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Switzerland as a Site of Capital Accumulation: The Case of International Education / Die Schweiz als Ort der Kapitalakkumulation: der Fall des internationalen Bildungswesens / La Suisse comme lieu d'accumulation de capitaux: le cas de l'éducation internationale

Edited by Karen Lillie and Anne-Sophie Delval

Karen Lillie and Anne-Sophie Delval — Switzerland as a Site of Capital Accumulation: The Case of International Education [E]

Anne-Sophie Delval — Being Swiss and International: Territorialities at Stake in the Field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools [E]

Jeanne Rey — The Uncertain Value of Cosmopolitan Capital: Teachers at International Schools in Switzerland [E]

Mianmian Fei — Concerted Cultivation from Afar: Wealthy Chinese Families and Their Children at Swiss International Boarding Schools [E]

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Hannah Mormann and Raimund Hasse — Sustainability as Proper Investment: Organisational and Field Level Effects of Grand Challenges in the Case of Swiss Banking [E]

Seismo

Manuscripts and Editorial Correspondence

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Introduction to the Special Issue: Switzerland as a Site of Capital Accumulation: The Case of International Education

Karen Lillie* and Anne-Sophie Delval**

Abstract: This special issue explores how and why foreign families and individuals, as well as local institutions, capitalize on the Swiss private schools' market. Our introduction unpacks how the country and its educational landscape intersect with broader ties to global capitalism and asset movement. By further unravelling the interplay of social re/production, Bourdieusian capital accumulation, and transnational mobility for the globally elite, our introduction sets forth an important research agenda on Switzerland's international education sector.

Key words: Elites, international education, global capitalism, mobility, Switzerland, transnational reproduction

Introduction au numéro spécial : La Suisse comme lieu d'accumulation de capitaux : le cas de l'éducation internationale

Résumé : Ce numéro spécial explore comment et pourquoi les familles et les individus étrangers, ainsi que les institutions locales, capitalisent sur le marché des écoles privées suisses. Notre introduction explique où le pays et son paysage éducatif se situent dans le capitalisme mondial et les mouvements des capitaux. En investiguant l'interaction entre (re)production sociale, accumulation bourdieusienne de capital et mobilité transnationale des élites, notre introduction propose un nouveau programme de recherche sur le secteur éducatif international suisse.

Mots clés : Élites, éducation internationale, capitalisme mondial, mobilité, Suisse, reproduction transnationale

Einführung zum Sonderheft: Die Schweiz als Ort der Kapitalakkumulation: der Fall des internationalen Bildungswesens

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Themenheft wird untersucht, wie und warum ausländische Familien und Einzelpersonen sowie einheimische Institutionen aus dem Schweizer Privatschulmarkt Kapital schlagen. In der Einleitung untersuchen wir die Wechselwirkung vom Staat und seiner Bildungslandschaft mit den weitergefassten Verbindungen zu globalem Kapitalismus sowie zu Vermögensbewegungen. Indem wir dieses Zusammenspiel von sozialer Re/Produktion, Bourdieus'scher Kapitalakkumulation und transnationaler Mobilität der globalen Elite weiter entschlüsseln, legt unsere Einführung eine wichtige Forschungsagenda zum internationalen Bildungssektor der Schweiz vor.

Schlüsselwörter: Eliten, internationale Bildung, globaler Kapitalismus, Mobilität, Schweiz, transnationale Reproduktion

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1 Introduction: Switzerland's Unique Position in the Realm of International Education

This special issue explores Switzerland's unique position in the realm of international education. Switzerland's international education sector has long been regarded as a trailblazer, marked by institutions catering primarily to non-Swiss students with foreign-based curricula and English-language instruction. Positioned at the intersection of global capitalism and education, Switzerland offers a fascinating lens through which to examine the intricate dynamics of social re/production, capital accumulation, and transnational mobility within the educational landscape.

The papers in this special issue delve into various facets of Switzerland's international education system, offering a multi-scalar and multi-positioned perspective. From institutional strategies to individual experiences, our collection of papers investigates how and why families and individuals capitalize on Switzerland's educational offerings and its global reputation. By unpacking the complexities of the Swiss international education sector, we aim to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how the country's educational landscape intersects with broader ties to global capitalism, asset movement, and the accumulation of Bourdieusian capital.

The papers present diverse empirical, methodological, and theoretical approaches. Delving into topics ranging from institutional positioning to individual experiences, our contributors shed light on the nuanced dynamics shaping the educational trajectories of students, families, teachers, and institutions within Switzerland's international education landscape. Together, they not only fill gaps in the existing literature but also set forth a future research agenda that explores the implications of Switzerland's international education sector on transnational strategies of social reproduction.

2 Switzerland and Global Capitalism

Achieving a comprehensive understanding of the significance of Swiss international education within the framework of transnational social reproduction necessitates a grasp of Switzerland's unique position within the landscape of global capitalism. Switzerland's strategic positioning within capitalism and asset movement both contributes to and is a consequence of an environment that attracts and caters to privileged foreign nationals. That the nation-state has come to be a central hub in Europe facilitating the influx and outflow of transnational economic resources and individuals means its influence resonates both deeply and widely, across such various interconnected sectors as tourism, luxury goods, art, banking and finance, international trade, and sports. The result is an international social, economic, and educational ecosystem that caters to well-resourced foreign nationals. This special issue delves into a critical component of this dynamic: Switzerland's international

education system. This domain offers insights into how and why Swiss private schools align with foreign families' desire for mobility, prestige, and cosmopolitanism – and, more centrally, how these institutions facilitate the accumulation and conversion of Bourdieusian capitals.

Switzerland's position at the intersection of capitalism and the movement of people and resources has embedded the country with international reach and power. Some international contemporary businesses and politics, for example, are shaped by legitimation processes that take place in the country. As historical research on transnational relationships between Switzerland and international business associations has demonstrated, Swiss economic players have actively influenced the laws and collaborations that govern modern capitalism on an international scale (Pitteloud 2020; Beausire 2022; Eichenberger 2022; Pitteloud 2022; David and Eichenberger 2023; Eichenberger et al. 2023). These relationships materialize at events like the World Economic Forum, an annual meeting in Davos that sets an international agenda in these sectors (Garsten and Sörbom 2018).

The country's international reputation is strongly entwined with its banking sector, which has become synonymous with private wealth management (Bertron 2018; Araujo et al. 2023) despite several crises from 1850 to 2000 (Giddey and Mazbouri 2022). In 1910, hoping to join London and Paris as a center of foreign capital, Switzerland introduced low tax rates. French authorities then sued Switzerland in 1932 for facilitating tax evasion, leading to the Banking Secrecy Act of 1934 (Guex 2000). The resultant "asking of no questions and hence no need to tell lies" (Urry 2014, 229) has appealed to the international rich shopping the globe for a (tax-free) place for their money (Drucker and Hubbard 2022; see also Rossier 2019).

The wealthiest not only make financial use of Switzerland, but also develop a whole range of social activities in specific private areas there. A research project led by Chauvin and Cosquer[1] is currently examining the "private worlds" of international elites in Switzerland through social clubs, holiday resorts, and second homes, and the role those play in the inculcation and dissemination of a privileged lifestyle on a global scale. As this suggests, Switzerland's role as a host country for foreign elites is reflected in its strong local presence of luxury goods and services (Donzé 2023a), including watches (Donzé 2022), private health clinics (Donzé 2023b), and holiday homes (Sonderegger and Bätzing 2013) in contemporary vacation destinations like St. Moritz and Gstaad, which tailor to the international rich (Sherman 2017; Cousin and Chauvin 2021) and operate as winter destinations for the global party circuit (Mears 2020).

The power and influence emanating from Switzerland – especially that which has financial roots – can also be found in non-economic fields, such as arts, culture, and sports. Art Basel, for example, epitomizes the ability of money to dictate what

1 See the project description on the SNF website "La Suisse dans la formation et la transformation des classes dominantes internationales : ethnographie des sociabilités et des styles de vie élitaires". https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/204882 (12. 03. 2024).

good art is (Schultheis et al. 2015); the Montreux Jazz Festival presumably does something similar for the relationship between money and music (see, for example, Debono 2021). Switzerland also hosts over 60 international sports organizations – such as FIFA and UEFA for football and FIG for gymnastics, as well as the International Olympic Committee, which arguably has immense social and economic power that goes relatively unchecked due in large part to its formal status as a Swiss NGO (Chappelet and Kübler-Mabbott 2008; Geeraert et al. 2014; Nelson and Cottrell 2016; Chatzigianni 2018).

This international reach is both cause and consequence of Switzerland being crisscrossed by transnational flows, making the country a dynamic space of internationalization. Because of its attractive economic and tax policies for foreign companies, multinational corporations accounted for almost 25% of the workforce in 2022, according to the Federal Statistical Office. It also has one of the highest proportions in Europe of foreign executives at the head of its companies (Bühlmann et al. 2018). Foreign citizens also hold leadership positions in Swiss economic (Bühlmann et al. 2013), banking (Araujo 2018; Araujo et al. 2023; Araujo and Davoine 2023a), and academic institutions (Rossier et al. 2015; Benz et al. 2021; Rossier 2020). However, this flow is bidirectional. Swiss leaders, too, have internationalized their careers in those sectors through various professional moves to the United States, England, and/or neighboring countries such as France and Germany (Bühlmann et al. 2013; Araujo and Davoine 2023b).

Globally mobile professionals in Switzerland are buttressed by an entire ecosystem that encourages and facilitates their moving and settling in, one that comprises private relations (the family), the private sector (recruitment and relocation agencies, and placement agencies for spouses; Tissot 2018; 2020), the public sector (in terms of setting conditions for migration; Sandoz 2019; 2020), and, importantly here, international schools that educate children who move with their parents.

Switzerland has thus progressively established itself as an ideal destination for foreign elites – a place that is welcoming to their international money, business, families, and lifestyles. Its international schools, to which we turn next, form a critical part of that positioning, while Switzerland's contemporary reputation on the global stage has become an attractive argument for those schools.

3 Switzerland's Global Imaginary

A survey from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (2022) of almost 12 000 people abroad from 18 countries showed that Switzerland is widely associated with its privileged resources – its nature, consumer goods, and socio-economic and political policies. Spontaneous associations with "Switzerland" that were elicited by the survey centered on its physical environment, such as the mountains, the

Alps, the lakes, the beauty of the landscape and the cleanliness; everyday consumer products (chocolate and cheese) and luxury goods (watches); and geopolitical attributes including neutrality, economic prosperity/stability, quality of life, social security, and the high cost of living. These representations provide resources for Swiss international schools, which can activate their host country's global imaginary to appeal to a globally wealthy clientele (Lillie 2024).

Switzerland has actively cultivated its association with attributes that both mark it as a privileged space and work to enhance its privileged position. For example, Switzerland widely advertised itself as "safe" (Swann 2007) – an association that takes on numerous meanings. The country can be seen as "safe" from geopolitics, through both the imagery of the Alps protecting it from the world (Zimmer 1998) and the discourse of being "neutral"; and from disease, due to its long history of sanatoriums (Lüthi 2005). These attributes directly enhance Switzerland's financial standing: Geopolitical neutrality meant that Switzerland profited from trading with both sides of the World Wars and not having to rebuild after bombing (Helmreich 1977; Golson 2011); and sanatoriums catered to a wealthy clientele that not only supported local economies during their stays in the country but also helped to cultivate and disseminate Switzerland's reputation as a place for the rich (Lüthi 2005).

Subsequently, amidst the backdrop of decolonization, the "myth of Swiss neutrality" emerged as a compelling rationale for the country's role in mediating international financial conflicts between enterprises hailing from the Global South and North (Beausire 2022). Similarly, Swiss academic players were asked to take part in the creation of diplomatic training abroad in the second half of the 20th century (Roy 2024 [forthcoming]). Switzerland has thus developed a reputation as one of the best places to manage international conflicts, and safely store financial capital, and its professionals have become known as experts in neutrality and diplomacy, exporting their knowledge internationally.

We could hypothesize that Switzerland's sense of security is strongly linked to the "security" of money. Switzerland's wealthy population, strong economy (and therefore high cost of living), and centrality in global financial landscapes signals its openness to the financially rich. According to OECD statistics, in international comparison, Switzerland has the third highest net national income[2] and employment rate (80.4%),[3] and fourth highest average wages (US$72 293).[4] Its poverty rate in 2020 was also comparatively low (9.9%).[5] Moreover, the country and its major cities are frequently ranked highly in various indexes evaluating quality of life, including the Legatum Prosperity Index, World Happiness Report, and Better Life Index.

2 OECD (2024), Net national income (indicator). doi: 10.1787/af9be38a-en (05. 03. 2024).

3 OECD (2024), Employment rate (indicator). doi: 10.1787/1de68a9b-en (05. 03. 2024).

4 OECD (2024), Average wages (indicator). doi: 10.1787/cc3e1387-en (05. 03. 2024).

5 OECD (2024), Poverty rate (indicator). doi: 10.1787/0fe1315d-en (05. 03. 2024).

These statistics and rankings contribute to a global imaginary of an "exceptional" Switzerland, a place seemingly sheltered from global conflicts and crises. At work here are two fundamental symbolic mechanisms: Switzerland's historical evolution into an international economic and political hub, nurtured by the interplay of transnational institutions, financial networks, and individual interactions; and Switzerland's comparatively privileged position on the global stage today, economically, socially, and politically.

4 Switzerland's Role in International Education

Switzerland is widely considered a trailblazer when it comes to international education. In the interwar period, it saw the start of the International Bureau of Education, which practiced educational internationalism as a tool of diplomacy (Hofstetter and Schneuwly 2023). This was also when the International School of Geneva began, educating the children of those working for the League of Nations or the International Labour Organisation (Hill 2001; Dugonjić 2014; Dugonjic-Rodwin 2022). In the 1960s, Switzerland became the birthplace of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. Although originally designed as a way for the children of internationally mobile parents to receive a continuous education (Fitzgerald 2017), the IB Organisation now arguably creates a global field of "international education"(Dugonjic-Rodwin 2021).

The literature examining international schools outside of Switzerland often finds that they are, at core, nationally oriented schools that have adopted an international outlook "through the prism of a national imaginary" (Rizvi 2015, 137). These schools, in post-colonial places like Singapore (Koh and Kenway 2012), Barbados (McCarthy et al. 2014), and India (Rizvi 2015), but also in Germany (Keßler et al. 2015) and Argentina (Prosser 2016), seek to balance their own local embedment with their clientele's global ambitions. Their families, these studies show, seek an education for their children that prepares them for the global marketplace. While those schools can be seen as national ones trying to rebrand as international, there are also internationalized schools trying to hold onto their national brand. In some contexts, like China (Ong 1999) and Nigeria (Ayling 2019), families want to educate their children abroad at a school that reflects its home nation and culture – i. e., at a "British school" rather than an international school in Britain. As a result, some English (Brooks and Waters 2015) and Irish (Courtois 2016) schools have tried to preserve their national image while quietly internationalizing their student body.

In comparison, Switzerland's international educational landscape is unique. Its international schools were typically designed as establishments for foreigners – usually either for middle-class families that worked abroad or wealthy families that sent their children abroad to "scale up" their social class standing from the national

elite to an international elite (see, for example, Bertron 2016a; Lillie 2021a). As a result, these schools traditionally educate primarily non-Swiss students, teach in English, and offer a foreign-based curriculum, such as the IB, British A-Levels, or American Advanced Placement courses, instead of the Swiss Maturité (Rey 2024, this issue).

International schools in Switzerland are tied to economic capital in several ways. Historically, these institutions have continuously educated the global wealthy, even as the geographies and forms of Bourdieusian capitals defining those wealthy have changed – from European and Anglo-American elites up through the 1960s to emerging economic (and, notably, primarily non-white) powers thereafter: The Persian Gulf from the 1970s, Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, Russia and the post-soviet states in the 1990s and 2010s, and the Asia Pacific since then (Bertron 2016b; Delval 2022a).

That these international schools, many of which were founded in the first half of the twentieth century, have survived for so long while often charging high fees attests to their staying power in the global educational market. To survive, many of them have adapted their client base in parallel with changes in the global financial landscape (Lillie 2022). Bertron (2019b) shows what happens when schools cannot adapt: Finishing schools educating international young women in Switzerland declined in the 1960s as societal expectations around how to educate the future elite changed and those institutions could no longer compete in the educational market. Currently, in line with both changes in the global education market and with Switzerland's orientation towards global capitalism, the landscape of international schooling in the country has increasingly become entwined with multinational for-profit companies that take over educational institutions (Bertron 2019a).

Why do wealthy families look to Switzerland for an education abroad? In part, schools in Switzerland offer "refuge" from competitive educational systems (Delval 2022b) and/or geopolitical tensions in other countries (Bertron 2016a). But also, they work to inscribe privilege on their students through the accumulation of international or cosmopolitan capital (Weenink 2008; Igarashi and Saito 2014; Wagner 2020). However, our work shows that young people from different races, nationalities, and social class backgrounds can experience their schooling differently (Lillie 2021a; Delval 2022a; Lillie 2024), pointing to the importance of not reducing Swiss international school students into one conceptual category.

Graduates from Swiss international secondary schools may attend university in the United States or the United Kingdom because of the global status that higher education in those countries holds (Lillie 2021b). An exception is when staying in Switzerland is a strategy for acquiring citizenship, as can be the case particularly for Russian students (Bertron 2018). However, as ongoing work by Lillie and Maxwell (2024) shows, even though young people often leave Switzerland after their secondary schooling, they continue to cultivate the international and wealthy social

networks they acquired there by, for example, vacationing together – and to put those networks to work for personal and professional opportunities.

Switzerland's international education sector also extends to the tertiary level, a large part of which developed after the Second World War. A notable example is the Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Lausanne, which is often internationally top-ranked for business management. David and Schaufelbuehl (2015) demonstrate the essential role played by Swiss and Canadian multinationals – Nestlé and Alcan – in the genesis and funding of the IMD, which also encourages the transatlantic circulation of managers, teachers, and knowledge. The IMD was thus initiated by and for the international private sector and caters to foreign students.

Similarly, Roy (2024 [forthcoming]) investigated the conditions under which the Graduate Institute, which plays an international role in cultural outreach and diplomacy, was founded in Geneva. The Institute was established in 1955 with a donation from the Ford Foundation, one of America's largest philanthropic organizations. Its director Sehpard Stone saw Switzerland as a "neutral" place that could attract young intellectuals from decolonized countries hostile to the United States. Switzerland was thus conceived as an "ideal place to expose students to Western ideas, methods and knowledge". The Institute's activities, however, were also aimed at the Swiss public and students studying foreign affairs.

Delval's study of Swiss Hospitality Managements Schools (Delval and Bühlmann 2020; Delval 2022a) illustrates how they developed a unique vocational training from the early 20th century. Their reputation is based not only on representing Switzerland as the "cradle of the tourism industry", with professional expertise aimed at a distinctive international clientele, but also on their affiliation with the internationalist educational model. Their curriculum is therefore tailored to international students hoping to enter the global luxury hotel industry. Considered the best in the world in their field, these institutions attract heirs of the foreign economic elite searching for a "refuge" from their home schooling systems when they do not perform well in them (Delval 2022b).

These international higher education institutions (HEIs) share a common thread: The cultivation of a hybrid training model that seamlessly integrates Swiss expertise – in multinational and hospitality management as well as diplomacy – with English-language instruction within an international community. This starkly contrasts with Switzerland's public universities, which do not attract many international undergraduate students, particularly in comparison to the United States or the United Kingdom. Switzerland's international HEIs are dedicated to equipping their graduates with a degree that stands out on a global scale. Conceptualized as "specialized Higher Education Institutions" (Findlay et al. 2012), they thus cater to unique vocational training requirements and goals, positioning themselves within niche markets tailored to the needs and aspirations of a selective flow of international students looking for an English-language curriculum in a desirable Western location.

5 The Special Issue

Starting at the institutional level, then focusing on the individual level through teachers, families, and pupils, this special issue offers a multi-scalar and multi-positioned perspective on how, why, and to what ends an international education in Switzerland can be deployed as a mechanism of social re/production. Its papers speak to the question of how families and individuals capitalize on these institutions' Swiss location and taught dispositions. As such, it contributes to a more complete and complex understanding of how Switzerland's educational landscape intersects with the country's broader ties to global capitalism, asset movement and foreign nationals – and the role it plays in the conversion and accumulation of Bourdieusian capital. This special issue marks the inaugural gathering of researchers and their studies on Swiss international schools, offering a comprehensive presentation and discussion of this previously disparate body of work.

The first paper, "Being Swiss and International", discusses international institutions themselves. Delval studied how Swiss Hospitality Management Schools use the symbolic attributes related to "Swissness" and "internationalism" with other forms of capitals, to both position themselves and compete locally and globally. To do this, Delval used mixed methods data drawn from interviews and Multiple Correspondence Analysis, to produce a cosmopolitan field analysis. The article shows how the reputation of an international educational establishment based in Switzerland is embodied and circulates transnationally through recruiters, alumni, and students. It reveals that not all international institutions have the same symbolic, social, and academic resources to put to work in territorial expansion. In other words, the symbolic categories of "Swiss" or "international" in fact conceal very unequal institutional realities – ones that are not always defined by the elitism, prestige, and multiculturalism often associated with such labels. The paper thus shows that any examination of social reproduction strategies among students within the Swiss international sector requires a nuanced consideration of the distinctive attributes of their institution vis-à-vis its competitors.

