inferior’ (subsumed by the masculine at all opportunities), no longer can the genders seem to work together, complementarily, in language as they once seemed to. In this way, it is evident why many French, including institutions like the Académie française, were unhappy with proposals for feminist reform of the French language, due to what they saw as the disruption of this complementarity. That the Gallic singularity continues to hold forth in the collective conscious and social imaginary of the French is significant, as it evidently features in the modern French identity, and thus influences heavily conceptions of gender, and by extension gender in language. That this identity is present in

the feminist language planning guide of la Suisse romande shows that francophone Swiss, too, have assumed this ideological history.

Returning to *Ecrire les genres*' historical linguistic overview, the guide then goes on to discuss women's loss of status and social legitimacy over the next several centuries, as the devalorisation of the feminine gender, both linguistically and socially, renders it increasingly invisible as a mere "appendice du masculin" (p. 6). This is discussed within the context of the 1789 French Revolution, the subsequent entry into force of the Napoleonic Code, and the writings of French 'grammariens', notably Claude Favre de Vaugelas, on the French language. Another example of language reflecting reality, the historical phenomena of women being conceived of as less "noble" than their male counterparts, to use the words of Vaugelas, led to the predomination of the masculine gender over the feminine each time they appeared together (1647, p. 127). In this way, sexist times did indeed have corresponding sexist measures, the effects of which we still see linguistically today. Equally interesting are the consistent references to distinctly 'French' historical events in this section of *Ecrire les genres*. The 1789 Revolution is arguably the most significant event in the history of the French nation, and was crucial in defining and bringing together the country as it is known today. The 'Code civil', also, is equally engrained within the French national consciousness and imaginary, and its basis enduringly present in modern law (Gordley, 1994). The adoption of history considered to be specifically 'French' by la Suisse romande is therefore very apparent in this feminist language planning guide.

Significantly, these events were periods during which language was used to attempt to re-shape the collective social imaginary of French society of the time. For example, the Revolution saw a complete upheaval of previous linguistic conceptions and divisions of time, an explosion of neologisms and new expressions for money, measurement, and calendrical unit (Walter, 1989). 'Une semaine' was no longer seven days, but ten, known as a 'décade'; months of the year renamed based on seasonal characteristics (such as Pluviôse, from pluvieux, or Frimaire, from frimas). The Revolution also saw the suppression of the Académie française, as a former 'royal' academy; an indication that French society during this period was less concerned with linguistic purity than with the role of language as a vehicle for social change (Walter, 1989). In completely transforming vocabulary to do with measurement, time, and the calendar, an effort was made to transform the nation's entire conception of modalities of time and space – language was employed as both a symbol and a facilitator of social change. We can qualify this linguistic revolution as a moment of 'imaginary revolution', to invoke the work of Castoriadis (1975). In this way, we can view the use of language during the period of the Revolution as symptomatic of the relation between social upheaval and consequent linguistic upheaval, parallel to the call for language parity so as to be more accurately

reflective of social progress in *Ecrire les genres*. Similarly, the entry into force of the Napoleonic Code is a linguistic reflection of a social declaration made during this period – even the title ‘les Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen’ immediately gives a very clear indication that women were not considered of the same level of importance as men in both this document and this time. Napoleon’s ‘Code civil’ is known for the subordination of women, especially in comparison with their relative independence during the Revolution (Dhavernas, 1978). It is significant that through language women’s subjugated position was reinforced, and the feminine gender rendered invisible as the newly acquired ‘universal’ rights from the Revolution were not shared with women. A striking example is Napoleon’s refusal to grant citizenship to women in the Code as “Les femmes n’exerçant aucun droit politique, la qualification citoyenne manque de justesse” (Bureaux de l’égalité romands, 2002, p. 6). Not only was “citoyenne” deemed an invalid term, so too were women deemed invalid to participate fully in political life and in the public sphere, a linguistic underscoring of the fact that they were not seen as full or valuable members of society.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the French language is considered a “patrimoine national”, a symbol representative of not only French culture but of “les valeurs de l’identité nationale” of France (Rebourcet, 2008, p. 111). It therefore seems that, through language, la Suisse romande has adopted, or associates strongly with, French history, including significant – and distinctly ‘French’ – events such as the 1789 Revolution and the establishment of le Code civil. Thus, as these events are engrained within the French national consciousness and collective social imaginary, and these imaginaries are comprised of perceived shared myths, rituals, and symbols, la Suisse romande shares in its symbolic nature by virtue of being French-speaking, despite being ‘Swiss’ rather than ‘French’ – just as with the aforementioned Gallic singularity. In fact, the first reference to a specifically Swiss context in this historical discussion does not appear until towards the very end of the section, regarding the lack of feminine form for “carte d’électeur” (Bureaux de l’égalité romands, 2002, p. 6), as, evidently, women did not have the right to vote at a federal level in Switzerland until 1971. The final paragraph of the historical discussion explores use of the ‘universal’ masculine in the Swiss Federal Constitution – the only segment referencing an experience that could be categorised as specifically Swiss. Further reinforcing the importance of the French language as a unifying factor, the document also goes on to sketch a brief history of language parity and feminist language planning initiatives in la Suisse romande and la Francophonie, including France, Québec, and members of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. Again, the link is made to the history of communities sharing *the French language*, rather than sharing a country – no mention is made of the paths of German and Italian-speaking cantons towards language parity.

Ultimately, there are two main points to be gleaned from close analysis of the historical section of *Ecrire les genres*. Firstly, that society, ever-changing, is reflected in language. This is evidenced in the work and historical examples presented in this chapter of the guide, and serves to remind the reader why such guides are necessary to ensure that linguistic parity is as reflective of the current state of society as possible. Secondly, and perhaps most significantly, the links constantly drawn by the Bureaux de l'égalité of la Suisse romande to the history of France through the French language, as well as emphasising the connections of francophone Swiss to other francophone communities, purely by virtue of being French-speaking. Despite the French-speaking parts of Switzerland not having ever been "part of France" – partial annexation under Napoleonic rule aside (Grin, 1998, p. 3) – the French-speaking Swiss seem to conceive of the linguistic history of French (of France), and the history of the nation, as partly their own. Because of the apparent strength of this identification with France, we can conclude that it is likely that the problems found in France (and particularly by the Académie Française) with feminist language planning must also influence Swiss French attitudes and actions on the subject. As through the French language, la Suisse romande adopts the 'valorised' and prestigious history of the French of France, it thus adopts the associated values, symbolism of the language, and a common identity with French speakers of France. Therefore, in the imaginary of French-speaking Swiss, the belonging, connection, or group seems to stem from the quality of being 'French-speaking', rather than other defining characteristics (including 'Swiss'-ness).

Francophone unity at the expense of 'Swiss' unity

Returning to *Ecrire les genres*, the guide then goes on to present examples of re-worked versions of real documents used in French-speaking cantons, such as the *Code de déontologie des enseignantes et enseignants*. These practical examples are used to illustrate the feminist language planning recommendations made by the Bureaux de l'égalité, and to show that their implementation results in a text that, with men and women equally visible and "pareillement traités", conserves both elegance and ease of expression (2002, p. 16). The guide recommends following several simple rules in order to achieve these outcomes, including: use of doublets, generic expressions (such as "le corps enseignant"), use of hyphens, listing terms in alphabetical order, and "accorder au plus proche" (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002, p. 16). *Ecrire les genres* encourages use of a variety of strategies in a text – too many hyphens, for example, render a text less legible, and overuse of generic terms could depersonalise, or even "remasculiniser" a text (p. 16). The Bureaux de l'égalité romands justify their choice of the hyphen (as in "Les citoyen-ne-s âgé-e-s"), rather than parentheses or the forward slash, as hyphenation has more positive connotations "dans l'imaginaire linguistique" (p. 17). Parentheses, according to the guide, would continue to signify how women have for years been relegated to mere afterthoughts in brackets, and the "barre d'exclusion"

indicates, of course, exclusion, rather than inclusion, of women and the construction of two separate worlds for the genders (p. 17). Most interestingly, the Bureaux de l'égalité romands reject the form "députéEs", an example of a word-internal capital and a strategy employed by German speakers (p. 17). For example, 'StudentInnen', or 'LehrerIn' refer to both the masculine and feminine noun forms, with the interior majuscule, or "Binnen-I", demarcating the feminine suffix (Abbt & Kammasch, 2009, p. 215). The guide states that while this form might be comprehensible to germanophones, it would not be understood "en dehors de nos frontières" (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002, p. 17). This statement is particularly telling, because not only are the Bureaux de l'égalité romands intent on promoting and devising feminist language planning strategies specific to the French language, but have also rejected a German-language solution, and concretely drawn a border between la Suisse romande and la Suisse alémanique – despite being part of the same country, the linguistic division, the Röschtigraben, between French- and German-speaking Switzerland, is starkly apparent.