The next paper, "The Uncertain Value of International Capital", shifts to the broader context surrounding international schools in Switzerland, with a focus on the experiences of teachers who come to the country as part of their career and mobility trajectories. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data from a multi-sited ethnography of international schools in the region, the paper shows that the same Swiss international school employment market varies drastically in terms of the social reproduction strategies it can offer, depending on the migratory and professional background, as well as the socio-economic and geographical origins, of the teachers. Rey starts the paper by discussing three distinct socio-professional and mobility trajectories of teachers. For "trailing spouses", who move as a result of their partner's career path, teaching at an international school in Switzerland emerges as

an accessible avenue to bolster household income, enriching their already privileged circumstances. It also fosters integration into the local expatriate community, despite disparities in qualifications or professional backgrounds. "Adventurer teachers", who often hail from English-speaking countries, on the other hand, seize Switzerland as an opportunity to cultivate professional expertise in a "first-tier" international school, notwithstanding the challenges posed by the country's high cost of living. Finally, the third trajectory is that of the "local teachers", mostly Swiss or neighboring country residents, who may lack the prerequisites for more lucrative public sector teaching roles. Opting instead for international school positions, they leverage their personal ties or cosmopolitan backgrounds to navigate their career paths. The paper examines the potential for these different types of teachers to bridge their skills and experiences between international and local education spheres, underscoring the limited transitional opportunities within Switzerland. In doing so, it sheds light on the social and economic dynamics surrounding international schools in the country. While globally prestigious, Swiss international schools appear to hold lesser social value for the resident population, giving rise to broader socio-professional complexities in the region's education sector.

The third paper, "Concerted Cultivation from Afar", looks at students' families situated outside Switzerland. Using in-depth interviews with mothers analyzed through the lens of outsourced concerted cultivation, Fei delves into the practices of affluent Chinese families in utilizing their economic resources, time, and cultural values to nurture their children remotely. She finds that these mothers exhibit minimal class anxiety, as they firmly believe their children will inherit and manage the family business upon their return. Consequently, they prioritize their children's cultural enrichment, socio-emotional well-being, and academic performance over concerns about university or career opportunities. Their decision to send their children to Switzerland stems from a desire for a holistic education fostering qualities like maturity, independence, emotional intelligence, courage, and courtesy. Despite the physical distance, these mothers maintain close involvement through frequent travel to Switzerland and financing their children's visits to China, thereby continuing concerted cultivation despite delegation to boarding schools. The paper thus offers a distinctive sociological perspective on a Chinese demographic often overlooked, despite its significant presence in Switzerland's international boarding schools.

The fourth and final paper, "Educating Inheritors", delves into the dynamics within Swiss international boarding schools, particularly focusing on economic socialization within these establishments to understand processes of elite legitimization and perpetuation. Drawing from empirical evidence gathered through a socio-historical study encompassing 12 such schools, Bertron conceptualizes philanthropic practices, the significance of pocket money, and financial management as pivotal to fostering practices of moral and economic distinction. Her analysis suggests that Swiss boarding schools tend to instill an ethos of conspicuous consumption, a tendency that correlates with the substantial presence of heirs to "new wealth" within

these establishments. In these Swiss boarding schools, young people are confronted with always privileged but varied consumption styles, from which they develop economic, symbolic, and social dispositions designed to ensure the reproduction of their social class position. Far from their country of origin and from an early age, they become familiar with the universe of the "rich kids", a social category now present throughout the world that distinguishes young people living in opulence on a national level, while at the same time creating a sense of belonging to a global elite that shares the same transnational luxury lifestyle.

Together, these papers clearly show that working or studying in Switzerland's international education sector as part of a transnational pathway takes on a particular meaning and value depending on one's country of origin and economic resources. Although Switzerland's reputation as an international, elite, safe, and healthy space is still an attractive argument for its educational establishments, the individual experiences that take place there are varied and unequal.

6 A Future Research Agenda

There are many avenues that could still be explored to more fully understand the role played by Switzerland's international education institutions in transnational strategies of social reproduction. These avenues are empirical, methodological, and theoretical.

Case studies presented in this introduction and special issue show that while international elites send their children to prestigious boarding schools, expatriate communities often enroll their children in local international private day schools, which are cheaper. Swiss international schools also increasingly educate Swiss students hoping to develop or acquire international capital, and who are sometimes charged lower fees. Therefore, studying international education in Switzerland as a whole, through field analysis, and by examining both the different agents involved and the socio-economic distinctions that arise, could provide an excellent case study for understanding the differentiated transnational strategies of social reproduction of various social groups around the world.

Taking a comparative approach would also usefully contribute to what we know about Switzerland's unique place in the international market. It could help unravel why and how students end up studying in Switzerland rather than in the United States or the United Kingdom, or in other educational hubs such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and the United Arab Emirates. To investigate "Switzerland" from abroad – to understand where and how it is presented and sold to potential clients, by which recruiters, or which agencies, in which locations, with what arguments, for what purposes – is to understand how Switzerland overlaps with and differs from other training locations.

Methodologically, we lack substantial quantitative data on the international school sector in Switzerland. As a result, much of this kind of research relies on

qualitative sociological and/or historical data. An important step forward, then, would be to find data on things like the material bases of these schools, including fees and profits; student demographics, including family wealth; and employment data, including salaries. If we could compile this into a dataset, we could better explore how this sector intersects with broader trends in the financialization of schooling.

Moreover, although Switzerland presents itself as neutral, the country is part of the Global North, which arguably has a vested interest – historically, through imperialism; contemporarily, through financial landscapes – in extracting economic and human capital from the Global South. Future research would benefit from taking a post-colonial theoretical approach, seeing international education in Switzerland as implicated in the western cultural colonization of other spaces. What implications does this have for how racial and geopolitical hierarchies are constructed and construed, and how do those play out for the international families and children educated in its schools?

Another still-open theoretical and empirical question is how cosmopolitan, economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capitals acquired or developed in Switzerland are actually converted abroad in transnational life courses, after leaving a Swiss institution. In other words, does the educational strategy of sending one's child to a Swiss international school for social class re/production pay off? Considering that Swiss international schools have been diversifying in terms of geographical, racial, and socio-economic origins, Switzerland is an ideal case study for theorizing how social relations of race, class, and gender influence the acquisition and conversion of capital in transnational life courses and mobile lifestyles.

The aim of our current research projects is, through multi-sited research designs, to follow the alumni of these international schools from their point of departure in Switzerland. This requires going beyond methodological nationalism to follow (or find) an international population of respondents. To do this, Delval[6] investigates valuation mechanisms of a hospitality management degree obtained in Switzerland, by analyzing the careers and mobility paths of alumni working in France, the United Arab Emirates, and China. Lillie, with Claire Maxwell, is examining challenges to and the stability – or, rather, instability – of graduates' elite status when they become mobile, due to "soft barriers" like new configurations of race and racism and "hard" ones like currency fluctuations. This is in line with Delval (2024), which underscores the imperative of reconceptualizing cosmopolitan capital through a postcolonial lens to elucidate the ways that racialization shapes the convertibility of international capital around the world.

That these are just a few ways forward highlights the exciting nature of – and possibilities in – this area of research. We are delighted that our special issue can

6 See the project description on the SNF website "Converting international capital: The Case of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools' alumni careers": https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/199264.

contribute both to filling gaps in the extant literature and to setting a future agenda and look forward to seeing that agenda unfold.

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Being Swiss and International: Territorialities at Stake in the Field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools

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Abstract: This article develops a cosmopolitan field analysis, drawing on Bourdieu and Beck, to analyze Swiss hospitality management schools (SHMS). Using a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and 19 interviews, it highlights the competing uses of academic recognition, admissions, and alumni networks, as well as the complexity of reconciling Swiss and international identities. The results highlight the nuanced interaction of local, national, and international attributes in shaping the attractiveness of SHMS on the global scene.

Keywords: Switzerland, cosmopolitan capital, cosmopolitan field, hospitality management schools, internationalisation

Être suisse et international: les territorialités en jeu dans le champ des écoles hôtelières suisses

Résumé: Cet article applique une analyse de champ cosmopolite, inspirée de Bourdieu et Beck, pour explorer les écoles hôtelières suisses. À l'aide de l'analyse des correspondances multiples (ACM) et de 19 entretiens, il met en lumière les usages concurrents de la reconnaissance académique, des admissions, des réseaux d'anciens élèves, ainsi que les défis pour concilier les identités suisse et internationale. Les résultats illustrent le rôle des attributs locaux, nationaux et internationaux dans l'attractivité de ces écoles sur la scène mondiale.

Mots-clés: Suisse, capital cosmopolite, champ cosmopolite, écoles hôtelières, internationalisation

Sowohl Schweizerisch als auch International: Territorialitäten im Feld der Schweizer Hotelfachschulen

Zusammenfassung: Dieser Artikel wendet eine von Bourdieu und Beck inspirierte kosmopolitische Feldanalyse an, um Schweizer Hotelfachschulen zu untersuchen. Mittels multipler Korrespondenzanalyse werden in 19 Interviews die konkurrierende Nutzung akademischer Anerkennung, Zulassungen und Alumni-Netzwerken sowie die Herausforderung, die schweizerische und internationale Identität in Einklang zu bringen, untersucht. Die Ergebnisse betonen die Rolle lokaler, nationaler und internationaler Attribute für die globale Attraktivität dieser Schulen.

Schlüsselwörter: Schweiz, Kosmopolitisches Kapital, Kosmopolitisches Feld, Hotelfachschulen, Internationalisierung

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1 Introduction

1.1 Territorialities at Play in the Internationalisation of Higher Education Fields

The geographic location of a Higher Education Institution (HEI) has been shown to significantly influence its perception and attractiveness on a global scale (Marginson 2004). Notably, Western English-speaking countries, like the USA and UK, serve as pivotal educational and scientific hubs (Marconi 2013; Börjesson 2017). Friedman (2017) delineated how American and British HEIs inherently embody national traits that define their appeal to prospective students and their families. Lee (2021) noted a similar process on a smaller geographical scale, with HEIs located in certain cities – like London or Oxford – being "naturally" esteemed as international and prestigious. Conversely, some educational institutions strategically and actively market their territorial identity to gain visibility. For instance, scholars studying international and boarding schools in Switzerland have shown the strategic use of symbolic attributes tied to the "international" and the "national" fortifies their legitimacy (Bertron 2016; Bolay and Rey 2020; Dugonjic-Rodwin 2022), positioning a school within the globally elite sphere (Lillie 2022).

Understanding how HEIs leverage or struggle with the symbolic capital of their location warrants sociological investigation. Such institutions no longer confine themselves to a local-to-global axis (Fielding and Vidovich 2017) but instead navigate multiple territorial identities simultaneously – international, national, and local – creating an intricate and intertwined geographical positioning (Kehm and Teichler 2007; Marginson 2008; Mulvey 2021a). Yet, studies reveal that internationalization processes at a national level tend to reinforce existing inequalities, notably in France (Delespierre 2019), the US (Matić 2019), South Africa (Naidoo 2004), and the United Kingdom (Friedman 2017; 2018). These studies highlight that nationally prestigious HEIs often maintain their elite status without significant curriculum changes, attracting high-performing foreign students who pay substantial fees, thereby enhancing their income and reputation (Donnelly and Gamsu 2020; Mulvey 2021b). These top-tier HEIs establish transnational partnerships with prestigious foreign counterparts, offering academic mobility and additional benefits to their students (Knight 2016; Delespierre 2019). Some also expand their presence by establishing branch campuses in educational hubs like Singapore, China, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, or Qatar, bolstering their revenue (Wilkins 2021).

In contrast, less nationally renowned HEIs actively market their internationality by teaching in English, recruiting international students, and emphasizing their training of "global citizens". Delespierre's (2019) analysis of the French higher education landscape showed unequal transnational partnerships in which lesser-ranked institutions offered limited student mobility to less prestigious destinations within Europe, lacking additional diploma recognition. These less prestigious HEIs often struggle for international visibility due to limited academic recognition and financial

resources (Findlay et al. 2012; Friedman 2018), which are then reinforced by that lack of international visibility. Therefore, to understand HEIs' internationalization strategies, it is crucial to differentiate between the symbolic advantages of specific locations and the institutional practices and resources deployed to expand territories, remain attractive, and generate revenue.

Employing a cosmopolitan field analysis, this article asks how Swiss Hospitality Management Schools (SHMSs) leverage territorial resources to carve out distinctive positions within the national education landscape. It investigates how they link and showcase various territories, each possessing unique symbolic attributes, and explores how their internationalization strategies intertwine with other institutional capital they possess. As such, this article offers concepts and methodological tools that can be used to systematically compare territories involved in HEIs' internationalization strategies across different scales, analyzing their impact on reputational resources and positioning opportunities. In doing so, it contributes valuable knowledge to the limited extant literature that addresses international student migration to Switzerland and the role of public policy in shaping this phenomenon (Bolzman 2011; Renggli and Riano 2017).

1.2 Theoretical Framework: Cosmopolitan Field Analysis

I employ Bourdieu's concept of a field to scrutinize unequal practices of internationalization in higher education, aligning with prior research (Naidoo 2004; Marginson 2008; Bathmaker 2015). A field represents a distinct social space characterized by relations among agents occupying various positions (Bourdieu 1985), united by shared objectives and rules governing their interactions (*the specific game*). Positions are objectively defined by possession of diverse forms and amounts of capital, conferring power within the field in question (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Within educational arenas, holding specific capitals forms the basis for dominant or subordinate positions (Bathmaker 2015; Dugonjic-Rodwin 2021). However, while field analysis can facilitate systematic assessment and comparison of HEIs' resources in a national territory, the internationalization of higher education necessitates transcending methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Schiller 2002). To address the complexity of transnational flows of students, institutions, and degrees (Marginson 2008), I propose integrating field analysis with cosmopolitan sociology (Beck 2004), in which geographical scales serve as interconnected categories of analysis encompassing the local, national, transnational, international, and other relevant geographical considerations (Beck and Sznaider 2006). This theoretical fusion allows for the conceptualization of HEIs' internationalization strategies as concrete and symbolic practices aimed at leveraging diverse territories across multiple geographical scales. Cosmopolitan field analysis thus provides a framework to empirically chart the territories connected by HEIs and discern potentially unequal symbolic and economic rewards stemming from these institutional strategies.

1.3 The Case-study: Swiss Hospitality Management Schools

In Switzerland, SHMSs stand at the forefront of internationalization. Originating in the early 20th century, SHMSs evolved to cater to an international audience, especially through English-language instruction adopted after the 1950s. They promote a multicultural learning environment and tout access to a purported global hospitality job market. SHMSs have garnered global acclaim in the hospitality industry for their comprehensive training in hotel management, attracting students both locally and globally. Recognized in various rankings, Swiss institutions like Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), Les Roches, and Glion rank among the world's most prestigious (Delval 2022b).

Presently, 19 SHMSs enroll approximately 20 000 international students annually, deriving a considerable portion of their revenue from student fees. Costing between 23 000 and 174 900 Swiss francs for their entire training program as of 2018, fees vary based on school, program length, and student residency status (Swiss residents pay lower fees), evidencing the commercial orientation of many of these institutions (Delval and Bühlmann 2020). The diversity among these schools – including in their dates of establishment and language of instruction (English, French, German, and/or Italian) – makes them an excellent case for analyzing diverse institutional internationalization strategies. That diversity also sets the stage for a Bourdieusian exploration of the territorialities involved in accruing international visibility.

2 Mixed Methods to Investigate an Educational Field

To plot the landscape of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools (SHMSs), I designed a mixed methods PhD study conducted between 2014 and 2018. I collected qualitative data through 19 interviews with SHMS staff to analyze the competitive dynamics within the field. These interviews provided insight into the specific resources under competition. Subsequently, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) allowed me to systematically measure and compare the institutional capitals possessed by each SHMS. This analytical approach offered a snapshot of the field, one that captured the objective positions of agents as well as their articulated perspectives (position-taking) on those positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

2.1 Interviews with Staff

Qualitative insights were instrumental to investigating the specific game within this field: The cultivation and dissemination of an SHMS's reputation globally, to attract and enroll prospective students. To gather this data, I interviewed 19 employees from 5 distinct SHMSs (Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, Ecole hôtelière de Genève,

Les Roches, Vatel and IHTTI) which varied in their year of establishment, size, status, language of instruction, and types of degrees offered. Initial contact was established with SHMS management to ensure that I had official access to the institution. I first asked for an interview with one or more senior managers. Although I often heard the institutional, even promotional, discourse, this guaranteed their consent to my research. I also asked them to recommend staff members from different sectors whom I could interview. Respondent selection was then broadened via snowball sampling techniques – i. e., through personal recommendations from employees and current or former students, to counter an overly controlled institutional discourse.

In the final qualitative sample, participants represented diverse roles across various sectors and levels of responsibility within SHMSs. They included executives, department managers handling recruitment and admissions, academic professionals, alumni network coordinators, and educators in both theoretical and practical domains. Collectively, their roles mirrored the spectrum of departments and operational sectors within SHMSs.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with predefined themes (Galletta 2013). The interviews started with an introduction about me, the research objectives, and the interview conditions (duration, pseudonymization, and consent for audio recording and transcription). Encouraging respondents to share their personal and professional backgrounds, the discussions then focused on the SHMS they were associated with and their daily professional engagements. This approach enabled the collection of comprehensive data concerning SHMS operations, expansion strategies, staff perspectives on pertinent issues, perceptions of competitors, and the hierarchical dynamics within the field.

Subsequently, all interviews were transcribed and flexibly coded (Deterding and Waters 2018) using ATLAS.ti software. I referenced my initial theoretical framework while remaining open to emerging insights and conceptual categories from the data. This article uses select quotations that exemplify my broader sociological analyses. I translated into English the interview extracts that were initially obtained in French. To protect the identities of my participants, I gave them a fictitious name and do not mention their level of responsibility or department. However, I do give the real name of their SHMS because my theoretical standpoint involves identifying the position of each SHMS within the field, to be able to interpret the positions taken by their employees.

2.2 Multiple Correspondence Analysis

Institutions can be thought of as moving pieces occupying an intermediate position between two spaces, which offers a dynamic and structural vision linked to the notion of field (Bourdieu 2013). To spatially represent the field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools by systematically measuring and comparing their institutional

capital, I used multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). This geometric data analysis was popularized by Bourdieu in 1979 in *Distinction* and is commonly used for field analysis (Hjellbrekke 2018). The use of MCA makes it possible not only to produce a typology of SHMSs but also to think sociologically about positional space (distance/proximity, opposition, and composition) (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010). MCA thus enabled me to geometrically objectify the oppositions and distances formulated in the discourses of my respondents (*position taking*) and to check whether they could be reified in space (*space of position*). MCA is therefore an excellent method for objectively situating agents in a field, interpreting their discourse according to their position within it and thus combining quantitative and qualitative data.

Multiple Correspondence Analysis creates a multidimensional geometric space represented by a scatter plot that summarizes the distribution of agents according to their properties. Those who frequently share the same properties are close to each other, while those who are farther apart have different profiles. The same is true for the modalities of the variables: The closer they are, the greater the number of individuals who share them. Opposite and spatially distant modalities are those that polarize and therefore structure the field the most. The complexity of the association between variables is reduced to different dimensions (axes) which summarize the distribution of individuals within the cloud. Each axis has a rate of variance explained (in %) and an eigenvalue, which act as a measure of inertia. To graphically represent the cloud on a two-dimensional plane, the two axes which explain over 80% of the variance are selected because they are most likely to reflect the positions and oppositions in the field (Le Roux and Lebaron 2015).

Traditionally, MCAs are constructed based on individual-level data, inspired by Bourdieu's work in *State Nobility* (Bourdieu 1996), wherein capitals are perceived as held, accumulated, and transformed by individual agents. Building on Naidoo's (2004) insights, I propose conceptualizing HEIs as strategic agents striving to enhance or maintain their position within the educational field by acquiring diverse resources (Fumasoli and Huisman 2013; Thoenig and Paradeise 2018). My approach investigates how individually held capital – possessed by students, alumni, or even staff – can be leveraged by an HEI to bolster its reputation and how this institutional capital accrues value independently over time.

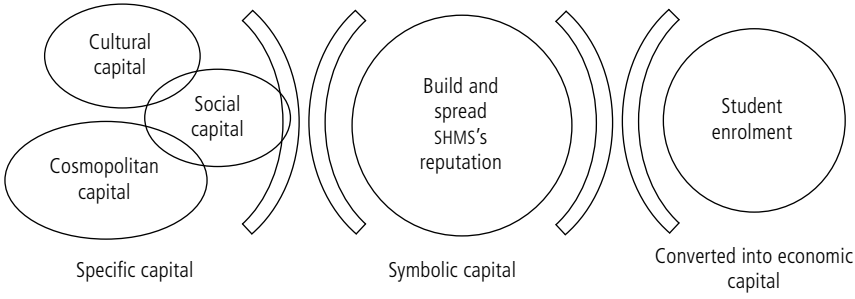
Due to the private nature of SHMSs and the absence of publicly available data about them, I constructed a comprehensive database by screening their respective websites through digital ethnography (Pink et al. 2016). This database facilitated a comparative analysis, encompassing variables such as year of establishment, student and alumni numbers, degree types, accreditations, institutional status, languages of instruction, and tuition fees. Drawing from insights gathered during the interviews, I then defined categorical variables crucial for distinguishing these institutions and systematically comparing their forms of institutional capital. After collecting data for each variable, I recoded them in a categorized way so that I could carry out the MCA. For the geometric analysis to work, it is essential that the number of modali-

ties per variable is not too high (no more than 4), which required me to observe the distribution of responses and establish brackets that spread my population as evenly as possible (Hjellbrekke 2018).