While *Ecrire les genres* does typically align itself with France by virtue of common language, rather than its German-speaking Swiss counterparts, there are ways in which the guide is unique to la Suisse romande. Most notably, *Ecrire les genres* advocates for the use of "l'accord au plus proche" (p. 18). The 'Règle de proximité' in French, later replaced by the règle "habituelle", in which "le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin", was used – non-exclusively – up until the 17th Century, after which "l'accord au masculin" became the predominant rule (Chemin, 2012, p. 42). L'accord de proximité sees the adjective agree, whether it is feminine, masculine, singular, or plural, with the final noun of a group (Gouvernement de Québec, 2002). For example, "Tout électeur ou électrice domiciliée dans la commune...", or "Les jardinières et les jardiniers sont *heureux* de..." (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002, p. 18, my emphasis). France is yet to recognise this convention as grammatically correct (or, rather, not grammatically incorrect), despite its history in the language (Chemin, 2012). Therefore, the fact that the Bureaux de l'égalité romands encourage the use of this rule as a feminist language planning strategy is progressive, and significant because it shows consideration for the independent linguistic situation of French-speaking Swiss.

Ecrire les genres also contains a section specifically dedicated to the law and rédaction épïcène. Much of the previous work in feminist language planning initiatives at a cantonal level pertained only to legislative procedure and acts (such as Bern's *Directives de la Commission de rédaction concernant une formulation des actes législatifs qui respecte l'égalité des sexes* (1992), and *Directives du canton de Berne sur la procédure législative* (2000), to be discussed in the following chapter), meaning that this guide is both an expansion on and continuation of earlier recommendations and texts produced in the field. The guide offers an extremely similar set of rules for laws and regulations as for journalistic texts, with the notable difference being the recommendation that legal experts are

consulted in the process of une rédaction de loi épïcène, so that the content of a given legal text is not changed semantically as well as linguistically (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002, p. 25). For example, "un congé de maternité" could only apply specifically to mothers, whereas the epicene "congé parental" would signify that either parent would be eligible to take leave (p. 25). This section of the guide also includes real examples of laws and regulations re-written in a gender-fair manner, such as Fribourg's 1997 *Loi sur la formation des adultes (LFad)*. The guide finishes with several appendices pertaining to rules on the feminisation of names and titles, l'accorde au plus proche, the use of "Madame" rather than "Mademoiselle" to address women, and a short lexicon of common feminised noun forms (p. 41). Each appended section reinforces the practical nature of *Ecrire les genres*.

Ultimately, the most powerful and convincing aspect of *Ecrire les genres* is its emphasis on 'pourquoi faire?' rather than merely "comment faire?" (p. 2). The introductory sections strongly and cohesively establish the justification and motivations underlying precisely why feminist language planning and guides such as this are necessary and important. This commitment to feminist language reform by the Bureaux de l'égalité romands is evidenced in the guide's wealth of practical applications and examples, not only in legislature and official texts, but in everyday language use, as well as the accessible manner in which the guide is presented. The policy analyst is given the impression that the Bureaux de l'égalité romands hold a convincing commitment to language parity and feminist language reform, through their linguistic ideology ("[la langue] se doit donc d'être le reflet des êtres humains qui la parlent", p.1), their recognition of both the difficulties francophones have faced in undertaking these initiatives and the necessity of doing so nonetheless, and their discussion of the linguistic historical context of feminisation and feminist language planning in French.

While the feminist language guide of la Suisse romande shows a higher level of engagement to non-sexist language reform than previously seen in francophone Switzerland and in France itself, and the language planning strategies suggested go further than those found in both *Guide de formulation non sexiste des textes administratifs et législatifs de la Confédération* (2000) and *Femme, j'écris ton nom... : guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms des métiers, titres, grades, et fonctions* (1999), the most striking aspect of the guide is undoubtedly the number of ideological fronts on which la Suisse francophone aligns itself with a 'French of France' identity. This francophone alignment reveals itself in their shared conception of language and its relationship with reality, their linguistic ideology (language as the mirror of societal evolution, which necessitates language planning and in this case feminist language reform in order to more accurately reflect women's participation in society), as well as in la Suisse romande's adoption of the linguistic history of the French of France, and the resulting valorised conception of the French language in their social imaginary. To employ Anderson

(1991), we could conclude that the Suisse romande adhesion to France evidences their identity as part of the 'imagined community' of the French by virtue of their shared language and ideology. This can also be seen in the evidence of the Gallic singularity's ideological presence in the guide. This evident alignment with views typically held by the French of France naturally come at the expense of the relationship of the French- and German-speaking Swiss. While neither la Suisse italienne nor la Suisse alémanique have their own meso-level, regional feminist language planning guide with which to directly compare la Suisse romande's *Ecrire les genres*, the francophone region's distancing, whether deliberate or inadvertent, from other 'Swiss', indicates the influence of the French language, rather than nationality, as a unifying factor. Therefore, in-depth analysis of *Ecrire les genres* allows us to see precisely the ways in which the Suisse romande identity is inextricably bound up in the powerful ideological influence of France, and how this is brought to light through the linguistic issue of feminist language planning.

Chapter 4: Cantonal feminist language policy in the bilingual canton of Bern

As mentioned, Bern will function as the primary case-study for discussion of non-sexist language policy at a cantonal level in French-speaking Switzerland. As one of just three cantons in which French and German have co-official status, Bern provides ample opportunity to comparatively examine the policies created and steps taken towards language parity in both official languages – paths which have not always run parallel. This comparison will again illustrate that the identity of the French-speaking Swiss *bernois·e·s* is inextricably bound up in the influence of the French of France, to the detriment of a cohesive common identity with their German-speaking counterparts in Bern. Cantonally, just as federally and regionally, it is ‘French’ as a marker of identity that takes precedence over ‘Swiss’, and therefore it is the imagined community and collective consciousness of the French to which the francophone Swiss bind themselves in their social imaginary.

I have chosen Bern as a case-study to represent cantonal-level feminist language policy for several reasons. The interaction of French and German language in the canton provides an interesting parallel to their linguistic interaction and dynamics at a federal level, and therefore Bern provides more interesting material for comparative analysis than a monolingual francophone canton, such as Jura or Vaud. Similar, French speakers are a convincing minority in Bern, which is reflective of the status of French-speakers in the country as a whole. This is significant as this status as a linguistic minority adds another dimension to the identity politics at play in analysing any language issue, and particularly that of feminist language planning. Additionally, given the traditional protective and defensive attitude of French-speakers to their language, being a linguistic minority in a federal or regional context seems to incite a particular reaction in francophones. As the French-German bilingual cantons of Valais/Wallis and Fribourg/Freiburg possess large French-speaking majorities (just over two thirds of the population are French-speaking in both Valais and Fribourg) (Service de la statistique, 2018; Lüdi & Werlen, 2005), Bern was the natural choice of canton for comparative analysis. Lastly, as discussed in Chapter 1, the canton has been the focal point of the ‘question jurassienne’ for decades. This historical division between the French and German speakers of this canton in particular could also have a bearing on the cohesion of their language policy, and is therefore worthy of consideration as another ideological influence on feminist language policy in Bern.

To contextually situate a policy-focussed discussion, it is necessary to first provide background on the canton itself and its bilingual status. Bern is both the second largest and second most-populous canton of Switzerland (Leclerc, 2015). Historically, as today, Bern was one of the largest and most powerful cantons. It was one of the ‘Acht Orte’, or the first eight districts of the Eidgenossenschaft,

the Old Swiss Confederacy in the 15th Century (Church & Head, 2013). French-speaking areas of what is now the canton of Vaud came under Bern's control, but according to Walter et al. (1984), the French-speaking vaudois-es never truly accepted German-speaking leadership, leading to several revolts. We can see that even before the delineation of Switzerland's modern-day states, cultural and linguistic tensions between speakers of different languages in the country caused unrest, and still resonate today. During the Napoleonic period, francophone Vaud called for French support as it declared itself a republic, inspired by the 1789 French Revolution (Walter et al., 1984). The French obliged, but took over the entirety of Switzerland, establishing the Helvetic Republic in the late 18th Century (Church & Head, 2013). Lack of internal cohesion was a significant factor in the French invasion and ensuing collapse of the Eidgenossenschaft; Bern was the only district to put up any meaningful opposition. The canton was subsequently separated into three: a significantly shrunken canton of Bern, the new canton of Oberland, and canton Léman with the capital city of Lausanne to the west (Walter et al., 1984). Walter et al. (1984) again touch on the already-apparent divisions between French- and German-speakers, as the canton Léman was subsumed into the French-speaking canton of Vaud at the waning of the Helvetic Republic – the French separatist sentiments were prevalent here, but not in German-speaking Oberland, which re-joined Bern. After 1815, the post-Napoleonic Restoration, Bern acquired the French-speaking region of the what is now known as the Jura bernois, with the bilingual city of Biel/Bienne (Church & Head, 2013). Until 1979, when the northern-most districts of the Jura bernois broke away to form the new monolingual francophone canton of Jura, Bern was the largest canton by area in Switzerland.