3 Operationalization of Institutional Capitals

I conceptualize three distinct forms of institutional capital inherent to SHMSs: cultural, social, and cosmopolitan. Collectively, these capitals represent the specific capitals coveted within the field of SHMSs (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Operationalization of the Specific Game Within the Field of Swiss Hospitality Schools



These elements form the bedrock of the schools' reputation, akin to what I designate as their symbolic capital – a currency that can later be translated into economic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013). Symbolic capital within a field embodies the characteristics recognized and appreciated by agents, enabling them to perceive, comprehend, and acknowledge its value (Bourdieu 1998). In essence, an SHMS's symbolic capital resides in prospective students' recognition and appreciation of cultural, social, and cosmopolitan assets, defining the institution's attractiveness.

3.1 Institutional Cultural Capital

Each SHMS possesses unique institutional cultural capital recognized within both higher education and professional arenas. This capital manifests in diverse forms, objectified through specific criteria (Bourdieu 1986). I operationalized institutional cultural capital through four categorical variables:

› Diploma Offered: The higher education system is stratified and diversified in terms of degrees offered, which means that length of study and academic recognition vary. Consequently, the type of degrees awarded by a Swiss Hospitality

Management Schools reflects its academic recognition. I differentiated between an Advanced Federal Diploma, which is recognized in the Swiss vocational higher education realm but not for postgraduate studies, and a bachelor's degree, which allows progression to master's levels. Some SHMSs offer both, contingent upon the program's duration and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) obtained.

- Ranking Status: I categorized SHMSs as having appeared in the top-10 in international rankings, which demonstrates conformity to global academic standards. Rankings indicate academic prestige and competitive edge (Pusser and Marginson 2013) and significantly influence an institution's attractiveness (Marconi 2013).
- English Proficiency Requirement: I assessed the linguistic capital of the student body through minimum International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores. SHMSs vary in their entry requirements, from 5.0 (B1 level) to, amongst the most selective, 6.0 (B2 level).
- Admission Process: Admissions requirements (cover letters, tests and/or interviews, and specific high school diplomas and grades) mirror the anticipated academic caliber of applicants (Stevens 2007) and consequently the individual institutionalized cultural capital they own. Some SHMSs employ a simple file-based application process, while others use additional intelligence and/or personality tests and interviews in their selection.

3.2 Institutional Social Capital

Following the framework proposed by Brinton (2000), I consider institutional social capital within an HEI as encompassing existing and potential networks involving students and alumni which can be leveraged to both symbolic and economic ends. Alumni networks play a pivotal role in enhancing both individual and institutional economic capital by providing professional opportunities grounded in a sense of solidarity (Hall 2011; Rivera 2012). Students gain access to resources associated with attending a specific school (Brinton 2000), which then contributes in turn to an institution's reputation through the individual capital of its alumni and their networks (Steven 2007; Waters and Leung, 2013). I operationalized this into three categorical variables:

- Proportion of Local Students: I categorize SHMSs into one of three categories based on the percentage of Swiss residents in their student population, which is indicative of their national academic and social recognition: (1) more than 50% local students; (2) between 20% and 49% local students; and (3) less than 20% local students.

- Annual Student Enrolment: Student body size indirectly signifies an SHMS's economic capital and its effectiveness in student recruitment. It also reflects the volume of current social capital within each SHMS and potential for alumni networks. I used four categories of enrolment: (1) Less than 300 students; (2) between 301 and 1 000 students; and (3) between 1 001 and 2 000 students; and (4) more than 2 000 students.
- Alumni Count: Demonstrating the level of institutional social capital, the number of alumni signals an institution's ability to quantitatively expand its reputation. I delineated two categories: Fewer than 10 000 alumni and more than 10 000 alumni.

3.3 Institutional Cosmopolitan Capital

Previous research has examined diverse institutional internationalization practices, yielding intriguing typologies (Paradeise and Thoenig 2013; Friedman 2018; Delespierre 2019), but has not explicitly conceptualized these practices as capital – as resources that institutions can accumulate (Savage et al. 2005) to secure more influential or appealing positions within an educational field. The notion of institutional cosmopolitan capital provides a lens onto the territorialities and their symbolic attributes that are leveraged by HEIs to gain competitive advantage. I operationalized this concept into four categorical variables:

- Teaching Language(s): This points to the recruiting territory of an SHMS. Some exclusively teach in English and cater primarily to an international student clientele. Others use a national language (French, German, or Italian), thereby mostly attracting local and surrounding-country students. Certain SHMSs offer dual sections – one in English and another in a national language – which diversifies their student demographic.
- Educational Network Territoriality: Reflecting an SHMS's academic transnational position, I here used the categories of standalone establishment, institution within a Swiss educational group, or part of an international educational group with foreign branch campuses.
- Number of Nationalities Represented: Nationalities reflect one kind of diversity within a student body that often contributes to a multicultural learning environment and the geographical expansion of an institution's reputation. Categories here are: Fewer than 50 nationalities, between 51 and 80 nationalities, and more than 80 nationalities.
- Academic Accreditation Territoriality: This refers to the extent that a diploma is recognized in various countries. Some SHMSs hold Swiss accreditation, foreign accreditation, or both.

4 The field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools

The Multiple Correspondence Analysis consists of 11 active variables (Q = 11) and 31 active modalities (K = 31). I interpreted the first two axes of the MCA, which constitute 94.3% of the overall variance. The modified rates of 68.3% (axis 1) and 26.0% (axis 2) provide an accurate bi-dimensional representation in which modalities close to each other were frequently shared by SHMSs with similar characteristics (Table 1).

Table 1 Eigenvalues and Modified Rates of Axes 1–5

	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis 3	Axis 4	Axis 5
Eigen value	0.539	0.376	0.230	0.146	0.133
Modified Eigen value (%)	68.3	26.0	5.1	0.4	0.1
Cumulative Rate	6.3	94.3	99.4	99.8	99.9

Only the variables and categories above the average contribution were retained (average contribution of variables: 1/11 = 0.09, average contribution of categories: 1/31 = 0.0322). Each category's contribution to the two axes is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Contributions of Active Variables and Modalities in the MCA

Variable	Modalities	Axis 1	Axis 2	N	%
Institutional Cultural Capital					
Diploma Offered	Advanced Federal Diploma	*9.7*	0.2	5	25.0
	Bachelor's Degree	*4.6*	0.1	12	60.0
	Advanced Federal Diploma or Bachelor's Degree	0.1	0.0	3	15.0
	Total	**14.3**	0.4		
Ranking Status	Never in top 10	1.0	1.2	14	70.0
	Appeared in top 10	2.3	2.9	6	30.0
	Total	3.3	4.1	--	--
English Proficiency Requirement	5.0 IELTS	*4.2*	0.2	10	50.0
	5.5 IELTS	*5.0*	1.2	7	35.0
	6.0 IELTS	0.1	*6.5*	*3*	15.0
	Total	**9.2**	7.9	--	--
Admission Process	Only a file application	0.3	*4.6*	13	65.0
	File application + tests + interview	0.5	*8.6*	7	35.0
	Total	0.8	**13.2**	--	--
Total		27.6	25.6	--	--

Continuation of Table 2 on the next page.

Continuation of Table 2.

Variable	Modalities	Axis 1	Axis 2	N	%
Institutional Social Capital					
Proportion of local students	More than 50 %	*9.3*	1.3	*6*	30.0
	50 % to 20 %	1.0	*7.4*	2	10.0
	Less than 20 %	3.0	*3.7*	12	60.0
	Total	**13.3**	**12.4**	--	--
Alumni Count	Fewer than 10 000 (or unknown)	0.5	3.0	16	80.0
	More than 10 000	2.1	*12.0*	4	20.0
	Total	2.6	**15.0**	--	--
Annual Student Enrolment	Fewer than 300	*4.9*	0.7	9	45.0
	301 to 1 000	0.5	0.6	4	20.0
	1 001 to 2 000	1.8	0.0	5	25.0
	More than 2 000	2.6	*8.7*	2	10.0
	Total	**9.8**	**10.1**	--	--
Total		25.7	**37.5**		
Institutional Cosmopolitan Capital					
Teaching Language(s)	English	1.9	*3.3*	13	65.0
	National Language (French, German or Italian)	*8.8*	0.3	4	20.0
	English + National Language	0.3	*10.4*	3	15.0
	Total	**11.0**	**14.0**		
Educational Network Territoriality	Single-owned school in Switzerland	*5.3*	0.1	8	40.0
	Educational group – Switzerland	1.5	1.5	9	45.0
	Educational Group – International	2.7	3.0	3	15.0
	Total	**9.5**	4.5		
Number of Nationalities Represented	Fewer than 50	*6.8*	0.3	8	40.0
	51 to 80	1.8	*5.2*	9	45.0
	More than 80	*3.9*	*9.0*	3	15.0
	Total	**12.5**	**14.5**		
Academic Accreditation Territoriality	Swiss	*9.3*	1.3	6	30.0
	Foreign	*3.7*	1.7	11	55.0
	Swiss + Foreign	0.4	0.7	3	15.0
	Total	**13.5**	3.7		
Total		46.5	36.7		

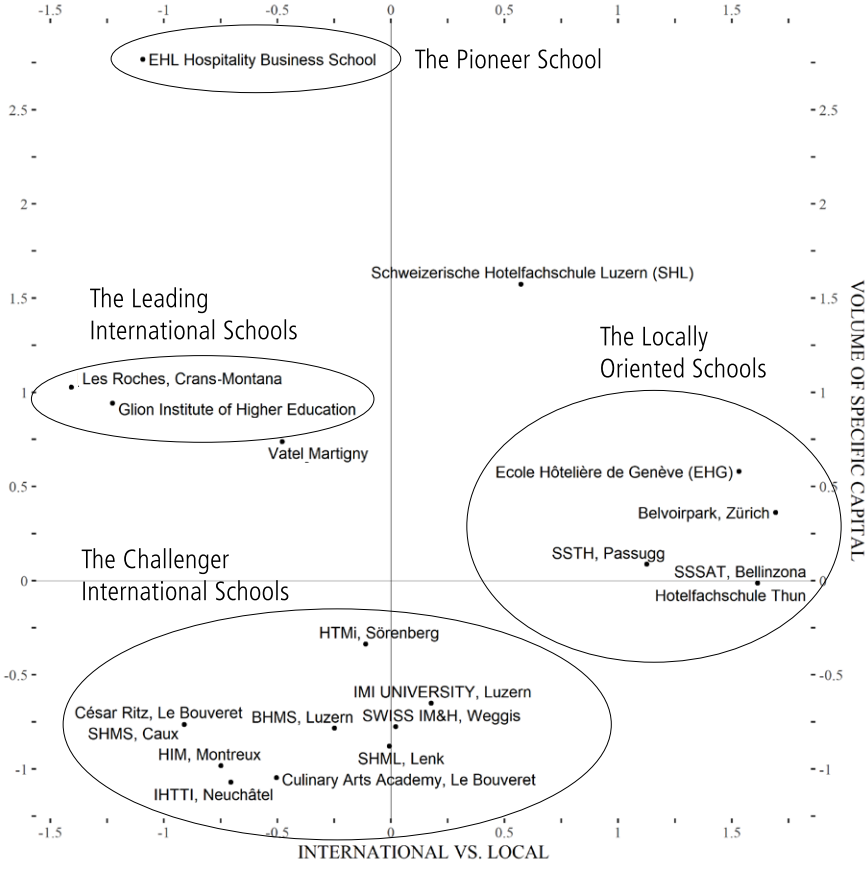
Note: The numbers in italics are the categories that contribute significantly to the spatial dispersion of individuals. The numbers in bold indicate the variables that contribute signicantly to the spatial dispersion as well.

Figure 2 MCA Field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools – Clouds of Categories

The visual depiction generated by the MCA highlights stark contrasts among SHMSs when it comes to their local/national versus international recruitment strategies (dimension 1: horizontal axis) and the extent of their specific capital (dimension 2: vertical axis) (Figure 2).

The projection of individual SHMS positions within the MCA reveals four distinct positional spaces, each emphasizing dual oppositions: 1) the pioneer school, 2) the leading international schools, 3) the challenger international schools, and 4) the locally oriented schools (Figure 3). I present the characteristics of each of these positional spaces to highlight, in a concluding paragraph, what this field analysis contributes to our understanding of institutional internationalization strategies.

Figure 3 MCA Field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools – Clouds of Individuals



4.1 Pioneer School – Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL)

EHL, the oldest SHMS established in 1893, claims the pioneer space. Its comprehensive specific capital, cultivated over a century, is unparalleled. EHL stands out with a significant volume of cultural, social, and international resources. With 2 500 students in 2016, escalating to 4 000 by 2022, and a vast alumni base of 25 000, EHL holds a remarkable position, often topping international rankings. It offers the highest vocational degree (VET) in Swiss higher education and boasts stringent entry standards, conducting logic and personality tests along with two interviews, contributing to its elite status.

Its distinctive positioning stems from a dual territorial focus, catering both to local and international students. EHL's internationalization began in the early 20th century, but more recently it has sought increased diversity by introducing English courses in the 1990s, pursuing American accreditation, and establishing a Singapore campus. This international outlook is complemented by transnational academic partnerships, such as the "3 continents in 3 semesters" program launched in collaboration with PolyU in Hong Kong and the Conrad N. Hilton College of Houston University in the US. Nonetheless, retaining a French-speaking department and securing a portion of Swiss public funding ensures local students' access to EHL. Consequently, its reputation extends not only globally but also locally, across Switzerland.

EHL holds a notably strong financial position compared to its competitors. A significant investment of 226 million Swiss francs has expanded its infrastructure, including academic buildings, new campuses, sports facilities, hotel application areas, and a research and innovation park. Like other leading educational institutions in the national landscape, EHL, already the most prestigious domestically, capitalizes on significant symbolic, cultural, and economic resources for international expansion. This strategic approach has enabled EHL to strengthen its presence both nationally and internationally. Moreover, being renamed "EHL Hospitality Business School" in 2022 underscores its bid to extend beyond hospitality, acknowledging the substantial migration of its alumni to management jobs in a variety of sectors.

4.2 Leading International Schools

The space of leading international schools, exemplified by Glion and Les Roches, encompasses SHMSs possessing significant specific capital and geared towards an international audience. Glion and Les Roches consistently rank in various global top 10 listings. They boast robust alumni networks (12 000 and 14 000 respectively) and considerable annual student intake (2 733 and 1 543 respectively) thanks to their seniority in the field (founded in 1954 and 1962 respectively) and their large infrastructure. In terms of institutional cultural capital, these two SHMSs are only recognized by an American accreditation (NECHE – the same as EHL) and award bachelor's degrees of 180 ECTS.

Established as English-language institutions from their inception, Glion and Les Roches almost exclusively enroll international students (over 90%) from over 80 nationalities. Their recruitment is globally oriented and less selective. In 2016, both schools – which were part of an American entity (Laureate Education) – were integrated into a larger international educational group acquired by a French company (Eurazéo) and bought for 248 million Swiss francs, reflecting a trajectory influenced by financialization. Glion and Les Roches have expanded their global presence since the 2000s by establishing branch campuses in London, Shanghai, and Marbella,

thereby augmenting their economic capital through territorial expansion and the multiplication of student populations abroad. They position their internationalization strategy as integral to their identity, leveraging their long-standing presence in international and private education sectors to assert their legitimacy. These leading international SHMSs often emerge as the primary choice for international students when EHL is not an option.

4.3 Challenger International Schools

The realm of challenger international schools encompasses newer SHMSs emerging post-1980, such as the Swiss Hotel Management School in Leysin, César Ritz College in Bouveret, and Hotel Institute Montreux. These SHMSs possess limited specific capital and primarily attract international students. Their status as newcomers and medium-sized establishments (ranging from 301 to 1000 students) results in relatively lower institutional social and cultural capital. These SHMSs maintain a less stringent entry process, requiring lower English proficiency levels and relying solely on file applications. They confer double bachelor's degrees through partnerships with second-tier American or British universities. Operating exclusively in English, they emphasize foreign recruitment (often 90% of their student body is international) but attract fewer nationalities (ranging from 51 to 80).

Both the leading and challenger international schools were established with a core focus on internationalization and expanding their global reputation through the deployment of recruiters for student enrollment. The challenger schools' approach revolves around attracting students by offering reduced fees and shorter courses compared to leading institutions. While some feature in international rankings, others within this category, barring SHMS and César Ritz, have less visibility. These challenger schools mirror the "wannabees" described by Paradeise and Thoenig (2013), aspiring to replicate the internationalization models of their dominant counterparts but grappling with resource constraints that hinder the development of robust transnational academic partnerships. For instance, a subset of these schools forms the *Swiss Education Group,* which is primarily confined to Switzerland despite its acquisition by a Chinese investment group (Sommet Education). Still, these institutions appear as private international enclaves within Switzerland, distinct from the local education landscape.

4.4 Locally Oriented Schools

The category of locally oriented schools encompasses SHMSs like Ecole hôtelière de Genève, BelvoirPark Zürich, and State Tourism and Hotel Management School in Bellinzona. These institutions possess a relatively limited specific capital and are inclined towards local or national recruitment. Despite being among the oldest

establishments in the field, mostly founded around the 1950s, their institutional social capital remains subdued due to their smaller student cohorts (300 or fewer students). Operating as vocational HEIs acknowledged by Swiss authorities, they confer vocational diplomas in "hotel and restaurant management" which are recognized professionally within Switzerland but hold limited academic recognition. Their institutional cultural capital also appears modest, considering their minimal entry prerequisites: A vocational education and training (VET) suffice for admission. Teaching primarily in a single national language (French, German, or Italian), they attract predominantly local students or those from neighboring regions, resulting in a less diverse student body (with fewer than 50 nationalities represented). These SHMSs prioritize the local professional integration of their graduates over internationalization strategies, distinguishing their focus within the national educational landscape. They operate independently, affiliated with Swiss hospitality organizations but without any overseas branch campuses, displaying weaker overall specific capital.

4.5 Conclusion

In the field of Swiss hospitality schools, institutional strategies for internationalization constitute an axis of opposition and power. My analysis shows that the opportunities offered by the internationalization of higher education are seized by institutions in different ways, and that criteria of seniority, prestige, and accumulation of territorial, cultural, and social resources are becoming hierarchical in the international education sector (King et al. 2011). The most nationally prestigious SHMS (EHL) can play both the local/national and the international game to maintain its privilege, which is characteristic of institutions in a dominant position (Paradeise and Thoenig 2013; Friedman 2018). In comparison, the leading or challenger international SHMSs were transnational from the outset, since they aimed to attract international students by solely teaching in English, reaping the financial rewards of such an orientation. They therefore show no interest in obtaining local or national recognition. Finally, locally oriented SHMSs are the least "capable" of internationalization, as they teach in one of the national languages, are dependent on national hotel organizations, and have limited financial resources and infrastructure (Paradeise and Thoenig 2013; Friedman 2018). Their internationalization is a secondary focus of development, and their main mission is to train the next generation of national hospitality professionals. In line with interpretations in the existing literature, it is not just a question of being "more or less international", but of investigating the importance of local or national resources, and their links with transnational ones, in institutional development strategies. My qualitative data, in the next section, demonstrates the ways in which these institutional capitals are developed by SHMSs and how these strategies are intertwined.

5 Institutional Strategies to Attract Wealthy Students

Interviews with staff at SHMSs highlighted a shared objective: Enhancing and disseminating the reputation of their institution to attract wealthy international students. Strategies in three domains emerged: (1) academic recognition, (2) cultivation and utilization of alumni networks, and (3) emphasizing symbolic attributes drawn from diverse territories.

5.1 Seeking Academic Recognition Through Various Accreditations

Despite SHMSs offering a similar curriculum – a blend of theoretical management education and 18 months of practical training – disparities exist in the type of diploma they confer. While some SHMSs issue bachelor's degrees in science or applied science, accredited with 180 ECTS, others solely provide higher education vocational diplomas (VET) without access to advanced degrees like a Master's or MBA. Consequently, degrees from SHMSs vary in academic recognition, both domestically in Switzerland and internationally.

These accreditations signify distinct positional advantages. Notably, only six SHMSs grant higher education degrees aligning with Swiss higher education standards. Mr. Müller (EHL) emphasized that EHL's "elevation to a university of applied sciences" rendered it "unique in Switzerland" because it forced EHL "to mandate research initiatives" and "facilitated global expansion". Swiss accreditation also ensures lower fees for Swiss residents, national labor market recognition, and streamlined access to Swiss postgraduate education. In contrast, SHMSs that exclusively teach in English seek accreditation from Anglo-Saxon bodies or opt for dual degrees with American or British partner universities. Mr. Willems (challenger international SHMS) highlighted his institution's transnational partnerships, emphasizing that "they had to do it abroad", "everyone has a partner-university somewhere in the world", and that the "quality assurance comes from them". He underscored the goal of reassuring international students of international diploma recognition, deeming Swiss recognition less pivotal. Consequently, how a SHMS's institutional cultural capital manifests is contingent upon its accreditation.

5.2 Leveraging Alumni Networks

Diverse approaches exist among SHMSs when it comes to nurturing and mobilizing the individual cultural capital of their students. While most SHMSs primarily admit students based on file applications, requiring a high school diploma and a certain level of English proficiency, a few take a more selective approach. For instance, EHL imposes higher academic standards, stringent English language proficiency, and additional evaluation measures like math and personality tests, setting it apart

from competitors and establishing an elitist perception that extends beyond tuition fees (Delval 2022a). Ms. Moret (EHL) highlighted the notion that "you can't create a leader, you have to take someone who is a leader from the start, and then teach them how to do it. Basically, all the personality traits and desires must be there". This stance was echoed by Mr. Müller (EHL) for whom "the better quality of the students on the entry, the better the quality of the students on exit. By selecting, we can be sure that we have a good cohort to build on".

But what exactly is being built? For interviewees, the *embodied* and *institutionalized* cultural capital of students and alumni reflect and spread their school's reputation. Almost all respondents declared that SHMS graduates were "ambassadors" for their school: Their look, attitudes, personality, and career achievements appear as the result of the institutional socialization they experienced in Switzerland. Individual cultural capital is thus institutionalized and marketed by an SHMS, and converted into social and symbolic capital for the institution.