Today, French-speakers comprise a small linguistic minority of just 10% of the canton and are located in the northernmost district of the Jura bernois, which is made up of Moutier, Courtelary, La Neuveville, and Biel/Bienne (Leclerc, 2015). Of these, only Biel/Bienne is not purely francophone, but is the bilingual canton's only true bilingual district in the sense that it is the only district in which French- and German-speakers must interact (Leclerc, 2015). Bilingualism is enshrined in Bern's constitution: Article 4 stipulates that the canton must take into account linguistic and cultural minorities, which can have "compétences particulières" assigned to them (Le Conseil fédéral, 1993, p. 2). Article 5 pertains specifically to the Jura bernois region, recognising its special status, and its right to "préservé son identité, de conserver sa particularité linguistique et culturelle et de participer activement à la vie politique cantonale", and that the canton "prend des mesures pour renforcer les liens entre le Jura bernois et le reste du canton" (p. 2). Article 6.5, on languages, states that "toute personne peut s'adresser dans la langue officielle de son choix aux autorités compétentes pour l'ensemble du canton" (p. 3). From this we can see that the germanophone majority of the canton takes very seriously the canton's status as bilingual, and many steps have

been taken to ensure fair and equal treatment of francophones in official contexts in Bern. The Chancellerie d'Etat of the canton elaborates that, in practice, these constitutional mandates involve providing versions of all official and legislative texts in both languages, ensuring that cantonal administration is equipped with the necessary terminology and translation resources, and that debates of the Grand Conseil should be simultaneously interpreted (Chancellerie d'Etat du canton de Berne, 2018). In 2004, a law was also adopted on the unique status of the Jura bernois and the francophone minority in the bilingual district Biel/Bienne. The *Loi sur le statut particulier du Jura bernois et sur la minorité francophone du district bilingue de Bienne* was enacted to better allow the Jura bernois to preserve its identity and “sa particularité linguistique et culturelle au sein du canton”, with the principal objectives of promoting bilingualism in the Bienne district, reinforcing “la situation de la population francophone en tant que minorité linguistique et culturelle” and the cohesion of the canton (Le Grand Conseil, 2004, p. 1). In order to achieve these, the law institutes the Conseil du Jura bernois and the Conseil des affaires francophones du district bilingue de Bienne, which exercise powers attributed by virtue of the districts’ special status. Interestingly, clause 3.5.6, on “relations transfrontalières”, encourages the Conseil du Jura bernois to “traiter directement” with the administrations of other cantons and neighbouring regions, particularly the government of Jura, on affairs relating to language, culture, or causes common to both cantons (2004, p. 8). This again shows Bern’s political will to cater to its French-speaking minority and recognise its special status, as well as for cohesion not only between speakers of different languages within the canton, but between francophones across cantonal borders. The recognition of the importance of co-operation with other French-speaking cantons, particularly Jura, speaks to the significance of French-speakers’ relations in la Suisse romande, as well as a bernois desire to avoid the build-up of tensions that culminated in the creation of Jura after decades of linguistically motivated conflict.

In terms of feminist language planning, numerous documents and policies specific to the bernois-es exist, but despite the canton’s official bilingualism, the Swiss-French treatment of the question of feminist language reform contrasts with that of the German majority in Bern. Therefore, this chapter discusses the history of feminist language planning policy and guides in Bern’s government and in the private sector from a francophone perspective. Comparative analysis of French- and German-language policy documents and approaches to feminist language planning reveals ideological and institutional divisions between the two populations, despite Bern’s political commitment to promoting internal linguistic cohesion. While the paths to the current bernois feminist language policy and guides began in French and German in a largely parallel fashion, significant policy differences both governmental and private increasingly reveal themselves as the timeline progresses.

Early governmental directives in francophone and germanophone Bern

In 1992, the same year that the federal Commission parlementaire de rédaction found that the ‘creative solution’ “posed insurmountable problems in Italian and French” (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000), Bern’s cantonal Commission de rédaction published *Directives de la Commission de rédaction concernant une formulation des actes législatifs qui respecte l’égalité des sexes*. This document was the first document specific to the French-speaking minority in the canton. The text, which also appears in a German-language version identical in content, is partly based on the 1991 federal report by the interdepartmental working group that was later rejected for French and Italian, and, interestingly, acknowledges that not only is it “souhaitable de soumettre la rédaction de tous les actes législatifs cantonaux à une réglementation uniforme”, but it is up to the “autorités politiques compétentes” to decide on the exact wording of these legislative acts (Commission de rédaction de Berne, 1992, p. 1; Caussignac, 1993). This decision to base such significant cantonal language directives on the content of a federal report that was not, in fact, adopted in the French language by federal authorities, shows the power of the cantonal system in Switzerland, as well as Bern asserting its jurisdiction over language planning and policies in the canton.

The directives adopted by the Commission de rédaction bernoise focus on not only the writing, but the *conception* of legislative acts, “du point de vue du fond”, in a manner respectful of gender equality (Commission de rédaction de Berne, 1992, p. 1). The document promotes the ‘creative solution’, previously rejected by the federal Commission parlementaire de rédaction (Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000), detailing the possibility of combining several feminist language planning strategies, such as re-formulating a text, using neutral noun forms, and symmetrical or joint use of feminine and masculine forms. The Commission de rédaction prioritises re-writing texts and use of neutral forms, such as “corps enseignant” (Commission de rédaction de Berne, 1992, p. 1).

Masculine and feminine forms can be used symmetrically if the two former strategies are not viable, but the text forbids use of abbreviations: i.e., “les instituteurs et les institutrices” as opposed to “les instituteurs/trices” (p. 1). However, the document also allows for some phrases to “exceptionnellement déroger au principe de l’égalité des sexes”, and that the ‘creative solution’ should only be applied insofar as the comprehension and consistency of a text do not suffer (Commission de rédaction de Berne, 1992, p. 1). It also states that texts will not be revised for purely linguistic reasons, meaning that unless existing legislative acts need substantial revisions in content, these acts will not be subject to the directives on gender-equal formulation. For example, the 1984 *Loi sur les avocats* was not updated until 2006, when it was replaced by the *Loi sur les avocats et les avocates* (Le Grand Conseil de canton de Berne, 1984; 2006). Nevertheless, the *Directives de la Commission de rédaction concernant une formulation des actes législatifs qui respecte l’égalité des*

sexes are an important first step towards equality of linguistic treatment in the canton. After similar legislation being enacted in the canton of Geneva several years earlier, these directives are the first official francophone legislation on language parity in a canton that is bilingual (Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017). Significantly, the directives are also the first binding legislation in the canton for both languages, and still remain so today (Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017).

A second significant document, also pertaining to the gender-fair writing of legislative acts in francophone Bern, was published in 2000. The document, *Directives du canton de Berne sur la procédure législative*, was published by the Direction de la justice, des affaires communales et des affaires ecclésiastiques, and the Chancellerie d'Etat of the canton. This directorate is responsible for, among numerous other duties, maintaining the relationship between the canton and its communes, and between its Churches and the State, and is also primarily responsible for decision-making in the field of justice (Direction de la justice, des affaires communales et des affaires ecclésiastiques, 2018). This shows that, interestingly, this set of directives were not conceived of from a linguistic or redactive perspective, but with a legal focus. The text is a guide on how to correctly draft legislative acts in Bern, with modules on legislative language, rédaction épiciène, spelling, and bilingualism. However, this does not necessarily indicate increased acceptance of, or commitment across departments to, language parity initiatives in French-speaking Berne. The *Directives du canton de Berne sur la procédure législative* are divided into several modules, the relevant module for this discussion being 'langage'. While the module itself is eight pages, Section 2 (Rédaction épiciène) comprises just two short paragraphs. The text acknowledges the aforementioned binding 1992 directives, which necessitate legislative acts being drafted in a manner that respects equality of the sexes. However, the section continues with discussion of the "impératif" of rédaction épiciène contradicting legislative language's criteria of simplicity and concision, which were discussed at great length in the preceding module, and alleges that explicitly including both masculine and feminine forms overly "lengthens" and "complicates" a text (Direction de la justice, des affaires communales et des affaires ecclésiastiques, 2000, p. 7). The use of "l'imperatif de la rédaction épiciène" implies a sense of resentment, and that it is an inconvenience to compose a text in a gender-neutral or equal way, rather than recognition of the importance of language parity. The reader is given, similarly to the federal-level French-language guide to non-sexist formulation published several months later, the impression of sceptical attitudes towards feminist language planning.