SHMSs actively engaged their alumni networks. Each SHMS website narrates "exemplary journeys" showcasing diverse vocational paths and professional triumphs. The internal management of alumni associations and orchestrated participation in luxurious events aim at fostering a sense of belonging. Alumni are also asked to participate in admissions interviews and job fairs and, sometimes, to commission business plans produced by students during their training. As alumni networks are rooted in reciprocity, they offer symbolic, social, professional, and economic resources, such as internships, job opportunities, and global contacts, which fortify an institution's image.

This institutional social capital serves as a catalyst for territorial expansion, wherein – according to the logic of participants – more former students correlate with higher enrollment rates. To Ms. Dupont (EHL), their statistics "had proved that the more former students you have somewhere, the more new students you get […] These are markets that have already flourished, that were already known […] It means, it's working". Interviewed students and alumni frequently mentioned that an alumnus – often a family member or close friend – convinced them to apply. This institutional social capital thus has a pivotal role in converting symbolic capital into economic gains.

5.3 Playing With the Symbolic Attributes of Territories

Switzerland's symbolic attributes play a fundamental role in shaping SHMSs' reputations. Benefitting from ordinary nationalism (Friedman 2017), SHMSs amplify their "Swiss" identity as a core element of their attractiveness. Mr. Descombes (locally oriented SHMS) described Switzerland as the "birthplace of the hospitality industry" and SHMSs as "surfing" on the country's image of "professional excellence in serving wealthy international clients". For Mr. Lambert (EHL), Switzerland symbolizes

geopolitical security, with SHMSs' historical development linked to Switzerland's neutral stance during world conflicts. This portrayal capitalizes on Switzerland's image as a secure, affluent, and healthy nation and contributes significantly to SHMSs' international appeal. Mr. Chappuis (EHL) explained that the "Swissness" label is strategically marketed as a symbol of quality and excellence deeply embedded in their institutional identity because it was "part of their DNA".

Interviews with SHMS staff reveal a nuanced balance between "Swiss" and "international" attributes. Staff effectively leveraged Switzerland's multicultural and multilingual aspects as selling points. They also highlighted Switzerland's "essential international character" by citing affiliations with international schools and the presence of international organizations, especially around Lake Geneva. Mr. Lambert (EHL) views his institution as an "extension" of Swiss international schools, envisioning Switzerland as a "launching pad" for cosmopolitan elites by facilitating their global engagement. Similarly, Mr. Sauthier (EHG) describes SHMS graduates as destined for global careers – "ambassadors for Switzerland" who will be "fostering socio-economic ties abroad". International education is thus portrayed as a quintessential Swiss attribute, tightly interwoven and mutually reinforcing, that serves as a symbolic resource meant to transcend borders and cultures.

However, the interviews also reveal a challenge faced by these institutions amidst increasing internationalization: The risk of diluting their "Swiss character". Mr. Sauthier (EHG) questioned what defines Swissness in these schools – "the headquarter's location, Swiss faculty or students, graduates' work placements, or the training venue?". He highlights instances of schools offering Swiss diplomas abroad, prompting a debate on what makes a hotel school truly Swiss. Mrs. Moret (EHL) notes that some schools, like Glion, seemingly lack a Swiss essence beyond their location, as they cater predominantly to international students. This ambiguity sparks questions around national identity, with varying degrees of local and national ties across SHMSs.

Similarly, all SHMSs emphasize their international character, yet student body diversity and transnational partnerships vary significantly among institutions. Most schools do not impose nationality quotas but a few, like EHL, strive for a balanced representation. Ms. Humbert (EHL) noted, "We aim for diversity. We must avoid overrepresentation from certain regions; it's a conscious decision". She said that "EHL could be 80% Asian, but we don't want to be completely Asian, just as we don't want to be completely Swiss, or French. […] It's clear that we must block out Asia, but not South America". Ms. Moret echoes this, highlighting EHL's conscious recruitment efforts by saying that they needed to "be careful". Some SHMSs indeed face criticism for an overly dominant "Asian" population. To counter this image, all SHMSs emphasize phenotypic diversity in their advertising by presenting students from apparently varied backgrounds, in order to appear "truly" international, i. e. with many nations represented within their ranks.

The diverse landscape of transnational partnerships among SHMSs reflects varying degrees of collaboration, autonomy, and prestige. Some SHMSs establish affiliations abroad that are aligned with Swiss educational standards. Notably, both EHL and EHG accredit overseas institutions or offer consultancy services to shape hospitality management curricula. Mr. Sauthier (EHG) views this as "pivotal for international development, facilitating engagement with industry needs in emerging countries". This approach redirects students lacking the economic means or academic readiness for "rigorous Swiss schooling, tailoring education to their specific needs" and enhances the SHMS' reputation abroad. In contrast, some institutions rather forge joint or dual-degree programs with esteemed American or British universities, leveraging their partner institution's academic and symbolic prestige. In this field, Swiss institutions are becoming importers or, on the contrary, exporters of territorial symbolic capital through transnational university partnerships.

Additionally, some prestigious SHMSs set up branch campuses overseas to capitalize on burgeoning tourism markets, particularly in the Asia Pacific, by tapping into a demand for skilled professionals. Mr. Chappuis (EHL) explained, "We are not Mother Teresa […] There's a huge demand for highly qualified staff in the tourism sector. […] The competing institutions, Cornell, The Hague, have a physical presence in Asia Pacific and that's where things are happening. Where we need to go. […] There, the market is relatively big, the cake is big enough and, on top of that, we have a reputation, we have real quality". These strategic expansions are aimed at boosting the economic and symbolic capital of an SHMS, while establishing it as an educational model to follow, to "mark their territory".

Another approach involves deploying recruiters to promote SHMSs internationally. Mrs. Moret and Ms. Humbert (both at EHL) detailed their periodic tours to international secondary schools abroad to advertise the institution's programs to students and parents. Mr. Schmidt (challenger international SHMS), in his efforts to position Swiss hospitality education against competitors in the UK and USA, highlighted the need to dispel misconceptions about the expense of Swiss training: "When I sell Switzerland, they already have the image of 'Switzerland's too expensive' […] The work I must do in many countries is to explain that everything is included in the price, it's all-inclusive". These staff operate within numeric targets, reflecting a focus on recruitment metrics and growth strategies. They undertake a highly commercialized endeavor to glamorize and promote the training. Once again, however, SHMSs do not have the same human or financial resources to actively promote their courses globally, resulting in uneven symbolic and economic outcomes across the educational landscape.

This comprehensive analysis of SHMSs illuminates an intricate balance between "Swiss" and "international" identities, underscoring the institutions' strategic utilization of the symbolic attributes of these territories. Although rhetoric around "Swiss" and "international" serve as a marketing strategy, the tension between preserving

a Swiss character and embracing internationalization looms large. Diverse practices in admissions, alumni engagement, and marketing "Swissness" highlight strategies that aim to increase institutional cultural, social, and cosmopolitan capital, and reveal how these capitals are intertwined.

6 Conclusion

This article explored the educational field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools (SHMSs), delving into the multifaceted dimensions of institutional capital and the dynamics influencing these schools' positioning. Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital offer a framework for understanding how institutional capitals – cultural, social, and cosmopolitan – interplay within these institutions' strategies for reputation enhancement and student recruitment in a context of internationalization. Expanding upon a traditional view of capital accumulation at the individual level, this research transcends it to encompass the institutional sphere.

The article thus sheds light on how HEIs, as strategic agents, leverage diverse resources to bolster their reputations and competitive edge within the educational field. It illustrates the challenges of other "special and elitist HEIs" (Findlay et al. 2012) by demonstrating their strategic enlistment of their location to constitute part of their attractiveness internationally, and ways that combine with national and local identities. By conceptualizing a cosmopolitan field analysis, this paper also considers the different territorial scales and their symbolic attributes, which constitute resources for HEIs. Therefore, the findings corroborate existing literature exploring how institutions strategically position themselves within global, regional, and local contexts (Kehm and Teichler 2007; Marginson 2008; Fielding and Vidovich 2017; Lee 2021; Mulvey 2021a). However, the conceptualization of an *institutional cosmopolitan capital* goes further by highlighting ways in which *uneven* transnational networks and partnerships are forged.

Empirically, this article demonstrates varied success rates among different SHMS categories: Pioneer and Leading International Schools exhibit robust global footprints, while others face limitations due to resource constraints, as has been observed in other national contexts (Naidoo 2004; Friedman 2017; 2018; Delespierre 2019; Matić 2019). Yet, unlike previous research that typically looks at international higher education as a phenomenon emerging in the 1990s and 2000s, this case study examines international higher education created as early as the 1950s as part of a long history of foreign elites in Switzerland (see also Lillie 2022).

The strategic positioning of each SHMS indeed encapsulates a complex interplay of historical legacy, territorial strategies, and global aspirations. EHL, as the pioneer school, stands as a testament to over a century of resource accumulation, harnessing cultural, social, and academic networks to assert its dominance both

locally and internationally. In contrast, the leading international schools – Glion and Les Roches – epitomize a distinct global identity centered on English-language education and international enrollment. Through strategic investments and territorial expansions, these institutions secured their positions as primary options for students seeking international educational experiences in hospitality management. Conversely, the challenger international schools strive to emulate established models but face hurdles due to limited resources, which hinders their ability to rival the leading institutions. Similarly, locally oriented schools emphasize regional recruitment and grapple with lower specific capital, positioning them with relatively less influence in the global educational domain.

Methodologically, this article shows that a mixed method approach employing MCA and qualitative interviews serves as a robust tool to map an educational landscape. Qualitative data can be used to inductively identify a specific game within a field, which can then be measured and represented using a quantitative and geometric method such as MCA. Such an integrated approach thus not only illuminates spatial configurations of institutions but also offers a rich narrative of the nuances, struggles, and representations of agents operating within this domain.

This paper is based on a very specific case study: vocational but elitist higher education institutions, which are very different from publicly funded HEIs in Switzerland and abroad. Nevertheless, the theoretical model and research design developed here could be applied to compare this field with others in educational hubs such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar (Knight 2018) that also compete for international students. It would be enriching to discover how other "special and elitist HEIs" (Findlay et al. 2012) in different countries showcase their location and play with territorial identities at different scales to build their reputation. Is there another country that can claim symbolic capital in which the national and the international are articulated to such an extent? This would also enable us to grasp the role played by Switzerland in the globalised field of international education.

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The Uncertain Value of Cosmopolitan Capital: Teachers at International Schools in Switzerland

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Abstract: Drawing on field theory, this article analyses the trajectories of schoolteachers employed in Swiss international schools, with a focus on the accumulation and mobilization of various forms of capital – and the limits thereof. The heterogeneity of teacher trajectories and resources when entering the international school sector is documented and, through the concept of cosmopolitan capital, light is shed on specific logics of distinction contributing to the segmentation of the teaching sector and the creation of an educational enclave of international schools.

Keywords: Denationalization of education, international school teachers, Switzerland, field theory, professional trajectories

Capital cosmopolite et segmentation du secteur de l'enseignement privé : le cas des enseignants des écoles internationales en Suisse

Résumé : Cet article propose une analyse des trajectoires d'enseignants employés dans les écoles internationales suisses en mettant l'accent sur l'accumulation et la mobilisation de diverses formes de capital. Il documente l'hétérogénéité des trajectoires et des ressources des enseignants lors de leur entrée dans le secteur des écoles internationales. Le concept de capital cosmopolite est convoqué afin de mettre en lumière des logiques de distinction spécifiques qui contribuent à la segmentation du secteur de l'enseignement privé et à la création d'une enclave éducative d'écoles internationales.

Mots-clés : Dénationalisation de l'éducation, enseignants des écoles internationales, Suisse, capital international, trajectoires professionnelles

Kosmopolitisches Kapital und Segmentierung des privaten Bildungssektors: Werdegänge von Lehrpersonen an internationalen Schulen in der Schweiz

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Artikel werden die Laufbahnen von Lehrkräften, die an internationalen Schulen in der Schweiz arbeiten, analysiert. Die Studie dokumentiert die Heterogenität der Laufbahnen und Ressourcen von Lehrkräften beim Eintritt in den Sektor der internationalen Schulen. Mit Hilfe des Konzepts des kosmopolitischen Kapitals wird ein Licht auf die spezifischen Logiken der Unterscheidung geworfen, die zur Segmentierung des Lehrsektors und zur Schaffung einer Bildungsenklave der internationalen Schulen beitragen.

Schlüsselwörter: Denationalisierung von Schulbildung, Lehrpersonen in internationalen Schulen, Schweiz, Feldtheorie, Berufliche Werdegänge

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1 Introduction

International schools are expanding worldwide, making them one of today's most significant global educational phenomena. According to some estimates, nearly seven million children currently attend a private or public K-12 school that pursues a non-national curriculum and/or provides instruction in English in a country where English is not a national language.[1] Although there is great diversity when it comes to types of schools and contexts, a common denominator is the recruitment of English-speaking expatriate teachers in addition to hiring teachers from the host country. Emerging research on these teachers underscores their membership to a "global middle class" but also highlights the ambivalences and subjectivities that characterise this unique articulation of a privileged lifestyle (that of an expatriate) and employment precarity in a deregulated global labour market (Tarc et al. 2019; Rey et al. 2020a; Poole and Bunnell 2023).

This article contributes to this body of knowledge by analysing different forms of capital held by teachers in Swiss international schools and the possibilities they have to convert this capital outside the international school sector. In this regard, Switzerland is a relevant and specific field of research for several reasons: It is a country where salaries are high in international comparison (including teacher salaries at public schools); it hosts arguably the world's oldest international school (the International School of Geneva), which contributes to Switzerland's standing in this field; and its international schools are mainly of the "traditional" type – i. e. they serve an expatriate community employed by multinational companies, international organizations, and embassies (Hayden and Thompson 2013).

Drawing on quantitative and qualitative interview data collected as part of a wider multi-sited ethnographic project[2], this article throws light on the heterogeneity of international school teachers' trajectories, variations in the distribution of cosmopolitan capital, and the lack of circulation between public schools and private international schools in Switzerland. The article further points to limited opportunities for capital conversion between "international" and "local" fields, due in part to different logics of distinction in these fields. This limitation contributes to the segmentation of the international school sector and the creation of an educational enclave of international schools.

1 According to ISC Research data (2023), English-speaking international schools around the world cater to close to seven million students and employ around 650 000 teachers. The sector had grown 18 percent over the previous five-year period, despite the COVID pandemic. Between 2013 and 2023, the growth was 52 percent.

2 This research was supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (grant number 161231). I thank project collaborators Matthieu Bolay, Elisabeth Schubiger, Camille Poursac and Noémie Kumar, who participated in the study.

2 Teachers in Swiss International Schools

International education has developed rapidly over the past several decades, fuelled by the expansion of the private sector at all levels of education, the increased mobility of high-skilled migrants in the context of the neoliberal economy, and the growth of the middle-class in emerging countries. Over the course of this development, Anglophone international educational programmes have been increasingly incorporated into a variety of national contexts and have generated a process of denationalization of education (Resnik 2012). In this article, international education refers to an educational ideology oriented towards "internationalism" as offered by many international schools in a context of economic and cultural globalization, which creates demand for transferrable education qualifications according to defined "quality standards" (Cambridge and Thompson 2004).

Moreover, the field of international K-12 education has been expanding, both through the rise of non-national curricula (such as the International Baccalaureate) and the growing number of international schools – although there is some disagreement on the criteria that make a school international. This "crypto-growth" (Bunnell 2022) is increasingly diverse and often occurs without national debate. While 30 years ago, the vast majority of students at international schools stemmed from (mostly Anglophone) expatriate families who lived abroad for professional reasons, nowadays, students are mainly from "local" middle-class, aspirational families in non-Anglophone countries (particularly China and the UAE) seeking an Anglophone education provided by Western-trained, native English-speaking teachers (Brummit and Keeling 2013).

For historical, economic, and political reasons, Switzerland represents an important centre in the global international education landscape. Switzerland has hosted many of the most high-end, elite international schools in the world (Koh and Kenway 2012). Recent historical and socio-historiographic studies have described how education tourism and the international elite schooling sector developed in Switzerland from the late 19th century onwards (Bertron 2016; Metz 2019; Rey et al. 2019; Lillie 2022). Bertron (2016) addressed the issue of how Swiss elite boarding schools historically promoted their territorial resources to increase their attractiveness and prestige. Nevertheless, the key discursive turn towards "internationality" came with the foundation of the International School of Geneva in 1924. Dugonjic (2022a) documents how the creation of this prestigious international school was influenced by post-war ideologies and geopolitical power relations, but also demonstrates that it emanated from stakeholders with heterogeneous profiles and interests who held significant social capital, including international civil servants eager to ensure the reproduction of their status through the education of their children.

Since the 1990s, the influx of highly qualified English-speaking migrants (Wanner and Steiner 2018) has further contributed to reshaping the educational

landscape in Switzerland, where public education is otherwise prevalent. In urban areas that host many multinational companies and their "expatriate" staff, the growth of English-language international streams in Swiss private schools has been significant over the past two decades (Bolay and Rey 2020) – although French sections often coexist in Western Switzerland's international schools. In 2017, in the canton of Geneva, there were nearly 10 000 students enrolled in English-speaking or bilingual private schools – many of which claim to be international in character – compared to 71 000 enrolled in public education. These international schools generally correspond to the Type A "traditional" international schools of Hayden and Thompson's (2013) typology, namely schools established to cater to mobile expatriate families for whom the local education system is not considered appropriate; although, some international schools, mainly in French-speaking Switzerland, also educate children from "host country nationals".

While the private to public school ratio remains low at the national level,[3] the increase in the number of schools accredited by the International Baccalaureate (IB) since the 2000s also reveals a trend towards internationalization within the Swiss private educational sector. In 2023, 55 schools offered the IB curricula in Switzerland (48 private and 7 public schools). The IB curriculum has been adopted both by international schools and by other private schools undergoing internationalization processes with the aim of attracting the growing expatriate population. There was an increase during the 2000s, until a certain saturation was reached after 2010: This is partly due to the 2008 financial crisis, which resulted in the reduction in benefits offered by multinationals to their "expatriate" employees, in particular concerning school fees for expatriate employees' children.

The growing field of international education necessitates the recruitment of specific teaching staff. International schools tend to look for English-speaking teachers, preferably with previous experience in the curriculum offered by the school (Canterford 2003). The teaching staff may vary according to local and school conditions, including the curriculum offered, national and local government requirements, school employment policies, immigration policies and work permit restrictions (Hayden and Thompson 2008). Worldwide, the English-speaking sector of international schooling attracts as many as 30 000 new entrants each year, predominantly professionals trained in the United Kingdom (Bunnell and Poole 2021a).

The emerging scholarship on teachers at international schools, which has recently shifted its focus from institutional issues like recruitment and retention to the study of teachers' perspectives and lived experiences (Poole and Bunnell 2023), has described this population of teachers as motivated by a quest for adventure, travel, and discovery (Savva 2015; Bailey 2015), but also by career or economic opportunities (Tarc et al. 2019). This motivation is despite the fact that teach-

3 Only about five percent of Swiss pupils (aged 2 to16) across Switzerland attend a private school, although this varies greatly according to canton and age. https://www.edk.ch/fr/ (01. 09. 2023).

ers face numerous cultural and professional challenges when transitioning to an international school environment, including a sense of "de-skilling" when teachers feel their expertise and knowledge are not valued (Bailey 2015). Indeed, teachers at international schools often ambivalently and simultaneously experience privilege and vulnerability: They are highly mobile and identify with a global middle class, and yet have precarious employment linked to contractual and economic insecurities in a largely deregulated teaching sector (Rey et al. 2020a; Soong and Stahl 2021; Bunnell and Poole 2021b; Bright 2022; Poole and Bunnell 2023).

Moreover, a common typology differentiates between two categories of teachers: "expatriate" and "host country" (Poole and Bunnell 2023) – echoing the dichotomy between the "global" and the "local" that often implies asymmetrical positioning within international schools (Savva 2015). And, in fact, when studying the professional profiles of expatriate teachers, a further distinction can be made between "local hire expatriates" (Garton 2000), who are generally in the country because of their spouses' mobility or career, and "overseas hire expatriates" (Garton 2000), or "adventurer teachers" (Rey et al. 2020a), whose presence is related to their own professional mobility, activities, and interests. This distinction is particularly relevant in the Swiss context, as the country employs a large number of expatriate staff in its international organizations and corporate sector. Spouses of these employees are often highly qualified yet unemployed when they arrive in Switzerland (Cangià 2018). The following addresses the ways in which these various trajectories reflect different possibilities for cosmopolitan capital recognition in a national context with a dominant public education sector.

3 Cosmopolitan Spaces and the Construction of Educational and Social Privilege

Many education systems cultivate an ambivalent stance towards cosmopolitan identities. While cosmopolitanism implies valuing the plurality of cultural experiences, school actors often take a deficit approach to migration, meaning migrant students are characterised primarily by what they lack in relation to national and local educational expectations. Educational systems thus tend to place single national citizenship, immobility, and fixed boundaries above multiple citizenships and movement across borders (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011).

However, this value asymmetry between a stationary life and international migration is reversed within certain educational niches designed for a mobile and privileged clientele. Dugonjic-Rodwin (2022a) shows how the field of IB schools developed on the back of "political internationalism", which contributed to the unification of dominant social fractions from various countries under a single logic of distinction (Bourdieu 1979). This gives us a contrasting, even opposing, picture

of how migratory journeys can be approached in a school context: Whereas in public schools, students from migrant families experience how their life trajectories run against assumptions of state-based educational systems that emphasise acculturation and citizenship within a single nation-state, in international schools, students from more privileged families are taught to embody the transnational culture of global elites (Wagner 1998).

A cosmopolitan ethos in schools, however, does not erase national, language-based, or culture-related asymmetries. Behind the purported neutrality of discourses associated with a celebration of diversity (Bolay and Rey 2020) or the formalism of political internationalism in which they have historical roots, international schools reflect implicit hierarchies and tensions that refer to geopolitical relations between nation-states (Dugonjic-Rodwin 2022b; Lillie 2020). In addition to aspects of nationality, social inequalities are also reproduced in international schools through socio-economic differences, ethnicity, "race", and gender (Bailey 2022). This is particularly visible in the language of instruction (English) and the recruitment of predominantly white, Anglo-Western teachers.

Taking Bourdieu's (1992) concept of social fields as a basis, various scholars have examined intersections among academic credentials; social, symbolic, or economic capital; and the reproduction of social networks in transnational contexts. Cosmopolitan practices and dispositions (openness towards other cultures and the ability to enact this openness) have been conceptualised in terms of cultural capital as a source of class distinction and elite privilege under the cover of meritocracy (Weenink 2008; Igarashi and Saito 2014). Other authors point to the moral superiority implied in the claimed capacity to transcend the local (Moore 2013): Cosmopolitan self-definitions are paradoxically also markers of a distancing from local realities, and they establish a certain class identity.

Wagner and Réau (2015) conceptualize international capital as related to various forms of social, economic, and cultural capital – the lattermost including institutionalised (diplomas), material (objects), and embodied (dispositions or *habitus*) cultural capital. They argue that an approach to globalization through the notion of capital avoids essentializing the social effects of globalization by framing it in terms of social relations rather than sub-groups or reified populations (Wagner and Réau 2015, 34). Other authors suggest that the term "cosmopolitan capital", which is used in this article, may refer to the actors' social or cultural capital (Bühlmann et al. 2013), while "institutional international capital" is relevant for institutions and organizations such as schools (Delval 2022). Gardner-McTaggart (2016: 20) thus suggests that international schools draw their symbolic power from their credentials of internationally transferrable, outstanding qualifications, while their material power lies in the economic elitism of expensive private education.

The theoretical relevance of the international/cosmopolitan capital perspective also lies in its consideration of space: Scholars analyse not only how and when this

capital is accumulated but also identify in which (local, national, transnational) spaces this capital may be recognised and converted. To account for the spatial relation of international schools to their "host country", Rey et al. (2021) proposed the concept of the "cosmopolitan enclave". Marked by discourses of openness and ideals of universality, cosmopolitan enclaves are characterised by dual dynamics of bordering and circulation: They facilitate the global circulation of specific actors, like teachers (Bolay and Rey 2021), and resources across enclaves, while maintaining (relative) detachment from local social, political, and legal conditions and constraints. This article will look at the extent to which different forms of capital play a role in the process of constructing these enclaves.

4 Methodology

This research draws on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork conducted from 2015 to 2018 in the international education sector. The ethnography included classroom observations, participation in school events, attendance at teaching job fairs and school fairs, and interviews with international school teachers from a variety of backgrounds as well as with other experts in the field (including school directors, school owners, consultants, and teacher recruiters). In Switzerland, several schools were selected for short visits or for observations over a couple of weeks, and ethnographic research in one international school was conducted over a period of 10 months (one school year).

Participant observation and interviews were conducted with the explicit consent of school principals and teachers. The research was introduced to the school community, department, or section (as appropriate) orally and through written documents. Schools and interviewees have been given pseudonyms in all publications deriving from this research.

In this article, two sets of data are of particular interest. The first set concerns the trajectories of teachers at Swiss international schools, which was gathered by means of a questionnaire addressed to teachers employed at four international schools: two in French-speaking Switzerland and two in German-speaking Switzerland. Data was collected on the trajectories of 60 primary and secondary school teachers, two thirds of whom identified as female. Respondents taught the International Baccalaureate (85%) and/or other curricula (42%) – including the British, French, and Swiss curricula as well as school-specific curricula.

The second set of data comprises 22 interviews with teachers employed at Swiss international schools, with a focus on their personal, professional, and mobility-related trajectories. Eight teachers started working at international schools as expatriates accompanying their partners abroad; six began as "adventurers", most of whom

were recruited to teach overseas via mobility brokers such as teaching job fairs and recruiting agencies; and eight were from "local" – yet heterogenous – backgrounds.

5 Teachers' Cosmopolitan Capital

This section categorises different forms of cosmopolitan capital held by the participants in the study: teachers in Swiss international schools. The indicators considered refer to embodied and institutionalised cultural capital (e. g. skills and diplomas), as well as social capital accumulated from living in different countries: (multiple) nationalities, mobility during childhood and for higher education, and language skills. Transitions from one professional sector to another is also considered, as they have the potential to generate a conversion of capital, as is professional mobility between various public and private education sectors in Switzerland or abroad.

5.1 Nationalities, Education, Languages, and Mobility

Most of the teachers who answered the questionnaire (77%) are citizens of an Anglo-Western nation (Table 1) – despite the administrative hurdles posed by Switzerland's restrictive immigration policies, as reported by recruitment staff. One out of every three teachers is British (35%), followed by American (20%), Australian, Irish, Canadian, and New Zealander. By contrast, only 15 percent of the sample are Swiss nationals. About one quarter (24%) of all teachers have more than one nationality.

When considering the countries in which the teachers in the sample were educated, the Anglo-Western component becomes even more pronounced (Table 2). Four of every five teachers received their primary and secondary education (K-12) partly or solely in an Anglo-Western country, with Great Britain named most frequently (39%). By contrast, the ratio of teachers who attended school in Switzerland is low (8%), and only one respondent stated that Switzerland was their sole place of schooling – all other Swiss nationals had also attended school in other countries (United States, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, India, Canada, and/or United Kingdom). When examining the backgrounds of the Swiss teachers in the sample, it also becomes apparent that the vast majority (with the single exception) spent their childhoods outside of Switzerland. Some of them grew up in an expatriate family and went to school in three or four different countries.

The Anglo-Western component becomes even more predominant when analysing the countries where teachers received their tertiary education (bachelor's or master's degree). Nearly half the teachers (48%) studied in the United Kingdom and 84 percent of them studied in at least one Anglo-Western country, while not quite a third of the teachers studied in a continental European country and only 10 percent were trained in Switzerland. Moreover, teaching degrees were almost

Table 1 Nationalities of International School Teachers

	Nationality	N	%
Anglo-Western	British	21	36
	American	12	20
	Australian	5	8
	Irish	5	8
	Canadian	3	5
	New Zealand	1	2
	subtotal	47	77*
Swiss and neighbouring countries	Swiss	9	15
	German	5	8
	French	3	5
	Italian	2	3
	Austrian	1	2
	subtotal	20	33*
Other European	Spanish	2	3
	Danish	1	2
	Finnish	1	2
	Slovak	1	2
	Swedish	1	2
	subtotal	6	10
Other	Malaysian	1	2
Two or more nationalities		14	24
Three or more nationalities		1	2

* Ratio related to the number respondents (excluding multiple countries from the same region for the same respondent).

exclusively obtained at Anglo-Western universities (85%). About one quarter of the teachers (26%) attended universities in more than one country.

It is interesting to note that only one respondent holds a teaching degree from Switzerland. Although most Swiss nationals in the sample have a teaching diploma, this qualification was almost always acquired abroad, notably in the United States, Australia, Chile, Great Britain, or Canada. The other international school teachers who studied in Switzerland either have no teaching degree or acquired their teaching qualification through an in-service training offered at a university (such as the University of Nottingham or Durham University, both in the UK) that specifically targeted an audience of international school teachers. These programmes often have infrastructure (distance learning and face-to-face classes) geared towards international school teachers who have not yet earned a teaching degree – and notably do not provide access to teaching positions in the countries where they are awarded. For instance, according to the university's website at the time of writing, the PGCEi (Postgraduate Certificate Education [International]) degree offered by the University

Table 2 Countries Where Teachers Received Their Primary and Secondary Education (K-12), Tertiary Education and Teacher Training

	Country	K-12 education		Tertiary education		Teaching degree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Anglo-Western countries	UK	23	39	28	48	25	48
	US	13	22	18	31	11	21
	Australia	4	7	6	10	5	10
	Canada	4	7	2	3	2	4
	Ireland	2	3	0	0	1	2
	New Zealand	1	2	0	0	0	0
	subtotal	47	78*	54	84*	44	85
Switzerland and neighbouring countries	Germany	6	10	4	7	1	2
	France	5	8	2	3	0	0
	Switzerland	5	8	6	10	1	2
	Austria	1	2	1	2	1	2
	Italy	0	0	1	2	0	0
	subtotal	17	24*	14	21*	3	6
Other European countries	Netherlands	2	3	1	2	0	0
	Denmark	1	2	1	2	1	2
	Slovakia	1	2	0	0	1	2
	Spain	1	2	3	5	0	0
	Sweden	1	2	0	0	0	0
	subtotal	6	10	5	9	2	4
Other countries	Chile	1	2	1	2	1	2
	India	1	2	0	0	1	2
	Malaysia	1	2	0	2	0	0
	Hong Kong	0	0	1	2	1	2
	South Korea	0	0	1	0	0	0
	subtotal	3	5	3	5	3	6
Education in 2 or more countries		7	12	15	26	–	–
Education in 3 or more countries		5	8	2	3	–	–

* Ratio related to the number respondents (excluding multiple countries from the same region for the same respondent).

of Nottingham does not licence someone to teach in the UK or elsewhere – including in Swiss public schools. To teach in the Swiss public sector, a teaching qualification must be recognized by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (CDIP 2016). This is only possible if that qualification allows direct access to the profession in the country of origin (professional accreditation), which does not apply to international teaching qualifications such as the PGCEi.

Table 3 Languages Spoken and Level of Mastery

Number of languages spoken	N	%	Number of languages mastered (C1 or higher)	N	%
one	4	7	one	25	49
two	23	40	two	16	31
three	17	30	three	8	16
four	5	9	four	1	2
five	7	12	five	0	0
six	1	2	six	1	2
Total	57	100	Total	51	100

Finally, most teachers in the sample are multilingual (Table 3), with the majority (53%) speaking three or more languages, at least two of them fluently (51%) at a language level of C1 or higher.

In summary, these data reveal that almost all teachers who responded to the questionnaire obtained qualifications abroad and/or were geographically mobile during their educational paths. This situation starkly contrasts the career paths of teachers in Swiss public schools, who rarely have an immigration background (Beck and Edelmann 2016) and whose career paths are essentially based in Switzerland.

5.2 Previous Teaching and Other Professional Experience

Most of the teachers (53%) in the sample have significant work experience outside the field of education. They reported 39 significant job experiences in a variety of fields, including research, industry, marketing, sales and finance. Most were previously employed in the private sector, and a significant proportion of those jobs were in private corporations (Table 4): travel, technology, pharmaceuticals, and banking and insurance. These jobs were mainly based in Anglo-Western countries, especially in the United Kingdom, but also in the United States, Australia, and Canada. Other jobs were in continental Europe (Switzerland, France, and Spain) or in Asia.

Table 4 Teachers' Previous Significant Employment Experiences

Research	6	Education (non-teaching)	3	Arts	2	Media	1
Aviation and travel	4	Marketing	3	Entertainment	2	Military	1
Business and sales	4	Pharmaceuticals	3	Business owner	1	Navigation	1
Banking and insurance	3	Technology and informatics	3	Logistics	1	Therapy	1

Table 5 Previous Teaching Experience

	Previous teaching experience	N	%
International school	No	34	57
	Yes	26	43
Swiss private school	No	48	80
	Yes	12	20
Swiss public school	No	58	97
	Yes	2	3
Private school abroad	No	34	57
	Yes	26	43
Private school in Switzerland	No	20	33
	Yes	40	67

Respondents' teaching experience ranges from 0 to 35 years, with an average of 15. The average number of years working at their current school is 6735 years. This is relatively high for the international school sector, which often operates on a two-year renewable contract basis. However, international schools in attractive locations tend to have lower turnover rates of expatriate staff than those in other parts of the world (Hayden and Thompson 2008). Switzerland is often seen as offering a good quality of life, which may appeal to expatriate teachers seeking "a place to call home".

Most teachers who responded to the questionnaire had also taught at another school (Table 5); just 12 percent had taught only in their current school. Previous teaching experience was mainly accumulated outside Switzerland, with 80 percent of the teachers in the sample having previously taught abroad and only 22 percent having previously taught in Switzerland, almost exclusively in the private sector. In contrast, two out of every three teachers had taught in the public sector abroad (67%) – confirming similar findings among international school teachers in other contexts (Savva 2015) – while a large minority (43%) had also worked in the private educational sector abroad. This sector includes international schools, which 43 percent of respondents report having taught at (in Switzerland or abroad).

The data show that, in general, there is a high degree of permeability between the public and private sector when it comes to educational trajectories. Yet boundaries arise between the Swiss educational landscape and private international education, where almost no circulation is observed. This can be explained by several factors, namely the structure of the international school sector and the kind of profile (and capital) that employers seek, as well as the economic structure of the Swiss educational employment market, as discussed later.

When comparing teachers' cosmopolitan capital to other categories of actors in international education, it appears that their capital tends to be lower than, for

instance, that of students in the internationalised sector of hotel management education where, as Delval (2022) reports, one out of three students moved to another country during their K-12 education (compared to only 12% of teachers in this sample) and a similar ratio of students has two or more nationalities (compared to 24% of teachers here). The next section explores this analysis in greater detail by drawing on qualitative data to situate Switzerland in teachers' heterogenous career trajectories.

6 Pathways for Accessing International Schools: A Typology

The previous section offered a general overview of teachers' backgrounds with regard to the cosmopolitan capital gained through education and training, but did not discuss the diversity of their trajectories or the different ways and settings in which they accumulate and mobilise various forms of capital. The following addresses how international school teachers enter the international school sector in Switzerland and the different considerations that shape this process, depending on the teacher's background. It uses the typology of Rey et al. (2020a) to account for how a teacher gained access to their first international school position: as the "trailing spouse" of another expatriate who followed their partner abroad; as an expatriate "adventurer", who are mainly young Anglo-Western teachers excited by the opportunity to travel while teaching; or as a "host-country" or "local" teacher with a background in Switzerland.

6.1 Expatriate Teachers Accompanying Their Spouses: The School as a Community

Many international school teachers in Switzerland are foreign nationals whose mobility is related to personal circumstances, most often because they have moved with their partner and family as a "trailing-spouse" (Hayden and Thompson 2008), i. e. if their partner works at an international organization or multinational company. As the ratio of highly qualified migrants has increased in Switzerland, family configurations and gender roles imply that women are more likely to follow their spouse and arrive in Switzerland with no employment than men (Wanner and Steiner 2018).

These individuals often turn to teaching as a viable career opportunity. For many, teaching was not the first career choice; rather, it is seen as an interesting solution to the issue of limited employment opportunities in the host country. For accompanying spouses, Switzerland is described as a hard-to-access labour market with few job opportunities, where employers tend to prefer hiring locals. As such, teaching at an international school represents an accessible professional option. These "trailing spouses", most of whom have professional qualifications, experience a form of precarity (Cangià 2018) linked to job instability and periodic changes in work destinations, as well as to possible breaks in their own careers in favour of

their partner's. At the same time, they often have more economic resources than other categories of migrants.

About half of the interviewees in this study who fit the profile of the expatriate trailing-spouse teacher did not choose teaching as their first profession, and therefore did not have a teaching license when they first applied for a position at an international school in Switzerland. To cite a few examples, one teacher worked in the chemical industry; two were management consultants; one was a researcher and biomedical technician in various laboratories; one worked in the cultural sector of museums; and two were doctoral candidates in sociology or chemistry. Their international mobility is dictated by their partner, who often works on assignment for embassies, NGOs or multinational companies.

For these individuals, one advantage of starting a career in international education is that they can easily find work anywhere, as was often mentioned in the interviews. In addition, most of them have school-age children and so the school community also becomes a site for the social life of the whole family, either through events organised by the school or through informal networks between teachers, parents, and children. In terms of the social capital they accumulate in Switzerland, their relationships often remain restricted to contacts within the expatriate world.

In addition, employment at international schools is also an economic strategy in relation to the children's education (Tarc et al. 2019). For example, certain privileges regarding tuition fees for children are offered to teachers at international schools. This consideration was related by one teacher:

> *Another good thing about working here is … my husband's job paid for the girls to go to this school, his job paid for them. And so, if you imagine, at some point in life we have three children in an expensive school and if my husband would lose his job, we would have had no way [of] paying that fee, three times, whereas now, because I have got my job – because the fees are less – if my husband loses his job, we don't have to worry about [maintaining] such a nice lifestyle which we have. (…) The girls are [still] going to school, it is fine. It really made a big difference; my husband must feel quite released [that I'm] pulling my weight a bit more. (…) He appreciates [the fact that], now, we have got more security.*

As Wagner (1998) pointed out, in the 1990s, jobs for expatriate wives needed to be transferrable to different countries. This included teaching, secretarial work or self-employment. Today, teaching remains a popular employment option among accompanying spouses (male or female) not only because it is transferrable, but also because it enables them to become involved in the education of their children by becoming an actor in the school community.

In general, the expatriate trailing-spouse teachers in this study tended to have significant economic and cultural capital: They came from families of highly quali-

fied professionals (such as lawyers) or pursued careers in science or finance before moving overseas. In addition, most respondents feel a proximity to their school's socio-economic environment as well. One teacher expressed this proximity by saying that, as she comes from a wealthy family, she was not "shocked" to have "rich kids" in her class. Other teachers also grew up in expatriate communities themselves, making them well-acquainted with the social environment of the school:

> *I noticed that I was happier in an international environment. So, when my partner at the time said "Oh, I'm gonna get a job, I'm thinking of getting a job in Switzerland", it was actually quite exciting to me, because (…) I could be an expat again, which is how I grew up. (…) Personally, it seemed to make sense. So, I was happy to come out here and I did, I had a very international expat friend group (…) I actually feel a lot more comfortable as an outsider than as an … assumed insider. (…) When I came to this school, and I am sitting with the students, and I am talking to the students, I felt at home, in the same way that I did, growing up (…) as an expat. (…) Like I say, when I decided to become a teacher, part of that decision was, I'm gonna become an international teacher in an international environment. If for personal reasons I had to move (back), I am not sure I would teach. The emotional trajectory, the how much I feel at home in this sort of environment … I have come to realise means so much to me.*

For many alumni of international schools who came to teach at international schools, the international school setting represents a home. These expatriates have a greater familiarity with this cosmopolitan environment than with one that could be considered "local".

6.2 The "Adventurer" Teacher: The School as a Path of Exploration

"Adventurer teachers" are a priori connected neither to the site/country of the school nor to the expat community. In contrast to the trailing spouse profile, the adventurer teachers are oriented very early on towards the professional teaching sector. They are typically trained teachers from Anglo-Western countries who completed teacher training in their country of origin; recruiters often require that these new teachers have accumulated at least one or two years of experience at home before moving overseas. They are also mostly young and unaccompanied by a spouse or children when they first apply for employment at an international school (Rey et al. 2020a). Although adventurer teachers are often single when they first move abroad, they frequently start a relationship with a teacher they meet at work.

Like the "trailing spouses", there is a certain heterogeneity in the social background of these kinds of teachers in the sample. Still, they tend to be from a middle-class or working-class background. Many grew up in small towns in rural or peripheral areas. In a certain sense, they embody the meritocratic ideal of the

education system, as they experience their educational trajectory as a social springboard allowing them to leave their original environment, which some consider in retrospect to be rather narrow-minded:

> *I grew up in a very rural community. So, I went to state school (…) which was, you know, very narrow, very … white. [laughs] I thought it was completely normal but in hindsight, [it was] very … restrictive, very nationalistic.*

This group's entry into the international school circuit is motivated by several factors: lack of professional opportunities or dissatisfaction with working conditions in their home country, a quest for adventure and travel (sometimes spurred on by the experience of a stay abroad as part of their studies), and financial imperatives related to repaying their student debt and/or a desire to save for either a return to their home country or a departure to a new destination (Rey et al. 2020a). Their statements are often marked by contradictions linked to their perception of the "cost-benefit" of enjoying life, freedom and "fun" in their leisure activities, while nevertheless choosing a destination that offers the best advantages in terms of financial savings.

Regarding their first destination, there is a considerable degree of randomness – it depends on the contract, which is generally offered at job fairs or recruitment agencies for the international school sector. Their basic contracts – which are subject to financial or social penalties – are usually limited to two years, whereafter they might be extended or replaced by a new contract in another school/country. Their next destinations tend to reflect more conscious decisions, with the end goal of teaching in their preferred location. Switzerland was never the first country of teaching in an international school for the adventurers in this study; they had all gathered experience elsewhere.

The geography of desirable destinations does not reflect the available positions on the international school employment market, and thus does not correspond to the needs of the global international school industry. To North American teachers ready to move overseas, for instance, Europe is often a favourite destination. But as employment opportunities in European schools are limited compared to the growing international school sector in Asia and the Middle East, recruiters often stress the high cost of living in Europe, which leaves little room for saving, and redirect the teachers towards regions with a higher demand for Anglo-Western teachers (Rey et al. 2020a).

Salary conditions and quality of life are therefore two important variables that determine a teacher's mobility to the next destination. For example, a teacher working in an international school in Switzerland will rarely benefit from housing and other allowances, which are frequently offered as part of a package (Canterford 2003) in less desirable destinations. Salaries within Switzerland can vary by as much as double, depending on the international school. At the wealthiest international schools, a teacher's income approaches that at the public schools. At the least wealthy

schools, salaries are enough to cover living expenses but, due to the high cost of living in Switzerland, leave little room for saving – despite seeming attractive in international comparison.