One of the most interesting features of the language module is that it has seemingly been conceived of and written from a germanophone perspective. The module advises the reader to consult the text *Leitfaden zur sprachlichen Gleichbehandlung im Deutschen*, which was the guide published by the Federal Chancellery in 1996, shortly after the refusal to adopt the same language policy for French

and Italian. The *Directives du canton de Berne sur la procédure législative* discuss the German-language guide's suggestions and recommendations, as well as giving directions to the location of the text in the German section of the Federal Chancellery's central linguistic services. There is no mention of any resources for francophones. It is, of course, ironic, that the French directives on language of legislative procedure are so heavily weighted towards the German-speaking experience of feminist language planning, and indicates that the disparity between French and German non-sexist language guides and directives may not only be due to differences in each populations' conception of their language, but a lack of attention and resources to French by the German-speaking majority. According to Caroline Brunner, a juriste with the Office des services linguistiques et juridiques of the canton, the 1992 and 2000 directives are the only binding texts pertaining to rédaction épiciène in French-speaking Bern (2018). This means that, while more modern texts that provide greater detail and more committed language planning strategies, the documents specifically pertaining to Bern's French-speaking minority are conservative, limited, and, as I will discuss shortly, more outdated than texts available to the German-speaking majority in the canton.

Bern's governmental language guides: linguistic parity across languages and genders?

2004 and 2005 saw two bernois texts, almost identical in both French and German, published: *Directives sur l'intégration de la perspective de l'égalité dans la politique du personnel du canton de Berne (Directives sur l'égalité)* (Conseil-exécutif du canton de Berne, 2004), and *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* (Ruf & Hans, 2005). The aim of the 2004 directives on 'égalité dans la politique du personnel' is a balanced representation of both genders at all hierarchical levels and in all functions of the cantonal administration, and a corporate culture based on partnership "permettant l'épanouissement du potentiel des collaborateurs et collaboratrices" (p. 1). The text contains two points on non-sexist language use and language parity. The first, in relation to the topic of 'Recrutement du personnel', requires that "les mises au concours et les profils des postes sont formulés de manière à s'adresser aux hommes et aux femmes" (p. 3), meaning that both genders are explicitly addressed. The section 'Communication' deals exclusively with gender-fair language, and states that all of the communication of the canton's administration must be *conceived of* "de manière à s'adresser aussi bien aux hommes qu'aux femmes", and, significantly, "les collaborateurs et collaboratrices pratiquent la rédaction épiciène, quel que soit le texte" (p. 3). The directives are semantically identical to the parallel German-language document. These linguistic sections of the bernoises *Directives sur l'égalité* are significant as the principles of the document focus on the 'realisation' of equality between men and women, and stipulate that yearly objectives and reports on their achievement and status, must be set up, implemented, and evaluated by the Chancellerie d'Etat and specialist groups on gender equality. The Conseil-exécutif du canton de Berne can

therefore be seen as acknowledging that language parity and feminist language planning policies and initiatives contribute to the real-life fulfilment of this objective – that language does affect social outcomes.

The short 2005 guide *Textes et illustrations non sexistes*, or in its German-language version, *Geschlechtergerechte Texte und Illustrationen*, is the result of a collaboration between Bern's Bureau de l'égalité entre la femme et l'homme, le domaine Gender mainstreaming, and l'Office de l'enseignement secondaire du 2e degré et de la formation professionnelle de la Direction de l'instruction publique. While almost identical across both languages, the German-language version of the guide was conceived of first, and published two months earlier than its French-language counterpart – this is significant as, despite minor alterations to suit a French-speaking audience, German-speakers were the original focus of this document, and French-speakers only later received a copy of their initial text. The tone of *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* is less formal, and addresses its reader directly. The application and scope of the document are not mentioned, nor, despite the direct stylistic address, is the target audience defined. According to Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix (2017), it is therefore difficult to gauge the extent to which *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* is binding, and to whom (and the contexts in which) it might be meant to apply. Nevertheless, it is the first bernois text to discuss illustrations and the presence of sexist or gendered stereotypes, and can also be considered more accessible, to a wider (unspecified) audience due to its brevity, simplicity, and relative informality.

The text begins with a few, telling sentences outlining its principal aims. Ruf and Hans state that non-sexist communication goes beyond simply adding feminised or masculinised noun forms, but starts the initial conception of a text, or illustration (2005). Interestingly, citing similar arguments to Maury Pasquier in her 2000 postulate to the Conseil national on the adoption of non-sexist language policy for French and Italian, *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* underlines the need for creativity in feminist language solutions and strategies employed, as “la recette miracle n'existe pas pour autant” (Ruf & Hans, 2005, p. 1; Official Bulletin | Swiss Parliament, 2000). This is significant as it demonstrates a continued commitment to achieving language parity, whilst acknowledging points that previously hindered, particularly in the French language, progress in this area (Maury Pasquier, 2006). Finally, the document claims the application of the principles of linguistic parity results in “une communication claire, vivante et en phase avec son temps” (Ruf & Hans, 2005, p. 1). This again reinforces its stance against the criticism that has often been levied at feminist language planning strategies and aims by institutions such as the Académie française, and opponents within federal and cantonal governments in Switzerland – that non-sexist language does not in fact render a text heavy or unwieldy, and that living, used language cannot be fixed and must change with the times as

society does (Dumézil & Lévi-Strauss, 1984; Das Schweizer Parlament, 1996; Grand Conseil de Canton de Vaud, 2006).

Ruf and Hans present eleven “*règles essentielles*”, almost identical across French- and German-language versions (2005, p. 2). This is, of course, interesting, considering that the delay of several years in applying the recommendations of the 1992 federal working group on non-sexist language was supposedly due to feminist language planning strategies viable in German not being possible for Romance languages, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Das Schweizer Parlament, 1996). The recommendations apply to written texts, images, and in oral contexts, significant as speech has been largely excluded from previous discussions on the topic in both federal and cantonal contexts, and reinforces this document’s accessibility by widening the potential application of non-sexist language principles. In terms of strategies, both French- and German-language versions of *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* advise the use of doublets, with the French version precisising use of “l’accord au plus proche”, or a collective singular or gender-neutral plural term, such as “le corps enseignant” or “les élèves” (2005, p. 2). It also authorises use of abridged forms, such as “étudiant-e” or “Florist/in” in shorter or informal texts, but advises against use of brackets or a general note explaining that a text refers to both men and women (2005, p. 2). Emphasis is placed on creativity in both languages, to ensure that texts do not become overly convoluted. The final rules deal with outdated, sexist stereotypes and clichés, advising balanced representation of the genders in varied roles of equal value, which requires increased sensitivity and awareness from the writer, illustrator, and language user. Of the eleven points, *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* differs from *Geschlechtergerechte Texte und Illustrationen* on only two: the most marked difference being the recommendation of direct speech (die direkte Rede) in German. For example, “Sie sind erfahren und teamfähig”, as opposed to “Wir suchen eine/n erfahrene/n und teamfähige/n Mitarbeiter/in” (2005, p. 2). This strategy is not mentioned in the French version of the document. Conversely, the French text recommends “la personnalisation”, or to prepare two versions of the same text – one with feminine designations, the other masculine – a strategy not present in the German-language guide (2005, p. 2).

That several of Bern’s key texts, including the initial 1992 directives, are identical (or nearly identical) across French and German is significant – it shows that canton has chosen to deal with issue of feminist language planning by attempting to address it equally, and for the most part uniformly, across its two official languages. This has meant, however, that French-speaking Swiss ultimately receives text that are conceived of from a German-language perspective, as evidenced in *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* (Ruf & Hans, 2005), and *Directives du canton de Berne sur la procédure législative* (Direction de la justice, des affaires communales et des affaires ecclésiastiques, 2000). As

discussed, both languages are bound up in extremely distinct identities and social imaginaries, and French in particular is a language that inspires intense pride and protection from both official institutions and speakers. French in Switzerland, especially, as we have seen, tends to be bound up in the construction of a fierce *Suisse romande* identity, as it is a minority language within both the country and the canton of Bern. This could therefore in part account for the Swiss-French hesitance to embrace feminist language planning policy and initiatives to the same extent as German-speaking Swiss, due to their particular and distinct identity not always being taken into account or reflected in official policy on language issues. Furthermore, when texts are conceived of from a German-speaking point of view, it is possible that French-speaking *bernois-es* could feel ignored, alienated, or silenced in this case. This, of course, makes for a compelling parallel with many of the arguments presented by feminist linguists and scholars in support of feminist language planning, in this very subject area.