Other factors also influence whether a school is more or less attractive to teachers. A common approach among teachers to rating the quality of an international school is to categorise it into one of three tiers. "First tier" schools (also called "premium schools") are those with the best conditions – although there is no strict consensus on what those conditions are. Criteria for qualifying as a top-tier school might include an international student body, an academic orientation, a shared work ethic, a strong teaching environment (including low student to teacher ratio, good infrastructure, and pedagogical support), high salary and good benefits (housing, travel, tuition for teachers' children, retirement funds), high quality management and being non-profit. Still, a high salary may be offered at a tier-three school to compensate for otherwise poor employment conditions. While there is no definitive answer as to in which tier a school belongs, many schools in Switzerland are generally associated with the first tier. This sets the country apart, sometimes ambivalently, as a destination for adventurers.

Schools in the upper tier in Switzerland rarely rely on job fairs and tend to recruit teachers through other means (like networking or online job postings), making social capital central. For example, a humanities teacher explained how he and his wife were recruited from an international school in Southern Europe to a school in Switzerland:

> *The director of that school was looking for other jobs around Europe and he secured a job as director of [an international school] in Switzerland. So, I remember, we had kind of a going away party for him, his name was Paul*, and I said to Paul*, "Well, all the best! Switzerland sounds good. I'm not asking for any favours, but should you ever need at your new school in [Switzerland] a humanities teacher and an English-German teacher (that's my wife), let us know."*

The couple was hired, went to Switzerland and eventually settled, married, and lived with their children there. While many adventurer teachers, like trailing spouses, move on to other destinations after two or more years, Switzerland is also a place where some individuals establish their roots for a longer period.

6.3 Local Teachers: A Search for Alternatives

In addition to expatriates and "adventurers", international schools also hire teachers with a local background. Being more stationary, these local teachers often remain at a school longer than the other, more mobile kinds of teachers, thus increasing stability within an environment with an otherwise relatively high turnover rate. Interviews with local teachers and recruitment staff revealed the diversity of this

category of teacher, including Swiss nationals who turned to teaching as a second career and so have no teaching degree, although many will complete on-the-job teacher training; alumni; and (less frequently) young Swiss who recently qualified as teachers, although it should be noted that young Swiss graduate teachers are often recruited by lower-tier international schools, as the most prestigious international schools prefer local teachers with international cultural capital. This category of teacher also includes those from neighbouring countries (France and Germany) who commute daily to work in Switzerland – thus, the designation "local teachers" refers not only to teachers from the "host country", but also to French and German nationals living close to the Swiss border.

Various factors motivate the entry of local teachers into the international school circuit. For some recent Swiss graduates, the lack of professional opportunities at the start of their career is behind the decision (Rey 2016). For others, it may be their personal identification with the institution as an alumnus of the school. In the case of cross-border commuters, the higher salary (compared to France or Germany) can be an incentive to teach at a Swiss international school – yet it should be noted that in Swiss border cities such as Geneva, cross-border status potentially applies to all three types of teachers, and even to some pupils, because of the expensive rental and real estate market. Lastly, it may be the international community that attracts them. Some local teachers have non-linear professional backgrounds and no teaching degree, but considerable cosmopolitan capital. One teacher in this study, for example, explained that she could identify with her school because, while having lived most of her life in Switzerland, she is "of Lebanese origin, Belgian, now Swiss, married to a Frenchman and [has] family all over the world".

While in many countries, hiring a host-country teacher is perceived as a guarantee of stability for the school, Swiss international schools experience some difficulty in retaining these employees. In Switzerland, salary and job security are better in the public school sector than the private one – although other conditions at international schools (such as the student to teacher ratio) offer some compensation. As a result, teachers who have the credentials to teach in the public sector are likely to leave when an opportunity at a public school arises.

The host-country teachers who choose to remain in international schools often have a particular attachment to the school, notably when they had attended the school or when its educational ethos reflects a personal or family trajectory. For example, one teacher in this study, whose family history is marked by World War II, as her grandparents were from France and Germany and later sought refuge in Switzerland, emphasises how she identifies with the ethos of international education:

> *The values of peace education and living well together are really put forward in all the programmes that are proposed, and then to see that it is possible on the scale of children, well that makes me hope that it is also possible on*

> *the scale of adults. I am utopian, I know, but it feels good to live it and to be able to share it with my children.*

This connection to the international environment partly explains why the local-expatriate dichotomy is less pronounced in Switzerland than in other countries (Bailey 2015), as many local teachers also look back on an expatriate experience in their personal life history.

Nevertheless, in terms of educational strategies, Swiss nationals are less likely than expatriate parents to send their own children to international schools, as they believe public schools offer the best preparation for the Swiss Matura – as long as their children are admitted to selective secondary schools – which is a qualification to enter any university in Switzerland. The same considerations apply to French and German nationals with regard to the French Baccalaureate and German Abitur, because many local teachers' children are likely to study in Switzerland (or France or Germany) and not go abroad. For parents of younger children, language issues, such as the ability to speak Swiss German, can also be a concern. Many local teachers consider mastering the local language more important than being educated in English.

7 The (Non) Recognition of Cosmopolitan Capital: An Enclave Effect

As already noted, there is little circulation between international private schools and the public education sector in Switzerland, leading to a strong segmentation of the teaching labour market. This is partly due to differences in the nature of the cultural capital required to enter the two different sectors. In international schools, where proficiency in English is generally required, cosmopolitan capital is important for accessing a teaching position. This capital may have been accumulated in different contexts – for example, a cosmopolitan habitus developed while living in expatriate communities (for expatriate accompanying spouse teachers), professional teaching experience in different countries (for adventurous teachers), or inherited cosmopolitan cultural and social capital (for local teachers, for instance).

For individuals in this study who did not initially have teaching credentials when they were hired by an international school, the conversion of capital plays a major role: All had significant economic, social, and cultural resources – including cosmopolitan capital – that aided their applications. In public schools, by contrast, where field-specific international teaching diplomas are not recognised and mastery of the local language is a requirement, international experience is considered unimportant, and may even be a disadvantage in some contexts (Rey et al. 2020b).

When it comes to economic capital, there is a clear asymmetrical positioning of these two teaching fields, with the public non-international teaching sector in a dominant position. Thus, while the Swiss international school sector may well be described as having a privileged teaching body and employment conditions in

international comparison, this statement requires additional nuance. Swiss public schools pay some of the highest teacher salaries in the world (the second highest after Luxemburg according to the OECD 2016); therefore, even the wealthiest international schools in Switzerland struggle to compete with public sector salaries. In this study, no examples were found of an international school where the salaries generally exceeded that of the public sector in the same area.

From a strictly economic perspective, then, there is no incentive to remain employed in an international school. However, other aspects of the job (such as the student to teacher ratio, teaching students from privileged backgrounds, professional and material support, or the international environment and cosmopolitan ethos) may compensate in the wealthier Swiss international schools. In addition, the prestige ascribed to the "international", the dominant position of English as a global language and the cultivation of a cosmopolitan ethos constitute the symbolic and cultural capital which facilitates the "closing off" of the international school teaching sector in Switzerland.

Frictions appear between these competing logics, which become visible when French- or German-speaking teachers leave the more prestigious international school sector to teach in the better remunerated and more stable public school sector. This reveals the ambivalent positioning of the international sector in relation to the national sector in a globally connected country whose public schools, teacher training and teacher employment is nevertheless state-driven and national.

8 Conclusion

To conclude, the specific contributions made by this article are highlighted, and possible future avenues of research are proposed. First, as a contribution to research on globalization and the denationalization of education (Resnik 2012), this article addresses how, on the level of the circulation of international school teachers, a segmented teaching sector is dynamically produced by mobility trajectories, individual and household strategies of capital accumulation and mobilization, state regulations and specific logics of distinction in the field of international schools. A detailed analysis of how cosmopolitan capital is accumulated and converted by other school-related actors, including the role of state or economic actors, would help further document the social and legal processes involved in creating an enclave of the international school sector in a context of the globalization – or denationalization – of education.

Second, the research results suggest that while international school teachers primarily belong to the "global middle class", this appellation may obscure their heterogeneity in terms of the economic and symbolic resources tied to the diversity of their trajectories. For instance, there may be unequal recognition of a teacher's

legitimacy to embody the cosmopolitan habitus associated with a school's educational ethos: While adventurers from middle or working-class backgrounds may have to first appropriate the international ethos of the school, the "heirs" of the expatriate milieu may already possess a cosmopolitan habitus that appears even more legitimate because it seems natural. Further attention to the distribution of different forms of economic, social, and cultural capital in other national contexts would allow for comparisons across the social dynamics of stratification within the teaching staff of international schools.

Third, the article highlights the importance of context for the recognition of cosmopolitan capital by documenting limits both to the conversion of professional teaching experience and to the recognition of a cosmopolitan habitus outside the international school sector. While Switzerland a priori offers a privileged and sought-after working destination, the structural precarity of the private school sector, especially when compared to employment conditions in the public education sector, reveals how thin the line is between privilege and precarity for those who are not previously endowed with significant capital. This finding suggests that the specific dynamics of educational landscapes need to be integrated into studies on mobility, education, and precarity.

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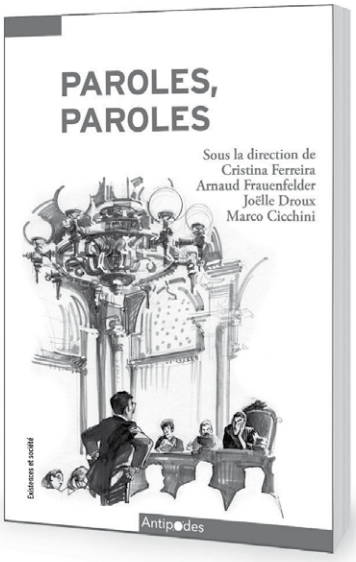

Cristina Ferreira, Arnaud Frauenfelder, Joëlle Droux et Marco Cicchini (dir.)

Paroles, paroles
Comment l'Etat écoute ses justiciables

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À l'abri des regards, au sein d'un tribunal ou d'un cabinet professionnel, se déroulent des moments d'écoute rarement étudiés par les sciences sociales. Les justiciables du civil et du pénal, mineur·es ou adultes, doivent répondre de leurs actes, exposer leur vie et leur vision des faits. Du XIXe siècle à nos jours, quelle est l'importance de l'écoute pour prendre des décisions de curatelle, de placements psychiatriques ou encore de sanctions pénales et de mesures socio-éducatives ? Quels sont les obstacles au droit d'être entendu et comment les personnes réagissent-elles aux interventions de l'État ? Fruit d'une entreprise collective, cet ouvrage d'histoire et de sociologie analyse ces rituels d'écoute par lesquels quantité de problèmes sociaux sont verbalisés ou voués à se taire.

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Concerted Cultivation from Afar: Wealthy Chinese Families and Their Children at Swiss International Boarding Schools

Mianmian Fei*

Abstract: Situated in the literature on China's economic elites and Early Study Abroad, the study employs interviews to explore how wealthy Chinese families cultivate their children through schooling at Swiss international boarding schools. It reveals their approach to education as extending beyond academics and strategies for concerted cultivation from afar. By focusing on the parenting of the wealthy, it thus adds to the discussion on concerted cultivation, highlighting the lack of class anxiety and pivotal role of economic resources in such practices.

Keywords: Concerted cultivation, parenting, studying abroad, international education, Swiss international boarding schools

L'apprentissage concerté à distance : les familles chinoises aisées et leurs enfants dans les internats internationaux suisses

Résumé : S'inscrivant dans la littérature sur les élites économiques chinoises et les études précoces à l'étranger, cette étude explore au travers d'entretiens la façon dont les familles chinoises aisées éduquent leurs enfants en les scolarisant dans des internats internationaux suisses. Elle révèle leur approche de l'éducation comme allant au-delà des aspects académiques et des stratégies de culture concertée à distance. En se concentrant sur l'éducation parentale des personnes aisées, l'étude contribue au débat sur la culture concertée, en soulignant l'absence d'anxiété de classe et l'importance des ressources économiques dans de telles pratiques.

Mots-clés : Apprentissage concerté, parentalité, études à l'étranger, éducation internationale, internats internationaux suisses

Abgestimmte Kultivierung aus der Ferne: Wohlhabende chinesische Familien und ihre Kinder an internationalen Internaten in der Schweiz

Zusammenfassung: Auf der Grundlage der Forschung zu wirtschaftlichen Eliten Chinas und zum Phänomen Early Study Abroad behandelt die vorliegende Studie mithilfe von Interviews die Frage, wie wohlhabende chinesische Familien ihre Kinder mittels Besuch internationaler Internate in der Schweiz erziehen. Es wird gezeigt, dass der Bildungsansatz der Familien über akademische Aspekte und Strategien abgestimmten Kultivierung aus der Ferne hinausgeht. Indem Erziehungsstile von Wohlhabenden mit dem Phänomen abgestimmter Kultivierung zusammengebracht werden, werden die Abwesenheit von sozialer Abstiegsangst und die Wichtigkeit wirtschaftlicher Ressourcen hervorgehoben.

Schlüsselwörter: Abgestimmte Kultivierung, Erziehung, Studium im Ausland, internationale Internate in der Schweiz

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1 Introduction[1]

China is the largest sending country of international students worldwide (UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2023). From 2003 to 2019, the number of Chinese students abroad increased almost sixfold, reaching 703 500 (MOE 2004; 2020).[2] The growing figure coincides with the country's economic development over the past decades and the rise of household income, making overseas education increasingly financially accessible to Chinese families (Fong 2011). However, the literature often labels study abroad as a "middle-class" practice in the Chinese context, thus collapsing more economically privileged families into the "middle" category (Zhou et al. 2019; Wang 2020). In fact, China's wealthy had joined the tide of study abroad long before it was popularized in the country.

In a study of successful Chinese entrepreneurs, 80 percent planned to send their children abroad for education, and about 60 percent were considering overseas education as early as primary and middle school (Hurun 2014). This Early Study Abroad (ESA) practice, defined as "the education exodus of pre-college students" by Kang and Abelmann (2011), sets it apart from the Chinese mainstream, where students go abroad for higher education (New Oriental 2023). While ESA is rather nascent in China, it is growing rapidly. Chinese students have become the largest group of international students in secondary schools in Australia, Canada, and the US (Farrugia 2014).

This study focuses on the burgeoning ESA practice of Chinese families sending their children to Switzerland for an international boarding school education. On the website of Nobel Wings (2022), a Swiss education consulting company serving the Chinese, Chinese families can choose from 23 Swiss international boarding schools (SIBSs), including 16 in the French-speaking region, 6 in the German-speaking region, and 1 in the Italian-speaking region. These schools are characterized by a nationally diverse student population, ranging from 17 to 120 nationalities. Six of these schools accept kindergarten-aged students as young as three, but most offer an upper primary through high school education. The majority provide the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, with additional options such as A-levels, the US high school diploma, the French baccalauréat, and the Swiss maturité. The annual tuition fees and boarding expenses range from around 70 000 CHF to 150 000 CHF. This high fee constrains SIBSs to the Chinese upper class, as those who can afford such schools are in the top of China's economic strata. No statistics exist on the exact size of the Chinese student population at SIBSs; although, a news article states that

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2 The number of Chinese students abroad plummeted between 2020 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and government-imposed international travel restrictions. The Ministry of Education (MOE) of the People's Republic of China has yet to release any updated statistics since 2020.

from 2013 to 2017, the number of Chinese students in Switzerland for middle- and high-school increased from 308 to 432 (Foppa 2018).

Based on seven in-depth interviews with Chinese mothers whose children were currently studying or had studied at SIBSs, this exploratory study addresses the research question of how wealthy Chinese families cultivate their children through schooling at SIBSs. The paper starts with a brief literature review on study abroad practices among wealthy families in China with a focus on parental intent. It then introduces the theoretical framework of outsourced concerted cultivation (Ma and Wright 2021), built upon Lareau's (2003) concerted cultivation. After a brief discussion of the study's methods, the bulk of the paper presents findings from the empirical research, divided into two themes: 1) The wealthy Chinese mothers in the study did not focus exclusively on their children's academic performance and instead were drawn to the diverse cultural pursuits and opportunities for socio-emotional development at SIBSs; 2) They practiced concerted cultivation from afar during their children's studies at SIBSs with their economic resources, time, and cultural dispositions.

This study contributes to the existing literature by filling gaps in research on parenting and study-abroad practices of wealthy Chinese mothers. In addition, it builds on the ongoing discussion of concerted cultivation, especially the newly proposed framework of outsourced concerted cultivation, by confirming the absence of class anxiety and highlighting the importance of economic resources in concerted cultivation. The study concludes by calling for further research to spotlight other parties in ESA, namely fathers.

2 Literature Review

While the lives of the wealthy have been perennial topics for social scientists in the West, there is less academic attention given to economic elites in post-Socialist countries, as individual wealth accumulation there is a relatively new concept (Schimpfössl 2018). This study focuses on the wealthy Chinese who have lived through China's economic transition over the past few decades. China was under a state redistributive economy for nearly 30 years. It was not until the Economic Reform and Opening Up of 1978 that the country was gradually transformed into a market economy "with socialist characteristics", followed by large-scale privatization and economic development. In recent years, the blooming of e-commerce and technology has led to an explosive growth of high-net-worth individuals (Lu et al. 2021). According to the Credit Suisse Research Institute (2022), China has 9.9 percent of the world's US dollar millionaires, ranking it second after the US.

Drawing on data from the Hurun China Rich Lists from 2000 to 2018, Lu et al. (2021) outline some common features of high-net-worth individuals in China. Most

individuals on the list are first-generation members of the economic elite, coming from humble family backgrounds. Political resource possession is not uncommon, enabling them to make profits or improve their socio-political status – rather than to wield political influence on policy formulation. The education level of these individuals continues to increase, with 48 percent of the 2012–2018 cohort holding a bachelor's degree or above. Few on the list studied abroad, but that number has already experienced a big leap from merely 2 percent in the 2002–2011 cohort to 10 percent in the 2012–2018 cohort.

The small percentage of high-net-worth Chinese individuals with an overseas education background is consistent with the fact that studying abroad was a practice on a much smaller scale in the country only two decades ago (MOE 2004). Currently, China leads the list of countries with the most students abroad (UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2023), and much literature exists on this education practice, especially on the mainstream trend of students going to Anglophone countries for higher education (New Oriental 2023).

While most empirical research focuses on students' experiences (Zhu 2016), a few articles spotlight families' roles. Bodycott (2009) surveys parents and students at an international education fair in China and finds that the deep-rooted Confucian notion of filial piety significantly affects the decision-making process of studying abroad. A student's educational decisions are not just individual choices, but ones that combine with family expectations and needs, especially as parents are often the leading investors in an education abroad. Similarly, Wang (2020) collected data from undergraduate Chinese students in the US but used their narratives to construct the motivations of their families. Three-fourths of the participants identified their decisions to study abroad as made jointly by them and their parents. This again highlights the importance of parental intent in children's overseas education. Additionally, using Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1986) as the conceptual framework, Wang (2020) illustrates how studying abroad in the US is seen by participants and their families as a way of marking their middle-class habitus and reproducing their social position through the educational field.

Parental intent likely plays an even more critical role in ESA because of the students' young ages. Although ESA is still a relatively new practice in China, it can be dated to the late 1980s in other parts of the Asia-Pacific. It also takes various forms, such as boarding schools, day schools with homestays, and "wild goose families" with mothers accompanying children abroad and fathers staying in the home countries to ensure the families' financial security (Shin 2013). For example, Min Zhou (1998) focuses on the "parachute kids" from Taiwan who seek schooling by themselves in Southern California. Her research reveals a series of inherent risks in these transnational families, such as the lack of direct parental support on the student side and high emotional costs on the family side. Shin's (2013) ethnographic research examines ESA as a strategy for class mobility for Korean middle-class "wild

goose families" in Toronto, Canada, and explores how these families deal with their anxiety by negotiating the meanings of success.

Limited literature exists on ESA among the Chinese, with the majority focusing on students' perspectives. Jing et al. (2022) makes an exception in that they interview both Chinese students and parents on their motivations to pursue a secondary education in Canada and present the results as push-pull factors on micro- and macro-levels. Push factors include poor academic performance in China, desire for cultural exploration, dissatisfaction with Chinese politics, pressure in Chinese schools, and intense competition for university entrance. Pull factors include opportunities to improve foreign languages, recommendations from friends and families, higher-quality education, lower tuition fees, greater potential for immigration, greater safety, and a better natural environment.

The current study delves into the research question of how wealthy Chinese mothers cultivate their children through schooling at Swiss International Boarding Schools. It adds to the literature discussed above, foregrounding discussions of parenting in the research on China's economic elites and ESA practices.

3 Theoretical Framework

Outsourced concerted cultivation, as proposed by Ma and Wright (2021), is built upon Lareau's (2003) concerted cultivation, a concept that describes an intensive, attentive parenting strategy among the middle class. Concerted cultivation is characterized by parents' active intervention in children's schooling and the organization of enrichment activities. This is contrasted by the accomplishment of natural growth among the working class and poor families, in which children are given more control over their leisure activities. Under concerted cultivation, middle-class children learn to act, talk, and get their way in institutional settings.

Over the past two decades, researchers have used concerted cultivation in various settings. For example, Maxwell and Aggleton (2013) employ the concept to examine young women's experiences at private schools in England. Their research shows that concerted cultivation has influenced their families' decision to pursue private education. Although private education produces various forms of privilege in these young women's lives, that decision is less associated with a strategy of class reproduction, as suggested by some previous studies, than with the families' concern for their children's socio-emotional well-being. Sherman (2017) uses this concept to illustrate conflicted attitudes toward childrearing among wealthy families in New York City. Those parents consciously constrain their children's entitlements and expose them to less advantaged others in an effort to produce morally good people, but these strategies come into tension with the conventional imperative of expanding children's selfhood and opportunities.