While the beginning of official policy on non-sexist language and language parity in Bern was symmetrical in the canton's two official languages, it has since become apparent that there are both more resources available in German on this subject, and greater commitment to applying the principles of 'geschlechtergerechte Sprache'. This is evidenced by the wealth of German-language resources that have appeared more recently in non-governmental institutions, such as educational or religious establishments and city councils, as well as the evident dedication to *systematically* apply the recommendations of non-sexist language guides and regulations, the content of which typically "goes further" in germanophone contexts as compared to French (Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017; forthcoming in Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, and Tunger, 2018, p. 8). For example, the Bern Staatskanzlei (Chancellerie d'Etat) published the guide *Schriftliche Kommunikation des Kantons Bern* in 2015, a guide intended for use in all texts produced by the cantonal administration, both internally and for public audiences. It emphasises that, because all communication, pictorial and written, applies equally to men and women, all "Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter" should strive for language parity in all texts (Staatskanzlei des Kantons Bern, 2015, p. 11). Although not binding, this document contains a detailed section of several pages dedicated to the equal treatment of men and women in language. It re-iterates the introduction of the 2005 *Geschlechtergerechte Texte und Illustrationen* in its will that texts should be developed "von Grund" in a manner that systematically takes into account language parity, and that non-sexist language practices involve more than the mere "mechanische" adding of a male or female designation (Staatskanzlei des Kantons Bern, 2015, p. 11). Significantly, the Staatskanzlei emphasises the 'living' quality of language, "kein starres Gefüge", which is eternally growing and developing as new, unfamiliar forms are introduced and become common (p. 11). This is significant because, despite

drawing on content that was reproduced in an almost identical French-language version (the document *Textes et illustrations non sexistes* by Ruf & Hans, 2005), the Chancellery has produced an official document applicable to all its German-speaking employees that deliberately puts its standpoint in opposition to the arguments produced by the Académie française. As discussed, these arguments have been highly influential in the attitudes of many French-speakers toward feminist language planning and non-sexist language use (forthcoming in Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, & Tunger 2018). There is no parallel French-language document to *Schriftliche Kommunikation des Kantons Bern*, despite the guide being based on earlier gender-fair language content produced in almost-identical French- and German-language versions. This asymmetry illustrates German-speaking Bern's commitment to striving for language parity and improving non-sexist language application in all possible official contexts, as well as the obvious lack of corresponding commitment from the francophone section of the cantonal chancellery.

That *Schriftliche Kommunikation des Kantons Bern* was recently published and contains extensive rules, such as forbidding the use of generic masculine forms (a feminist language planning strategy that has typically been far less accepted in French-speaking contexts) shows a strong germanophone bernois-e commitment to modernising language planning strategies, and applying these systematically (Elmiger, 2013; forthcoming in Elmiger, Schaeffer-Lacroix, and Tunger, 2018). This is also reflective of the German-speaking Staatskanzlei of Bern's view of language as something that should grow, change, and develop with its speech community. This ideology, and the corresponding will to continuously improve and update linguistically, is in turn reflected in their language policy, whereas a francophone attitude tends more towards conservatism and linguistic protectionism. As such, francophone feminist language planning initiatives have comparatively less momentum and less commitment than those corresponding in German.

Furthermore, as Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix (2017) reveal in their comprehensive research paper *Geschlechtergerechte Behördentexte: Linguistische Untersuchungen und Stimmen zur Umsetzung in der mehrsprachigen Schweiz*, there are few texts emanating from Bern that apply to its French-speaking minority. As discussed, after the secession of Jura from the canton, the francophone population in the north of the canton counted for only approximately 11% of Bern's total population (Office fédéral de la statistique, 2018). This is reflected in the overwhelming majority of German-language texts published not only by the cantonal government, but by the administrations of cities and educational establishments (particularly tertiary-level).

Geschlechtergerechte Behördentexte contains in its appendices a chronological timeline of many events and documents relevant to the topic of non-sexist language in Switzerland, including federal and cantonal governmental documents, and official texts from other institutions such as universities,

colleges, and churches (2017). This appendix reveals that of the thirteen texts published by non-governmental institutions in the canton, just three pertain to French speakers, and of these just one is binding (Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017).

Comparative analysis of the language guides of non-governmental institutions in Bern

These documents of other, non-governmental institutions are significant because, due to its language policy of bilingualism, the bernois government is obligated to make official texts available in the languages of its constituents (Leclerc, 2015). Therefore, the language policies and non-sexist language guides of these institutions are reflective of attitudes and approaches to feminist language planning independent of governance and legislation, that are, perhaps, closer to the everyday, real-world experiences of language users within the canton. Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix (2017) reveal that, of the policies and guides published by educational institutions, including Universität Bern, Pädagogische Hochschule Bern, and the bilingual Haute école spécialisée bernoise/Berner Fachhochschule, just that of the Haute école spécialisée bernoise pertains to French-speaking tertiary students in the canton. Comparative analysis of the most recent German- and French-language non-sexist language guides at this bilingual university yields interesting results.

Both texts, *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung*, and *Fil rouge pour une communication épïcène* were published by the university's Service de coordination de l'égalité des chances (or Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit in German) in March 2014, with 1000 copies of the French guide and 3000 of its German-language equivalent made. Although both versions appeared simultaneously, there is evidence to suggest that, similarly to several aforementioned bernois guides published in the context of cantonal governance, it is the German-language guide that is more ambitious and goes further in its non-sexist language recommendations. *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung*, the German version of the school's non-sexist language policy, is based upon material published in 2003 by another Swiss university, the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (with campuses across four officially monolingual German-speaking cantons: Aargau, Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, and Solothurn (Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, 2017; Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit, 2014). *Fil rouge pour une communication épïcène*, its French counterpart, is 10 pages to the German-language guide's 16, and is partly based on *Ecrire les Genres*, the collaborative document of the equality departments of la Suisse romande analysed in Chapter 3 (Service de coordination de l'égalité des chances, 2014). This is interesting because, although both texts are intended to be linguistic equivalents across their targeted speech communities, each guide illustrates and promotes divergent feminist language planning strategies and policy. Furthermore, it is the first text we have seen in the canton in which parallel French and German non-sexist language guidelines are

conceived of from different sources. This is particularly significant for Bern's French-speaking minority, because we have previously discussed numerous occasions during which francophone bernois-e-s were supplied with non-sexist language guides, policies, or legislation that were not tailored to their linguistic needs, ideologies, or attitudes. This could therefore have been a contributing factor in the comparative lack of francophone enthusiasm for the linguistic issues of feminist language planning and language parity in this canton during the last several decades. The content of and strategies promoted by each guide are consequently more contrasting than we have previously seen at a cantonal level.

Fil rouge pour une communication épiciène identifies three key rules for non-sexist redaction: "Mettre les deux termes, respecter l'ordre alphabétique, utiliser d'autres possibilités de formulation" (Service de coordination de l'égalité des chances, 2014, p. 3). The guide elaborates that "mettre les deux termes" refers to using both singular and plural formulations that are representative of both men and women, and the importance of "rendre compte de la réalité en mettant des femmes là où elles sont présentées" (p. 3-4). Using feminine or masculine forms appropriate to specific contexts within the university (i.e., if the head of a given faculty is a woman, using "directrice de département"), and hyphens (rather than brackets, the forward slash, or the 'majuscule') are also recommended (p. 5). The terms used should be placed in alphabetical order, "[faisant] l'accord au plus proche" (p. 7). The third rule encourages creativity and innovation in language use, to produce a text with variety. The guide suggests, among other strategies, use of infinitives and direct speech, both of which were recommended non-sexist language strategies in *Ecrire les genres* (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002). *Fil rouge pour une communication épiciène* recognises this text, along with the federal-level *Guide de formulation non sexiste en français* and the cantonal-level *Textes et illustrations non sexistes*, as sources (Service de coordination de l'égalité des chances, 2014). The Haute école spécialisée bernoise thus takes into account a wide range of French-language language parity guides from all levels of government and direction relevant to Bern.

Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung recommends ten main rules to *Fil rouge pour une communication épiciène*'s three. While both guides ultimately encompass similar contexts and recommend similar strategies (i.e., using both masculine and feminine forms when both genders are present [or possible] in a given linguistic situation and using creativity and variety to avoid "schwerfällige Formulierungen"), the German-language guide is more precise in its recommendations, more explicit in its explanations of these, and it ultimately goes further in the language planning strategies it endorses for increasing language parity (Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit, 2014, p. 5). Other "nützliche Tipps" involve using the comma (der Dozent, die Dozentin), forward slash (Dozent/in) and Binnen-I (DozentIn) in texts with space limitations – options

not recommended in the French text – as well as employing forms specific to individuals in letters and invitations, and avoiding clichés and stereotypes. The Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit elaborates that it is important to imagine the people that are referred to in, and are the target audience of, any text, which might mean consulting literature written by both genders, experts of both genders in a given field, avoiding stereotypical examples, and if necessary, submitting a finished text to a control group of critical readers for feedback. Interestingly, the guide also remarks upon gender-neutral or epicene forms not serving to increase the visibility of women in language, but these are at least not complicit in their *invisibility*, as ‘generic’ masculine forms are (2014). In contrast, the university’s French-language guide advises the language user to “privilégier les mots collectifs”, with no discussion of the potential linguistic, or psychological, implications and effects of this strategy (Service de coordination de l’égalité des chances, 2014, p. 4, 8). Furthermore, the German-language guide even advises avoiding compound words containing generic masculine forms, such as “Kundenzufriedenheit” or “Arbeitgeber”, because “haben wir uns so gewöhnt, dass wir die darin enthaltene männliche Form oft gar nicht mehr bemerken”, despite the groups or persons addressed by these forms not being exclusively male (Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit, 2014, p. 11). It is obvious that *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung* is a text extremely considered in its linguistic representation of men and women, again illustrating the high level of commitment to real language parity so often found in German-language feminist language planning guides, policy, and legislation.

Some of the most marked differences between *Fil rouge pour une communication épicienne* and *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung* reveal themselves in the introductions to each guide. The French-language document discusses non-sexist language use and rédaction épicienne from a primarily linguistic, and even literary, perspective. Marylou Bregy, the university’s déléguée à l’égalité des chances, and one of the guide’s contributors, states that conceiving of all communication “de façon épicienne”, while taking into account linguistic conventions, is what underpins all “communication épicienne” (Service de coordination de l’égalité des chances, 2014, p. 3). Bregy shows concern for the elegance of texts and for their accurate reflection of diverse realities, “en symbiose avec le temps” (p. 3).

The introduction to the university’s German-language guide is far longer, and focusses more on language’s ability to affect reality. The guide references German, not Swiss, authors, Gisela Klann-Delius and Senta Trömel-Plötz, both of whom have written extensively on violence done to women through language and language’s role in social oppression, stating that “[m]it Hilfe von Sprache wird Wirklichkeit konstruiert” (Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit, 2014, p. 3; Trömel-Plötz, 1984; Klann-Delius, 2005). It is evident in the introduction to the Berner Fachhochschule’s German-

language non-sexist language guide that the university's Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit subscribes to a linguistic ideology of language not only affecting reality, but *constructing* it; a view of language as "unser wichtigstes Kommunikationsmittel", conveying many implicit messages beyond obvious or 'surface' content (p. 3). The guide's introduction therefore emphasises the importance of "ein bewusster Umgang mit der Sprache", as our language use simultaneously reveals and constructs our worldview (p. 3). *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung* elaborates that receiving a message is not a passive process, and is informed by our environment, personal history, and attitudes. It is therefore not what is said that is important, but what is perceived. The guide's introduction thus recommends trying to understand the unique point of view of a target audience: "die angesprochenen Personen und deren Sichtweise hineindenken" (p. 3). Using the example of generic masculine constructions, the guide explains that women being merely "mitgemeint" implies that they are less important, and only explicit or "wörtlich" use of male *and* female or gender-neutral forms addresses men and women as equals (p. 3). The university's German-language guide states that it also aims to show that fluent, easy-to-read texts and non-sexist language use are not mutually exclusive; the more carefully and creatively we communicate, the more easily we achieve the desired effects of "die Gleichbehandlung der Geschlechter beim Schreiben" (p. 3).

On the next page, the guide briefly lists the essential aims of implementing non-sexist language strategies in words, texts, and images. For German, these are rendering both genders visible as independent persons of equal rights and equal value, employing gender-neutral or parallel masculine and feminine forms for mixed groups and always using full forms in spoken language and wherever possible in written texts. Interestingly, *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung* states that "es gibt keine Patentlösung", and therefore, in cases of doubt, it is "Gleichstellung", language parity, that takes precedence (Koordinationsstelle für Chancengleichheit, 2014, p. 4). The guide encourages the use of less familiar or uncommon forms and designations, because the more often they are utilised, the more commonplace they become, and gender-sensitive language should not be rare or extraordinary. We can therefore see that, for the Germanophone divisions of die Berner Fachhochschule, it is not linguistic correctness that is most highly valued, but linguistic parity.

When compared to the introduction to the French-language guide, it is evident that the aims, priorities, and conceptions of non-sexist communication and texts are disparate across the two speech communities. As we have seen, introductions are particularly revealing of what informs, motivates, and influences a given language policy. *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung* displays higher levels of commitment and sensitivity to feminist language planning and non-sexist language use, and is much more ambitious in the strategies it recommends than its French-language counterpart. Furthermore, *Fil rouge pour une communication épicière* places a much greater

emphasis on the correctness and elegance of language, and shows evidence of a linguistic ideology in which language should reflect reality (feminist language planning guides being necessary to ensure this). In contrast, the German-language guide's introduction clearly illustrates a deterministic conception of language – that language determines the construction and conception of the social and concrete world, and thus due to underlying biases and implications in what we say, and how we word these messages, care and sensitivity are paramount in creating non-sexist, gender-fair texts.

Despite these marked differences, both *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung* and *Fil rouge pour une communication épïcène* share the same tagline (in French: “La BFH favorise l'égalité entre hommes et femmes. Une communication épïcène contribue sensiblement à garantir l'égalité des sexes”), and a preface by the Chancellor of the university, Dr Herbert Binggeli (Service de coordination de l'égalité des chances, 2014, p. 1). As Binggeli is a native German-speaker (Gassmann, 2012), a direct French translation of his originally-German foreword has been made for *Fil rouge pour une communication épïcène*. Binggeli discusses equality as an important value of la Haute école spécialisée bernoise, and that the non-sexist language guide “a pour but de concourir à la réalisation de cet objectif, sachant que la langue forge notre perception et fait partie intégrante de notre culture” (p. 2). The Chancellor states that he is “persuadé qu'une rédaction épïcène des textes contribue grandement à garantir l'égalité des sexes”, and therefore recommends that non-sexist language strategies be applied in all university publications, internal and external (p. 2). However, from what we have seen from both the university's francophone feminist language policy and other French-language policy within the canton, it is quite obvious that Dr Binggeli's foreword is not actually representative of a 'French' view of language, but aligns extremely closely with what we know to be a German-speaking ideology. The idea that language parity contributes to societal gender equality and shapes our perception of the world is also found (as discussed in Chapter 2) in *Leitfaden zur sprachlichen Gleichbehandlung im Deutschen*, the federal-level German-language feminist language policy. This is significant because this deterministic view of language appears to remain a consistent reason behind the German-speaking Swiss commitment to feminist language planning initiatives and language parity, the driving ideology. Therefore, while the university's Chancellor is, of course, an important figure to write the preface to both the German and French non-sexist language guides of his university, the contrast between the linguistic ideologies of the two speech communities is stark in this context. Ironically, the German-language guide's urging to take into account a text's audience in non-sexist, gender-sensitive communication has, literally, not 'translated' to the preface of its French-language counterpart, an audience of speakers of a different language with evidently contrasting linguistic ideologies. Furthermore, the introduction of *Fil rouge pour une communication épïcène*, written by French-speaker Marylou Bregy, has clear evidence of

alignment with the linguistic ideology held by the government of France – that language should be reflective of reality, and needs language planning initiatives in order to more accurately societal changes, evolutions, and progress. As discussed in Chapter 2, this view is found in the circulaires published by Prime Ministers Laurent Fabius and Lionel Jospin, as well as in the text *Femme, j'écris ton nom... : guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms des métiers, titres, grades, et fonctions*, published by the governmental body Institut national de la langue française in 1999. We can therefore see that, even within a relatively small-scale feminist language planning effort, such as the non-sexist language guide of a single university in a single canton, the linguistic ideology of language itself and of its relationship with reality held by speakers of the French language permeates language policy at every level.

Die Universität Bern shows evidence of similar influences from higher-level German-language policies. The university has published four documents pertaining to non-sexist language use since 1994, two of which are binding (Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2017). The most recent, *Geschlechtergerechte Sprache: Empfehlungen für die Universität Bern* was published in 2017. The introduction to this guide, written by Dr Doris Wastl-Walter, the university's Vice-Chancellor, explains clearly the view of language held by the university's department of gender equality that drove the perceived need for modern, detailed non-sexist language policy (Abteilung für Gleichstellung, 2017, p. 3). According to Wastl-Walter, "die geschlechtergerechte Verwendung von Sprache und Bildern trägt zur tatsächlichen Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern bei, in den Köpfen und im universitären Alltag" (p. 3). Die Universität Bern's feminist language guide goes on to discuss how numerous studies from the fields of media, linguistics, and social psychology demonstrate language's impact on how people perceive, experience and categorize the world, society, themselves, and others. Language can therefore never be considered a neutral "Transportmitte", but also "trägt selbst auch wesentlich zur Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit bei" (p. 46, my emphasis). Like the non-sexist language guide of the Berner Fachhochschule, the university holds a deterministic ideology of language, closely aligned with the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and the linguistic ideology present in the federal feminist language policy of la Suisse alémanique. *Geschlechtergerechte Sprache: Empfehlungen für die Universität Bern*, like *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung*, encourages sensitive, conscious, and "spielerischen" language use, in order to reduce stereotypes, overcome restrictive language habits, and to grow increasingly accustomed to feminist language planning strategies and principles (p. 3). We can therefore see evidence of consistent values and ideologies across German-speaking universities of Bern. Although one of the most important educational establishments in the bilingual canton of Bern, die Universität Bern does not have a French-language non-sexist language guide. However, according to

Caroline Brunner (2018), the institution is currently working to change this, and a guide for francophone students is to be published in 2019. It will be extremely interesting to see whether the French-speaking division of the university experiences the disparities between the French- and German-language non-sexist language guides present in those of the Haute école spécialisée bernoise/Berner Fachhochschule.

The non-sexist language guides of educational institutions, while interesting subjects of comparative analysis, are significant for several reasons. The role of the university in revolution and resistance has, of course, historically been a powerful one. The very concept of student involvement in social movements conjures up meaningful imagery in the French social imaginary and national consciousness; one does not even have to mention explicitly May '68 to feel its psychological echoes and enduring standing as part of a shared, collective, French narrative (Singer, 1988). In this sense, student acceptance of and activism for feminist and non-sexist language planning initiatives is deeply significant, and could signal a wider cultural and social shift in terms of language parity. Furthermore, the institution of the university, fundamental in educating and shaping future generations, holds a symbolic place in any form of exchange, research, knowledge transfer, and progress in a given society or community, and thus is an influential agent in the dissemination of non-sexist language principles, and corresponding social developments (Abteilung für Gleichstellung, 2017).

An analysis of the other non-sexist language guides and policies of non-governmental institutions in Bern identified by Elmiger, Tunger, and Schaeffer-Lacroix (2017), such as those published by the cities of Biel/Bienne, the Synodalrat der Reformierten Kirchen Bern-Jura-Solothurn, and the Pädagogische Hochschule Bern, however useful, is beyond the scope of this thesis. In future research, and in other, more detailed projects, there are many possibilities for further analysis of these language policies and their underlying ideologies and influences. To conclude the discussion of feminist language policy in Bern, Brunner (2018) states that the canton also 'draws from' la Suisse romande guide *Ecrire les genres*, the topic of Chapter 3, and the *Guide de rédaction épiciène du CHUV* (Centre hospitalier universitaire vaudois) *et de la FBM* (Faculté de biologie et médecine), which was published in 2015 by the Université de Lausanne in Vaud, one of Bern's neighbouring monolingual francophone cantons.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the feminist language planning efforts and policy of the cantonal government of Bern are aimed at ensuring parallel policy and largely cohesive strategies across its two official languages. Cantonal bilingualism comes with its own challenges, and it is significant that Bern evidently wishes to treat its small francophone minority as equally and equitably as possible.

Yet, as we have seen, when given the opportunity to develop their own, independent policy documents and feminist language planning strategies, there are marked differences across French- and German-language texts. Just as texts and language can be conceived of androcentrically, so too do several bernois documents seem to be conceived of 'germano-centrally'. The result appears to be a francophone population that is less 'committed', that is, less ambitious and less thorough, in their approach to feminist language planning. Another significant contributing factor to this phenomenon continues to be the influence of the French of France. I had initially theorised that the autonomy and independence given to individual states through the Swiss cantonal system, as well as the fact that the government of France is structurally a 'level' removed, would mean that French-speaking Swiss in cantons with a German-speaking majority could be freer of the strong French influence seen so manifestly at a federal level. However, just as federally, francophone bernois·e·s showed strong evidence of being less ideologically aligned with their German-speaking cantonal counterparts than with the linguistic ideology of the French of France. The unique French conception of their language and their identity as French-speakers has meant that the feminist language policy and documents of the German-speaking bernois·e majority have not 'translated' for francophone Bern: there are more numerous German-language guides, and these have a greater depth of content and cover a wider spread of linguistic ground in their content, application, and target audiences (Elmiger, 2000). We have therefore learnt that at a cantonal level, too, francophone language planning guides show comparatively less commitment: less ambitious strategies, more willingness to accept masculine generic forms, and greater reluctance to try new things. Here, again, the particular set of values held by French-speakers concerning their language sees the oft-promoted German-language values of playfulness, creativity, and experimentation far less encouraged in specifically French-speaking contexts. Therefore, that German- and French-speaking Bern have had markedly different responses to the question of feminist language planning at a cantonal level mirrors trends also seen across bilingual federal-level language policy, due a remarkably similar set of ideological influences and identities.

Chapter 5: Final Observations:

This thesis has examined aspects of the identities and social imaginaries of the French-speaking Swiss through the lens of federal, regional, and cantonal feminist language policies. Close textual analysis of these policies reveals the ideologies and influences, both implicit and explicit, that inform and motivate them. A powerful convergence of the conception of the relationship of language and reality and of the French language itself in the Suisse romande imaginary has led to francophone feminist language policies that can be considered as reluctance to follow or reactions against the more progressive, committed non-sexist language reform initiatives of the in-country linguistic majority, the German-speaking Swiss. In this way, feminist language policy becomes a medium through which la Suisse romande is able to affirm its separate, linguistically superior identity despite being a minority group, and in doing so draws strong parallels with the policies and ideologies of France. These tendencies were consistent across each level of Switzerland's political structure.

At a federal level, *Guide de formulation non sexiste des textes administratifs et législatifs de la Confédération*, the nationally applicable French-language feminist language policy, is consistently aligned with France's *Femme, j'écris ton nom... : guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms des métiers, titres, grades, et fonctions*. This is evident not only in the timeline to each guide's publication – each was published within a year of the other, after initial attempts to institute official policies and subsequent delays of almost a decade – but in their linguistic conservatism and hesitance to fully engage in committed feminist language efforts. Both guides, for example, authorise use of the 'generic' masculine. This research explored possible binding influences on the two francophone groups, particularly that of the Académie française, and the moralisation of 'standard' French (rather than a reformed, gender-sensitive form of the language) in the francophone imaginary. The two nations' geographic and linguistic proximity is evident in the symmetry of the governing and official language bodies' choices on this issue. France is thus highly influential on French-speaking Switzerland, even if this influence takes place in the collective imaginary of groups that have instituted these shared ideas of nations and their mutual identities and ideologies. It is federally that we see some of the most marked disparities between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland. *Leitfaden zur sprachlichen Gleichbehandlung im Deutschen* was published four years earlier than the federal Swiss-French feminist language guide, and as well as being consistently more engaged in this linguistic issue, presented evidence of an ideology of linguistic relativity: the belief that improving language parity will improve gender equality socially. In their cultivation of a distinct and independent identity from Switzerland's germanophone majority, the lens of feminist language policy allows us to clearly see the linguistic, historical, and cultural tensions in the forefront of the Swiss-French social imaginary. Therefore, disparate ideologies and influences across la Suisse

romande and la Suisse alémanique have contributed to equally disparate federal feminist language policies.