Ma and Wright (2021) apply concerted cultivation to an international education context, in their examination of Chinese "new rich" families that outsource concerted cultivation to international schools and education consulting companies in China. With high educational aspirations for their children, these parents aim for top-ranked universities abroad, especially in the Anglophone West, to enhance their children's career prospects and produce social status and cultural prestige. Since the parents lack knowledge and experience in international higher education, they seek external support by enrolling their children in international schools and hiring education consultants in China.

Ma and Wright (2021) thus propose outsourced concerted cultivation as a new framework to capture this specific kind of concerted cultivation practice, one distinguished by parents' limited cultural engagement in their children's schooling. While the parents studied were able to convert economic investments into desired educational opportunities without much cultural engagement, that process was filled with intense anxiety, as the parents were left with few resources beyond complaints when providers failed to meet their expectations.

The Chinese mothers in this study also "outsourced" concerted cultivation to education providers: Swiss international boarding schools. However, doing so entails significantly more economic resources than using international schools and education consulting services in China. In addition, most children in the current study are in the early stages of their educational journeys, still a few years away from university. The findings section will further discuss whether outsourced concerted cultivation adequately captures how wealthy Chinese parents cultivate their children through SIBSs.

4 Methods

Seven participants who fulfilled two criteria were recruited: 1) self-identified as Chinese[3] and 2) had children who were studying or had within the past five years studied at SIBSs. Three participants were recruited from within my social network, and four, through snowballing after the first round of data collection. I identified the participants as "wealthy" as they could fund their children's SIBS tuition without financial aid from the schools, which cost from around 70 000 CHF to 150 000 CHF per year.

The fact that I was only able to recruit seven participants reflects the hard-to-reach nature of this economically privileged population in China. That said, as an exploratory study, this research aims not to identify a representative sample but rather to better understand a phenomenon through first-hand reporting of partici-

3 I used the general term "Chinese families" (中国家庭) in the recruitment post to avoid probing their immigration status, which could be considered a sensitive topic.

pants' experiences (Small 2009). It thereby contributes diverse views and important insights to the literature.

In-depth interviews, conducted in late 2021, were the primary data collection method. Only the first interview with Zhou was conducted face-to-face at her rented apartment in Switzerland, as she was there to take care of her son. The other interviews were audio calls since I could not travel to China, where the rest of the participants lived, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were semi-structured. I asked open-ended questions about their decision-making processes, parenting experiences, and changes witnessed in their children. I also added follow-up questions when necessary. All interviews were in Mandarin Chinese, both my mother tongue and that of the participants, and were audio-recorded with their permission. They lasted between 40 and 166 minutes, with a median of 63 minutes. I transcribed the interviews using iFlyrec, a Chinese automatic audio transcription platform, and manually checked the transcriptions for accuracy, adding markers of non-verbal communication such as pauses and laughter.

My coding process was both deductive and inductive. First, I generated an initial list of codes from reviewing the literature on concerted cultivation, such as class anxiety, extracurricular management, and institutional involvement. Then, I engaged in a first round of coding in which I applied the deductive codes and, at the same time, noted down further codes that emerged inductively, such as competitive parenting in China, visits to Switzerland, and frequent communication. In the next round of coding, I organized the deductive and inductive codes into groups and subgroups and eventually generated initial themes and sub-themes. In the last round of coding, I further examined the themes in relation to the research question and refined them into the two main themes presented in the findings section.

Table 1 presents the participants' profiles and other relevant details. The names in the table are pseudonyms. Biographical details, if not mentioned during the interviews, were collected through a short online survey afterward. At the time of the study, all participants lived in top-tier Chinese cities except for Zhou, who

Table 1 Profile and Relevant Details of Participants

Name	Age	Location	Occupation	Partner's Occupation	Child's Gender	Child's Age	Child's Years Spent at SIBS
Zhou	50	Ollon (CH)	Housewife	N/A	M	11	2.0
Ting	50	Shanghai	Housewife	Business Owner	F	18	6.0
					M	15	3.5
Sherry	50	Shenzhen	Housewife	Business Owner	F	13	1.5
Ann	40s	Shanghai	Business Partner	Business Owner	F	17	2.0
Hai	40s	Shanghai	Public Sector	Private Sector	F	17	5.5
Jessie	30s	Shanghai	Housewife	Private Sector	M	14	3.5
Rebecca	30s	Shanghai	Housewife	Business Owner	F	10	3.5

had accompanied her son to Switzerland for one and a half years. Ting was the only other parent who had accompanied her children long-term to Switzerland (two years), though she had returned to China at the time of the study. Five participants identified themselves as housewives. Five participants had two children; two had one child. Only one participant sent both her children to SIBSs.

While I did not specify any gender preference when recruiting participants, all participants happened to be mothers. Park's (2018) study with Korean students at elite US universities highlights the role of mothers, mostly stay-at-home moms, as "concerted cultivators" before children's high school years, managing all kinds of organized activities, and as "emotional experts" at all stages, taking care of children's emotional well-being. The mothers' intensive involvement in their children's early years contrasted with the fathers' more distant role as mediator and study-abroad counselor.

Participants in this study seemingly assumed the role of both "concerted cultivator" and "emotional expert." During interviews, they generously shared logistical details about the school selection process, visits to Switzerland, management of extracurricular activities, and so on. They also seemed emotionally engaged in their children's schooling, sharing both joy at learning about their children's growth and worry at seeing their children struggle. If the participants had been fathers, the interview data might have revealed other aspects of parental involvement, which would have required a different theoretical framework.

Of the participants' eight children who had studied at SIBSs, three identified as male and five as female. Six were studying at SIBSs at the time of the study; two were not. The age at which the children started school at a SIBS ranged from 7–15, and they had spent 1.5–5 years at SIBSs at the time of the study. A total of six SIBSs are represented in the sample, including three junior SIBSs, which provide an education until the age of 13 or 14, and three SIBSs with high school divisions. Four are in the French-speaking region of Switzerland; one, the German-speaking region; and one, the Italian-speaking region. Children at the high school level were all enrolled in an IB curriculum although their schools also provided other options, such as the US high school diploma and French baccalauréat. Four children changed schools during their time in Switzerland. Two graduated from junior SIBSs and moved to SIBSs with high school divisions. Two had studied at a Swiss international day school when their mothers lived in Switzerland to care for them.

In qualitative research, it is essential for researchers to be transparent about their positionality vis-à-vis the participants and research topic (Jones et al. 2022). I grew up in a middle-class household in a top-tier city in China, with both parents holding a bachelor's degree or above. At the time of the study, I was on a full scholarship to pursue my Master's in Anthropology and Sociology in Switzerland. I initially worried that the participants would perceive me as "interviewing up" because of my lower socioeconomic status (Smith 2006). However, I soon realized that our

age differences were more relevant than our social class ones. More precisely, it was the difference in our family roles that became important, with participants being mothers and me being a daughter. During the interviews, I sometimes leaned into my position as a "daughter" and shared my parents' involvement in my education journey, to make the conversation more reciprocal. This often helped open up conversations and elicit related stories from the participants.

5 Findings

The following subsections present two main themes from the interviews, which answer the question of how wealthy Chinese families cultivate their children through schooling at SIBSs. The first theme captures mothers' attitudes towards education as important but not exclusively so. In addition, they valued the diverse cultural pursuits and socio-emotional development offered by SIBSs. The second theme illustrates how these mothers continued practicing concerted cultivation from afar when their children were at SIBSs, something made possible by their sufficient economic resources, time, and cultural dispositions.

5.1 Education is Important, but Not Exclusively

Like the middle-class English parents in Irwin and Elley's study (2011), the wealthy Chinese mothers in this study seemed assured that their children would inherit their class advantages. Hence, although they valued their children's education, they did not exclusively focus on academic performance. Ting attributed her decision to send her son abroad for school to insufficient academic opportunities in China: "What he could learn, no matter English, Chinese, or mathematics, as a third grader in China, is very limited. So, my thought then was to send him out [of the country]." However, when asked what concerned her during his studies at a SIBS, Ting claimed, "I don't care what kind of university he gets into in the future because I've never heard of any of the kids studying at international schools in Switzerland worrying about jobs. Most of their families have their own businesses. If they go back [to China], they may take over their family businesses. So, it's unlikely that they need to worry about job hunting. Quite unlikely."

Indeed, while the "new rich" Chinese families in Ma and Wright (2021) display high aspirations and intense anxiety over their children's university admissions overseas, with the ultimate goal of reproducing class advantages, there was little evidence of this type of class anxiety among the mothers in this study. These participants instead frowned upon the competitive parenting strategy prevalent in China, which they described using the Internet buzzword "involution" *(neijuan)*. Initially coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1969) to describe how greater input does not necessarily yield proportionally greater output, the term captures

the excessive educational competition that parents witnessed in China (Si 2023). Involution, according to Chinese sociologist Fei Yan, is a middle-class practice that originates from a class anxiety about downward mobility (Zhou 2020). From a place of confidence in the continuation of their class status across generations, the wealthy mothers in this study labeled involution as "cruel" and "aggressive".

Nevertheless, a few participants confessed that this parenting strategy was so prevalent in China that it was difficult not to adopt an education-above-all mindset when their children were in Chinese schools. They looked into schooling options abroad to bypass educational competition for their children and to avoid emotional exhaustion for themselves. Ann recounted a critical moment when she decided to send her daughter abroad. After her daughter finished fourth grade, she heard from another parent that many of her classmates had enrolled in after-school tutoring that summer to prepare for the middle school entrance exam. "I was initially very nervous hearing that," Ann recalled, "very nervous. I thought, how come I didn't know about this information? All the kids but mine were in tutoring now. She's left behind!" Ann continued, "I thought about it later and realized, no, I cannot just go with the flow… I didn't want to bear this pressure, nor did I want my kid to bear it."

The parents in the study cited the diverse opportunities available as SIBSs as the main reason for sending their children there, which corresponds to the idea of concerted cultivation for the present (focused on children's development) rather than the future (focused on reproducing class advantage) in Irwin and Elley (2011). Instead of exclusively focusing on academic performance, the mothers in this study believed their children's schooling at SIBSs was "holistic", "comprehensive", and "all-rounded". When asked for elucidation, they gave lengthy descriptions of their children's various cultural pursuits at school, including sports activities, language lessons, music performances, and international excursions.

Regarding academic learning, the focus was not so much on their children's performance but rather on their motivation and interests. Hai, whose daughter was about to start college applications, was proud of her being independent and making her own decisions about majors and universities: "Regardless of her college (admissions) results, I think her attitude towards learning is what I hope to see – that she learns because she loves to learn and wants to learn." Indeed, like the English parents in Maxwell and Aggleton (2013), the mothers in this study primarily wished for their children to "try their hardest and enjoy school" rather than achieve particular academic outcomes. In addition, when asked about major changes they have witnessed in their children since enrolling in SIBSs, they primarily emphasized changes in character, saying that their children had become more mature, independent, emotionally stable, tolerant, courageous, and courteous. This again mirrors the parents in Maxwell and Aggleton (2013), who mainly care about their children becoming "happy, sociable individuals" at English private schools.

5.2 Concerted Cultivation from Afar

In her work on Taiwanese "parachute kids" in the US, Min Zhou (1998) details a few specificities of ESA, including the lack of direct support from parents and the large financial expenses required of parents. As the wealthy Chinese mothers in this study sent their children thousands of miles away for schooling, they strived to make up for a lack of direct support by practicing intensive, attentive parenting from afar, made possible by their sufficient time, economic resources, and, in some cases, cultural dispositions.

Like the Chinese parents in Ma and Wright (2021), the mothers in this study lacked knowledge and experience when it came to overseas education, as none had studied abroad. However, while the parents in Ma and Wright (2021) could only rely on social contacts when selecting international schools and education consultants, which resulted in anxiety due to information gaps, the mothers in this study were able to make more informed school choices through on-site visits. Five of the seven parents had sent their children to SISBs for summer camp before full-time enrollment, during which they paid visits to several SIBSs either by themselves or on organized trips. Three parents had also sent their children to summer camps at US boarding schools to compare the two study-abroad destinations. When explaining how the final school choice was made, the mothers listed a number of reasons in detail, citing the opinions of their children and themselves. With more economic resources invested in the school selection process, the parents in this study could make more informed and, therefore, confident decisions than those deciding solely based on word of mouth (Ma and Wright 2021).

To compensate for the lack of direct socio-emotional support, the mothers in this study created ample opportunities to spend time with their children during their studies at SIBSs, either by visiting them in Switzerland or paying for their trips back to China during breaks. Two mothers even arranged to accompany their children long-term in Switzerland, resembling the "wild goose family" in South Korea (Shin 2013). It is worth noting that regardless of whether they were in Switzerland short-term or long-term, the mothers could only see their children for one to two days each week due to the nature of boarding schools. However, even though a few brought up the high costs of these frequent visits or long-term accompaniment, in general, the mothers saw those visits as necessary to take care of their children's socio-emotional needs and deal with any problems in time.

Min Zhou (1998) shows not only that ESA children receive limited direct parental support due to the long distance from home, but also that parents pay high emotional costs for being separated from their young children. Park (2018) finds that in the case of Korean college students at elite US universities, it is usually their mothers, mostly housewives, who take on the emotional labor of managing the distance. Similarly, the mothers in this study demonstrated emotional struggles

around being physically away from their children while at the same time serving as the "emotional experts" for their children during their studies at SIBSs.

Sherry's daughter encountered many problems during her first year at a SIBS, such as demotivation in learning and difficulties making friends, which deeply worried Sherry. Although she was a stay-at-home mom, she could not accompany her daughter long-term in Switzerland due to visa issues. Sherry strived to maintain frequent contact with her daughter over the phone and worked with an education consultant and a Chinese friend in Switzerland to closely monitor her emotional well-being. Sherry was finally able to travel to Switzerland for three months one summer. She shared her intense emotional struggles during her last week in Switzerland: "I sent her back to school but left a week later, during which I walked around her campus every day, hoping to see her once again. I secretly filmed her once when she was out on the playground for PE [physical education] classes. I cannot let go of how much I would miss her. However, you still need to push her forward on the path because you made the choice. You, as a parent, need to adjust to it."

Besides managing their children's emotional well-being, the mothers in the study actively engaged with their children's schooling. This differs from the parents in Ma and Wright (2021), who seemed to wholly outsource concerted cultivation to international schools and education consultants, heavily relying on the guidance provided. Ann shared how she supported her daughter emotionally and strategically during a challenging world literature course. Not only did Ann stay up late every night to chat with her and encourage her, but she also gave her advice on how to deal with the challenges, such as adjusting her mindset and seeking help from her teacher. After the situation improved, Ann continued to help her daughter during the rest of the school year by buying her required books in Chinese, reading the books with her, and discussing the ideas afterwards. The two anecdotes above demonstrate that concerted cultivation from afar requires economic resources, time, and a cultural disposition to navigate educational settings overseas, which the "new rich" families in Ma and Wright (2021) might not have possessed to the same extent as the wealthy parents in this study.

The mothers in this study also actively intervened in institutional settings in different ways (Lareau 2003). Four of the seven parents hired private tutors for their children when they returned to China on school breaks to compensate for areas that they perceived to be insufficient at the SIBSs, including Chinese, mathematics, writing, and SAT preparation, the standardized test for college admissions in the US. Ting revealed that she paid nearly as much for her daughter's private tutoring as for her SIBS tuition. Three parents shared that they had initiated dialogue with the schools when problems arose, sometimes with the help of Google Translator or education consultants. For example, in response to her daughter's maladjustment, Sherry wrote emails to the school principal, sharing her daughter's demotivation in learning and asking her teachers to assign extra work. Sherry perceived this com-

munication as positive, as she immediately saw the school acting, and believed that she needed to keep up this close communication.

In a more extreme case, when Ting's son demonstrated maladjusted behaviors during his first year at a SIBS, Ting started immigration procedures for him so that he could transfer to a Swiss international day school and she could stay in Switzerland long-term to take care of him. When she later realized her son's decreasing Chinese proficiency, she brought him back to China and enrolled him in an international school there while hiring private tutors to help with his Chinese for two years. At the time of the interview, Ting decided that he was ready for a SIBS again and was managing to transfer him back to his old school. This tortuous schooling journey would not be possible without the time, economic resources, and cultural knowledge that Ting had invested in her intensive, attentive parenting.

6 Conclusion and Implications

Through seven in-depth interviews with wealthy Chinese mothers, this study explores how those families cultivated their children through schooling at SIBSs. The participants were confident that their children would inherit their social class advantages and continue their lifestyles. Therefore, while they valued their children's education, they did not demonstrate class anxiety and disagreed with the competitive parenting practices that are prevalent among the middle class in China. Their decision to send their children to SIBSs demonstrated what Irwin and Elley (2011) call concerted cultivation in the present, placing value on diverse cultural pursuits and socio-emotional development at school.

At the same time, participants in this study strived to make up for a lack of direct parental support entailed by the ESA practice. At the very beginning of their children's ESA journey, they made on-site visits with their children to make informed school choices. After their children enrolled at a SIBS, they traveled to Switzerland frequently, closely monitored their children's well-being, kept regular contact with the school, and intervened in institutional settings when necessary. Therefore, while it seemed like the participants had outsourced concerted cultivation (Ma and Wright 2021) to the SIBSs, they still practiced it from afar, made possible by their economic resources, time, and cultural dispositions in some cases.

This study has the following implications. First, it adds to the literature on parenting practices of the wealthy, an area to which existing research pays little attention. The extant literature primarily focuses on the parenting practices of the middle and working class, defining class in broad strokes (Sherman 2017). Furthermore, this research adds to the literature on study abroad practices among the wealthy. In the case of China, previous literature has labeled study abroad as a middle-class practice, collapsing more economically privileged families into the

"middle" category (Zhou et al. 2019; Wang 2020). In sum, this study expands the literature on parenting and studying abroad by exploring the practices of an economically privileged population.

Relatedly, the study confirms the finding of Irwin and Elley (2011) and Maxwell and Aggleton (2013) that for middle-class English families, class anxiety is not necessarily the main drive for concerted cultivation. Such class anxiety is also absent in Sherman's (2017) study on wealthy families in New York. The wealthy Chinese parents in this study were confident that their children would inherit their class advantages. As a result, concerted cultivation was for them less about class reproduction than about their children's development, as in Irwin and Elley (2011) and Maxwell and Aggleton (2013).

By using outsourced concerted cultivation as its theoretical framework, this study contributes to both Lareau's (2003) original discussions on concerted cultivation and this newly proposed framework by Ma and Wright (2021). While Ma and Wright (2021) focus on "new rich" Chinese families outsourcing concerted cultivation to international high schools and educational consultants in China, this study applies the theoretical framework to a different parent population, destination of study, and type of school, discussing how wealthy Chinese families outsource concerted cultivation to SIBSs. The findings of Ma and Wright (2021) and of the current study exhibit significant differences in how Chinese families outsource concerted cultivation.

In addition, the study foregrounds economic resources in the practice of concerted cultivation, as suggested by Ma and Wright (2021). The participants disagreed with the education-above-all mindset prevalent among the Chinese middle class and outsourced concerted cultivation to expensive SIBSs so that their children could be exposed to diverse cultural pursuits. Because of their time and economic resources, they were able to continue practicing concerted cultivation even though their children studied thousands of miles away. The study also highlights the importance of cultural knowledge, which enabled the participants to be more engaged in their children's schooling than the parents in Ma and Wright (2021).

This study investigates a little-known education and parenting practice of a hard-to-reach population. However, there are limitations to spotlighting only the mothers. Further research on ESA and transnational parenting could also collect data from the children, or the fathers. Park (2018) shows that among Korean students at elite US universities, mothers' practical decisions decrease as their children grow older, and fathers become more and more engaged in guiding their children's education. It would thus be interesting to explore fathers' involvement and the gender division of family roles during a child's ESA.

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Educating Inheritors. Economic Socialization in Swiss International Boarding Schools

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Abstract: In the context of the increased concentration of wealth at the top of the social spectrum, the article studies the role of economic inheritance in the education of elites. The article relies on a study at several international boarding schools based in Switzerland to explore wealth-related school policies (notably through pocket money and philanthropy), economic socialization, and their impact on students' self-identifications as a privileged elite.

Keywords: Wealth elite, economic socialization, elite schools, philanthropy, international schools

Former des héritiers. Élite de la richesse et socialisation économique dans les pensionnats internationaux en Suisse

Résumé : Dans un contexte de concentration croissante de la richesse au sommet de l'échelle sociale, l'article étudie le rôle de l'héritage économique dans l'éducation des élites. L'article s'appuie sur une enquête menée dans plusieurs pensionnats internationaux en Suisse pour explorer les politiques scolaires en lien avec les questions d'argent (argent de poche et philanthropie), ainsi que la socialisation économique et ses effets sur l'auto-identification des élèves en tant qu'élite privilégiée.

Mots-clés : Élites économiques, socialisation économique, écoles d'élite, philanthropie, écoles internationales

Erben erziehen. Wohlstandselite und ökonomische Sozialisation in internationalen Schweizer Internatsschulen

Zusammenfassung: Vor dem Hintergrund der zunehmenden Konzentration von Reichtum an der Spitze der sozialen Leiter untersucht der Artikel die Rolle des wirtschaftlichen Erbes in der Elitenbildung. Der Artikel stützt sich auf eine Umfrage in mehreren internationalen Internaten in der Schweiz, um die Schulpolitik im Zusammenhang mit Geldfragen (Taschengeld und Philanthropie) sowie die wirtschaftliche Sozialisation und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Selbstidentifikation der Schüler als privilegierte Elite zu erforschen.