Regionally, while la Suisse alémanique does not have a regional guide with which to comparatively analyse *Ecrire les genres: guide romand d'aide à la rédaction administrative et législative épïcène* of la Suisse romande, this guide revealed similar trends: strong sociolinguistic alignment with France, and subsequent implicit distancing from the German-speaking Swiss majority. *Ecrire les genres* shows the close French-speaking Swiss association with France at the level of the social imaginary in their parallel conceptions of language as a mirror of societal evolution, valorisation of standard French as a symbol of not only cultural heritage but also 'national' identity, adoption of distinctly 'French' historical (particularly linguistic) events, such as the 1789 Revolution and the establishment of the Napoleonic Code, and the presence of the Gallic singularity in the shared francophone consciousness. Because these concepts are engrained within the French national consciousness and collective social imaginary, and these imaginaries are comprised of perceived shared stories, rituals, and symbols, la Suisse romande, too, shares in its symbolic nature by virtue of their largely 'standard' francophone status. No reference is made to German-speaking Switzerland throughout the regional Suisse romande guide, despite three out of seven of the involved cantons possessing large germanophone populations. Furthermore, the guide also rejects the feminist language planning strategy of the word-internal capital, or Binnen-I in German, as "elle... ne saurait être comprise" outside of a germanophone context (Bureaux de l'égalité romands, 2002, p. 17). This is just one example of the powerful divide drawn in the social imaginaries of French-speaking Swiss between themselves and their German-speaking compatriots, a division that clearly goes beyond mere linguistic differences. In this way, the regional Suisse romande guide illustrates precisely how francophone unity seems to come at the expense of 'Swiss' unity, and it is through feminist language planning that this imagined francophone community and collective consciousness becomes most clearly evident.

Lastly, cantonal-level policy in the bilingual canton of Bern presented some of the most revealing analyses in this thesis. While the first governmental directives appeared in identical French- and German-language versions in 1992, chronological analysis of other government publications in this area showed an increasingly widening gap between each language's respective approaches and attitudes to feminist language planning and policy. Furthermore, Bern's political will to encourage the canton's bilingualism and for French-speakers' equal access to resources and legislation has meant that francophone bernois-es have at times received policies and documents that are conceived of from a germanophone perspective. This may have contributed to the markedly lower commitment to language parity initiatives on the part of the canton's French-speakers, their

particular identity and imaginary, known to inspire intense pride and protectionist attitudes, not consistently being taken into account in bernois policy. In terms of non-governmental feminist language policies, which are not required to be as symmetrical across the canton's languages as official governmental ones, the Haute école spécialisée bernoise/Berner Fachhochschule policies in French and German displayed clear parallels with larger influences on the canton. Just as at regional and federal levels, *Fil rouge pour une communication épicière* displayed evidence of the linguistic ideology of the French of France, that language should be a mirror of society, and *Leitfaden für die sprachliche Gleichstellung* revealed itself to be ideologically aligned with Switzerland's federal German-language guide in its linguistic determinism. This was true also for *Geschlechtergerechte Sprache: Empfehlungen für die Universität Bern*. In governmental and other institutional contexts, both languages continued to show consistency regarding previously established trends; francophone language guides show comparatively less engagement, less systematic application, and do not 'go as far' as their German-language counterparts. Therefore, that German- and French-speaking Bern's feminist language policies contain equivalent disparities to those seen at a federal level can be attributed to the presence of a similar influencing set of ideologies and values on their identities.

Significant themes and conclusions

One significant conclusion to be drawn from this research is the remarkable consistency with which each language presented its respective linguistic ideology in feminist language planning guides. Underlying each language policy is always a conception, whether implicit or explicit, of the relationship between language and reality. Because there exists an enormous range of nuance linguistic ideologies, differences in views on this fundamental principle have led to a lack of cohesion within Switzerland and its cantons, due to the fact that its different linguistic groups subscribe to ideologies in opposition to one another, a phenomenon also seen in France. The linguistic ideology held in the social imaginary of a given group will influence, shape, and construct its feminist language policy, and actions taken to apply this policy. I hope, therefore, that this research has rendered more evident conceptions and ideologies of language upon which language policies are founded.

Firstly, we saw that a French conception of the relationship between language and reality implicates that of language as a mirror of society and its evolution, and thus feminist language planning is necessary to ensure that the presence and participation of women in the social world is accurately reflected in language use. Evidence of this linguistic ideology was found in several regional and cantonal language policy documents of French-speaking Switzerland. Secondly, analysis of the Académie française arguments against feminist language planning revealed an ideology in which

language is conceived of as a neutral, and therefore equal, system, thus eliminating the need for and purpose of feminist language reform, and denying the presence of a link between language and its effect on lived reality. Lastly, the feminist language policies of German-speaking Switzerland at both federal and cantonal levels are based on the ideology that “geschlechtergerechte Formulierungen [leisten] einen... Beitrag zur tatsächlichen Gleichstellung” (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei, 2009, p. 13) – an ideology of linguistic determinism. Language’s capacity to influence and structure both thought and reality is evident in the germanophone Swiss commitment to progressive feminist language policy and strategies, and their systematic application, as this linguistic ideology involves strong links between linguistic change and social change. These observations permit us to better understand reasons underlying a given group’s position on feminist language planning, or adoption of a certain language policy, due to the linguistic ideology implicitly or explicitly present in their imaginary. This is significant because the greater our awareness of the ideologies influencing and informing these policies, the more productive the exchanges into which we are able to enter, in the aim of progressing feminist language planning initiatives and efforts.

The most significant theme throughout this research is the significance of conceptions of the French language in the imaginaries of its speakers. It is evidently not only because the French-speaking Swiss are a minority in a country with a dominant German-speaking majority that they show comparatively less commitment to feminist language planning and policy than the more progressive germanophone Swiss. Their stance on this linguistic issue is not merely due to being a community of minority-language speakers with a reactionary approach to that of the linguistic majority as a means of protecting their identity from a perceived threat, but also because they are *French-speaking*, and conceive of the language itself as special, as highly valuable, and as needing protection. As discussed, the Académie française conception of the standard or ‘prestige’ form of French language constructs in the social imaginaries of the language’s speakers both an idealised image of French and the urge to ‘protect’ or ‘defend’ this from exterior influence (i.e., German, for the French-speaking Swiss minority) and from perceived changes to this fixed, idealised form (modernisations through feminist language reform). Other concepts particular to French, such as the Gallic singularity, the language’s valorised history, and the moralisation of the standard form of the language itself, mean that the French language becomes, to again employ Castoriadis, a powerful symbol instituted within society’s imaginary, autonomous as it transcends its original function as a system of communication, but becomes inextricably bound up in its own symbolic nature (1975). Just as Weinreich discussed a given language’s standard form engendering more intense feelings of loyalty (1966), so too does French, as arguably the *ultimate* standard, prestige, pure form, inspire such pervasive emotional attachment and investment in the francophone social imaginary that it becomes the more than a

language – it becomes an identity. An identity, as we have seen, that eclipses even common nationality.

Limitations and challenges

A question that remains unanswered is whether it is the reaction against the suggestions and strategies of German-speaking Switzerland on this linguistic issue that causes la Suisse romande's alignment with France, or whether it is francophone Swiss seeking deliberate parallels with the French of France on the basis of linguistic commonality that leads to subsequent disparities with Swiss-German policies. While there is much scope for further exploration in this field in future research, I would suggest that these influences on Suisse romande policies could perhaps act in a relationship of circular causality: just as our thoughts, ideas, and imaginaries are influenced by language, and, reciprocally, our thoughts and ideas affect our language use and expression, so too may these influences of language, ideology, and imaginary across German- and French-speaking Switzerland, and the French and Swiss-French, respectively converge to culminate in identities simultaneously enacted and established through both similarity and *différance*, and reflected in each groups' language policies. It is also important to take into account the geographic, linguistic, and cultural proximity of the French and French-speaking Swiss that makes possible these remarkable links across their social imaginaries. The limits of this thesis were such that I was unable to explore thoroughly the influence of Germany on German-speaking Switzerland as a parallel to the relationship of France and French-speaking Switzerland, nor was I able to collect data or conduct interviews to corroborate the conclusions drawn from my close policy analysis. In future, I hope that this field is able to continue expanding and shedding light on what I consider to be an extremely valuable intersection of policy, feminist linguistics, and social theory.

Final thoughts

Ultimately, the identity we have discovered through analysis of feminist language policies in Suisse romande is one that reveals strong influences from the French of France, both by virtue of the significance of 'standard' French in their social imaginary, and due to association with France as a larger francophone nation against the perceived in-country threat of the German-speaking Swiss majority. The Suisse romande identity is inextricably bound up in the ideological and the symbolic, and performing textual analyses through the lens of feminist language policies in the country and in the region reveals the precise underlying ideologies and influences both implicitly and explicitly informing this identity. In future, we can hope that for la Suisse romande it will not be so important that their independent identity from the German-speaking majority in Switzerland and Bern, nor their alignment with the French of France are affirmed, but that their feminist language policies

systematically ensure that women are as equally visible, present, and represented as possible in the French language. French, with its influential presence in the social imaginary and powerful historical connotations of universality, would surely engender even more prestige and valorisation were it able to equally represent all francophones, all citoyennes and citoyens.

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