Schlüsselwörter: Wohlstandselite, wirtschaftliche Sozialisation, Eliteschulen, Philanthropie, internationale Schulen

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1 Introduction[1]

In the face of an increased concentration of wealth at the top of the social spectrum, this article contends that economic inheritance plays a specific role in elite schools and that economic socialization is central to understanding transformations in elite reproduction. Compared to family and professional socializations to wealth management (Marcus and Hall 1992; Harrington 2016; Herlin-Giret 2019), the impact of economically and socially selective schools on economic dispositions and perceptions of the world from an early age remains rarely studied. Elite international boarding schools offer a place of choice for studying these processes. In these settings, the influence of the family acts mostly from a distance (and from abroad), and students often rarely if ever go back home: They are permanently under the direct influence of their peers at school and of institutional actors (such as headmasters, teachers, and boarding house tutors).

International boarding schools in Switzerland, which are the focus of this article, are interesting for several reasons. First, they are "economically-elite" schools (Lillie 2022): They have continuously attracted elites with economic capital from around the world and have been identified publicly in this way (Bertron 2016a). These schools have increasingly become schools for the "super-rich" (Beaverstock et al. 2013) or the "wealth elite" (Savage 2015), whose global and exclusive lifestyles and growing distance from other social groups (Keister 2014) justify posing them as a distinct social group despite their social heterogeneity (Mears 2020; Cousin and Chauvin 2021). Second, private schools in Switzerland have been studied for their pioneering role in the internationalization of elite education (Dugonjic-Rodwin 2022), and for creating specific forms of international capital for economic elites, based on national symbolic resources (sometimes referred to as "Swissness"; Delval 2022). Lastly, but far from being least, students' economically dominant status is visible in many ways on campus. At Institut Le Rosey, a school of 400 students, for example, the infrastructure for a wide range of extracurricular activities implies high expenditures and luxury. On campus, there are 10 tennis courts, 3 football fields, 2 swimming pools, a circus, and an open-air theater. Nearby, along Lake Geneva, there is a nautical center that hosts the director's private yacht and several boats; a golf course is also in the area. These ostentatious extracurricular activities coexist with more conventional school activities, and lavish expenditures and conspicuous displays of wealth as shown by Lillie and Maxwell (2023) rival strict regulation policies of pocket money.

These remarks highlight that financial education and economic socialization in boarding schools that welcome wealthy elites in a period of intense family capital accumulation are not achieved through what Bourdieu (1979) called "distinction".

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Students do not negate the "economic" within the "cultural" part of their practices. This article argues that philanthropic practices, the importance of pocket money, and money management produce an elite ethos that neither relegates wealth to the invisible nor sanctifies its disavowal. On the contrary, many students pursue luxury consumption and wealth status markers as forms of cultural independence from their parents. Economic domination through consumption and the place of extravagant consumption (or the possession of luxury items) have been recently studied in Swiss international schools (Lillie and Maxwell 2023).

Looking rich, being looked at as rich, and designating other students as "rich(er)" are also part of school culture in these settings. This differentiates these young inheritors from New York or French elites who try to downplay their dominant economic status (Sherman 2017; Bozouls 2022); although, Swiss boarding school students also pursue (other) forms of moral legitimacy. But entitlement for them comes from being educated away from their parents, and from the experience of uprooting, of gaining moral independence, and, for some, of grounding themselves locally in Switzerland. While these features may not be unique to Swiss boarding schools, I suggest that compared to other elite schools, Swiss schools demonstrate extreme variations of economic socialization among elite students. As such, they are interesting sites for examining economic elites' modes of legitimation in educational spaces.

This article examines how students in Swiss elite schools are socialized into economic norms and practices, and how such schools erect *economic ethics* as educational principles: *Concentration* of the "wealth elite" in schools, *control* over the circulation of money in schools, and, finally, *status-making* by socializing to philanthropy. The article studies how these modalities of economic socialization shape elite identification and practices of distinction. There are, of course, differences in socialization and the social, academic, and economic status of students, depending on school policies, across the schools in this study, but socializing practices related to money and economic hierarchies were found in all of them.

2 Methods

This article is based on a socio-historical study of the students, school management, and educational offerings at 12 boarding schools in French-speaking Switzerland between 2012 and 2016. The research aimed to reveal the global elite's contemporary school placement strategies in Swiss boarding schools given the role these schools played for national aristocracies and bourgeoisies over the twentieth century.

The study comprised several phases. I first conducted interviews with 5 representatives of alumni associations and private school associations. Then, I consulted public and private archives on private education, including the Vaud cantonal archives

(1938–1980) and the Geneva Department of Public Instruction (1970–2010). I collected schools' publications and published autobiographies of former students at a Swiss school. Thirdly, after contacting 12 directors of boarding schools in Geneva and Vaud offering at least one curriculum outside the local one, I made school visits, observed meetings, and conducted 20 interviews with boarding school directors and managers at 8 different schools. I also conducted 40 interviews with former or graduating students from more than 10 countries (the US, Canada, France, Russia, the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK, Kenya, Mexico, Germany, and Switzerland), and 16 interviews with English- and French-speaking boarding school teachers and tutors. Finally, I quantitatively analyzed students' databases that I had constructed and schools' yearbook data (that of nationality, gender, and parental residences) from after the Second World War to the 2000s.

The interviews investigated student-parent relationships and family strategies of social reproduction. In interviews with students, I questioned family economic relations and the intermediary role of institutions by thematizing pocket money and autonomy. I also questioned relationships among peers, which led to thematizing wealth and wealth hierarchies at the school. Parental wealth was addressed in relation to family lifestyles, parents' professions, school life and parental presence in students' daily lives. I mostly had access to students' lifestyles, tastes, and economic status by other means: reconstituting sociability practices among peers, repeating interviews with students over two years, investigating friendship dynamics and professional projections, and visiting their homes. In interviews with staff members, wealth hierarchies, the administration of pocket money, and the regulation of students' expenses and consumption were also addressed, which raised issues relating to social class, social distance, and symbolic violence in student/teacher relationships.

The question of pocket money emerged during my thesis when I realized that in all boarding schools, there was a policy for and a codified way of administering pocket money. During interviews, it was sometimes delicate to ask about parents' fortunes, but pocket money was always a way of talking about money. Former students, principals, and teachers all had something to say about it, regarding allocation rules at school, parental practices, uses of pocket money, and, more generally, relationships to money.

Schools' and individuals' real names appear when citing data found in published sources. They are pseudonymized when used in relation to data collected directly from students and staff. In other words, interviewees' names are thus pseudonymized, but schools' and individual names appear when in relation to written sources.

3 Wealth Hierarchies and Inheritance in Swiss Elite Schools

Bringing back economic inheritance in the study of symbolic hierarchies in elite schools is supported by a renewed sociological interest in elite consumption and lifestyles (Sherman 2017), Bourdieu's analysis of "symbolic power" and the power of economic capital to materialize social hierarchies (Bourdieu 1979; Cousin et al. 2018; Bosvieux-Onyekwelu et al. 2022a), and the economic socialization of elites (Herlin-Giret 2019; Bozouls 2022). A practice reserved for the super-rich, sending one's child to boarding school in Switzerland remains a minority practice (around 2 000 students are boarders in international private schools in French-speaking Switzerland every year), even within that select economic group. Coming from a very affluent family is not only necessary to attend these schools, but also the major criterion that defines the schools' student bodies: Swiss schools charged annual fees up to 100 000 CHF in the 2010s (circa 90 000 EUR) and continually raised them, reaching 150 000 CHF per year in some schools in 2023 (at euro parity) – noticeably, in parallel with the economic top 1% becoming richer over the last decade, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic (Chancel et al. 2022).

Most former and graduating students I interviewed in the 2010s had rarely or intermittently come to Switzerland before enrolling in a Swiss private school. Their families targeted Swiss schools for their privileged location (Switzerland appearing as a safe and desirable location for new economic elites) and praised these institutions as a distinctive educational choice. The parents mainly lived abroad (in their home country or a third country); although, some acquired real estate in Switzerland when or after their children arrived in the country. They mostly knew about and chose a particular Swiss school through professional and social connections. Many did not have prior contact with the schools and often resorted to agents and agencies (lawyers, private counselors, etc.) to enroll their children (see also Fei 2022). Admissions directors themselves and Swiss schools' marketing organizations rely on their connections to the economic elite to recruit new students, by organizing private dinners and social meetings for current parents or alumni and prospective parents.

Entrance exams and academic performance play a secondary role in admissions: Quite a few admitted students I interviewed spoke very little English or French at their time of arrival. Admission was neither considered a very selective process for students nor a long, arduous one, and some schools praised being academically inclusive. Academic merit as a standard for school popularity and excellence at school was also questioned at several levels. In interviews, school headmasters did not emphasize academic excellence as a criterion for admission or as distinctive to their school. They situated their schools above or apart from academic and meritocratic standards, doing more or differently, and praised that they did not act according to most elite schools' rules. "We are not elite schools", one director declared, supposedly talking for all the Swiss schools, excluding them from the symbolic "economy of

eliteness" that elite schools tend to perpetuate (Prosser 2016). Another headmaster declared that his was still a "school for inheritors" who, he stated, "did not need higher education before the globalization of the 1980s" and who started to pursue university degrees when it became a necessity for their "legitimacy" in business.[2]

The students also did not emphasize academic excellence and instead reflected that their school community valued individual accomplishments and competition (especially in sports), social skills, and aspirations for leadership among groups of peers. Hierarchies of academic excellence and student popularity were challenged in students' and teachers' accounts by other norms and hierarchies constructed according to value and amount of wealth and money, which defined status, morally and socially, between students, and placed in opposition forms of "new" and "old" money.

Swiss international boarding schools may be considered "refuge schools" (Bourdieu 1989; Bertron 2016b; Delval 2022) or "sanctuary schools" (Waters 2007) on several political, academic, and economic levels. The circumvention of academic selection by going abroad and the quest for "international capital" (Wagner 2020) appeared as reasons to come to Swiss schools, where academic selection may have been less strenuous than in other elite schools. Students, for example, mentioned the close-knit competition within New York City elite schools or the narrow paths to Grandes écoles in France as reasons their parents chose a Swiss school. Switzerland's reputation for safety, security, and discretion were also important to high-profile students amidst geopolitical tensions. The quest for a Swiss passport was mentioned by some students and commonly recognized, especially among Russian students, as an important motive. Coming to Switzerland also coincided for some families with a partial relocation of family members and capital to Switzerland.

This article aims to show that pupils remain, above all, inheritors-in-training for whom Swiss schools provide a unique framework in a largely protected space that is also far removed from the family home, from national spaces of origin, and from academic competition in national elite schools. The socialization practices in these schools testifies to the totalizing nature of the work involved in the social reproduction of economic capital in wealthy families, and to the spatial and social segregation implied. Boarding schools indeed often organize social events on campus dedicated to finance and financial education, which often combine conferences, courses, and social events. These schemes introduce students to entrepreneurial sociability by welcoming business firms and executives (Ho 2009; Holmqvist 2023). They also often blur the boundaries between play and real money management: Business clubs are formed alongside economics classes, revealing the ambiguity between professional skills and school projects. In the 1990s and 2000s, several boarding schools also introduced new business learning practices for students, such as virtual investments in the stock market and micro-finance. Local relations with banks and

2 Excerpts, interviews with headmasters, 2012, 2013.

their role in the economic education of their students were sometimes made very explicit by school directors.

4 Attracting the "Wealth Elite"

There are now a dozen institutions self-labeling as "Swiss international boarding schools" in French-speaking Switzerland. The history of these schools' offerings, students' social and national origins, and appeal to elites, is far from being linear. Interviews with headmasters, school publications and biographies, and a quantitative analysis of one school's changing demographics, reveal that until the 1960s, students mainly came from Western European countries, North America, and post-colonial states of the British Empire. Thereafter, schools diversified their students' origins over successive recruitment crises.[3] Institut Le Rosey (VD), one of the most well-known Swiss international boarding schools, significantly welcomed students from the Persian Gulf (from the 1970s), Latin America (1980s and 1990s), Russia and post-socialist states of Eastern Europe (1990s–2010s), and, more recently, Pacific Asia (2010s), with an increasing variance in students' national origins over the last four decades.[4]

The Swiss international school sector's identity indeed underwent a concentration in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of spreading co-education, overall decreasing demand (as aristocratic families as well as industrial and financial upper classes from Western Europe and North America lost interest in Swiss education), and the consolidation of a few schools that raised their fees and started to be more selective in targeting richer families. Lillie's work on Leysin American School, for example, shows how from the 1960s to the 2000s, from one geopolitical and recruitment crisis to another, the school transformed from being a Cold War American school to a school strategically attracting global elites of capital (Lillie 2022). Swiss private boarding schools indeed started diversifying nationalities and becoming increasingly identified as schools for the "super-rich"; although, they had already attracted the "very rich" (Mills 1956). In the 1970s and 1980s, these schools attracted elites who accumulated economic capital in very different situations, but similarly under

3 Several processes are at play in these recruitment crises (Bertron 2016b): wars and geopolitical instability, but also the increasing appeal of national elite school streams and long studies for economic elites and the aristocracy (Saint Martin 1988; Blanchard 2015) in the context of increased integration of elite secondary schools and elite higher education at the national level, and the overarching place of academic definitions of merit in this process (Persell and Cookson 1985; Bourdieu 1989; Stevens 2007; Blanchard 2019).

4 Lillie's work (2022) on Leysin American School, a school that more than the others had been specifically targeting one national origin (American expatriates) since the early 1960s, shows the same trends: The decline of American students is followed by the arrival of emerging global economic elites.

a global regime of increased financialization, capital movements, and the rise of emergent powers.

The appeal of Swiss boarding schools to an elite in part follows the development of hotel, estate, and leisure infrastructure of high-society sociability spaces in Switzerland. Swiss resorts such as Gstaad (BE) became increasingly known in high-society circles, including for hosting the winter campus of the private boarding school Institut Le Rosey. The resort started to be seen largely as a meeting place for "boarding school people", as students sometimes refer to themselves and their families. Similar international boarding schools (Beau Soleil, Aiglon College in Villars-sur-Ollon (VD) and Leysin American School, for instance) are indeed located nearby.

Additionally, these schools' appeal to an elite increasingly defined by its level of wealth, I argue, follows a preceding period (the 1960s) characterized by the reign of "top incomes" who represented "new wealth" in the schools. In the 1950s and 1960s, Switzerland welcomed many American industrial tycoons and the Hollywood set, most of whom would spend part of the year in Switzerland and enroll their children in private schools. Fiscal conditions in the United States for Americans living abroad were advantageous, reinforced by the double taxation avoidance agreement in 1951 that favored Americans with very high incomes in Switzerland. The attraction of Swiss schools for US top-income earners in the 1950s and 1960s arguably paved the way for what became their reputation as schools for the "jet-set" crowd, appealing in later decades to new and heterogeneous elites.

The turn to an elite of global capital in the 1970s is marked in several ways. At schools such as Institut Le Rosey, the Lake Geneva region, Bern, and Zürich became the first places of residence of students' parents in the late 1960s, yet these students and parents were rarely Swiss citizens. Wealthy parents' seasonal relocation to Switzerland and the subsequent arrival of their children in boarding school have long been favored by Swiss cantonal dispositions in which residents, not earning income from work but from rent, are not taxed on their private income but rather on their level of consumption, or their external signs of wealth. This is one element of a larger shift in the school's population, underlying changes in students' family backgrounds and the fact that "new money" was then represented by extreme accumulations of capital. Close attention to Rosey students' parental residences in the 1970s shows rising numbers of tax havens and offshore centers such as the Bahamas, Bermuda, the Netherlands, Antilles, the Seychelles, the Channel Islands, Monaco, and Hong Kong. Together (and excluding Switzerland), these places account for more than 6% of parental residences in the 1970s and the 1980s.

Changes in the wealth regime within the student population were commented on by a former British student, Helen, who arrived at Institut le Rosey in the 1970s. She described the larger presence of economic elites from the Persian Gulf at that time. Her family's attachment to Swiss boarding schools was, from her perspective, unknown or of little value to her classmates. Coming from a "very old English aristocratic family", Helen's father had moved to Switzerland "for tax reasons" and

Helen's arrival at Le Rosey was part of family tradition: She was enrolled "for the simple reason that [her] grandfather, [her] uncle and [her] brother had all been there. It was a school that my parents knew well, and I thought it would be nice to go to boarding school".[5]

Yet, Helen repeatedly also said that she felt she did not belong, and that the other students were much wealthier than she was:

> *I found it very difficult to adapt to this ultra-rich environment. My father came from a very old English aristocratic family, who had money in the past. And he believed that he always had money, but compared to the Arab sheiks and company, we were… Very, very poor. I could not spend as much as my friends, who had 500 CHF pocket money every weekend to go out and splurge on restaurants and shops and stores in Geneva. And then, there was the clothing thing. 14- and 15-year-old girls had five pairs of Gucci shoes, a Vuitton bag, and the whole wardrobe, and I dressed in simpler ways. (…) I came from a family that wasn't very wealthy. My father had a little money, but I was poor with a capital P.*[6]

At first glance, Helen's experience chimes with what Shamus Khan wrote about legacy students losing their dominant status in elite boarding schools in the 2000s, and the opposition between entitlement and privilege that in some ways overlaps with that of old and new fractions of the ruling classes. Khan saw students who relied on their family ties to an institution to find their place as in opposition to more popular students who distinguished themselves at school based on their individual and academic performance (Khan 2011).

Helen's feeling of having been "unpopular" and "invisible" at the time was close to what other students I interviewed recalled experiencing in the 2000s and 2010s, reflecting the role that wealth played in school hierarchies. Students affirmed and contested wealth hierarchies in different ways: Declaring that other schools welcomed richer families than theirs, or that other students at the same school had more money than they did (measured by apparent wealth and by pocket money) was common. Downplaying one's status while commenting on others' level of wealth and popularity was indeed about differentiating moral values from money values, while still asserting that "money rules".

5 Control: Regulating the Circulation of Money

Charles W. Mills pointed out in *The Power Elite* that in American boarding schools, "competition for status among students is held to a minimum: where allowances are permitted, they are usually fixed at modest levels, and the tendency is for boys

5 Interview, Helen I., 50 y. o., boarding school alumna, April 2014. Translated from French.
6 Interview, Helen, 14 April 2014.

to have no spending money at all" (Mills 1956, 62). Quite far from this picture, in Swiss boarding schools, the distribution of pocket money to students is generalized. "Pocket money" is not always materialized in cash and coins; it is also extended to credit/cash cards. Yet pocket money and money circulation in all schools are indeed subject to both rules and moralizing discourses and practices, and, as such, are an aspect of daily boarding life with which to observe the institutional regulation of students' relationships to money.

"The important thing is that they realize the value of money but, you know, after that, there comes a time when you have no pocket money left, and then you can't buy anything"[7], is how one teacher summed up financial education for students: On the one hand, a (moral) awareness of value; on the other, the technique of empty coffers. But, if the circulation of money among students is subject to policies aimed at homogenizing and deindividualizing students' social characteristics, it may be compared to school dress codes aimed at "discouraging" ostentation: It takes part in the teacher-student relationship and reveals the social structures of domination within.

Policies and practices related to pocket money vary by school. In some schools, to prevent theft (among students), it is forbidden for students (but tolerated and practiced) to keep money in their rooms, while in others, when students must go out on an errand, they must ask boarding tutors/houseparents for cash, which they can withdraw from a personal envelope, or for special monies that can be used at local shops. Still, the circulation of money in most cases reveals how symbolic power and hierarchies related to money are constructed and challenged.

5.1 The Two Faces of Pocket Money

In most of the 12 schools studied, house parents or boarding house tutors collect and invoice pocket money from parents at the beginning of the semester and pay out a maximum, equal amount to boarders of the same age group every week. The amount increases with school age; in a few schools only, the weekly amount is left to parents' discretion. Pocket money is not used to cover everyday expenses. Uses of pocket money are therefore rather specific, and its transfer is controlled – characteristics that correspond to the usual definition of pocket money (Lazuech 2012), except that here, pocket money derives from an institutional policy and is not a direct transfer from parents to children.

Still, these policies are merely practices advised by the schools. In fact, in addition to the pocket money provided through the boarding houses, parents or family members often continue to award money to students. These sums cannot be controlled by the schools and thus are unequal between the students. Such payments from parents rarely take the form of cash; instead, credit/cash cards are preferred. Cards are arguably still a form of pocket money, as students use them for leisure and the rules for their use are defined directly within the family.

7 Interview with Susan W., boarding school teacher, July 2013.

This leads to the creation of two types of pocket money. *Institutional pocket money*, on the one hand, promotes equity between pupils (same age, same amount), with the school playing the role of intermediary and standardizing agent in the regulation of economic transfers between parents and children. Institutional amounts according to age were similar in the different schools: From 20 CHF on average in the lower junior sections to 100 or 150 CHF per week in senior sections. *Private pocket money*, on the other hand, responds to parental moral and economic logic: It is given by parents to their children without the institution knowing the sums allowed (or about its mere existence, in some cases), although this is not necessarily concealed. This "private pocket money" corresponds to a private, discreet space, where money is referred to as a family affair. Yet, these two sources of money form a single object of negotiation and even tension between school authorities and parents.

All the students I interviewed clearly distinguished between these two types of pocket money and talked about the inequalities revealed in the overall amount of pocket money available to students. Most respondents identified "pocket money" primarily as the form given and regulated by the institution, and secondarily as the credit/cash card given to them by their parents. In interviews, students from the same school and the same generation did not agree on what their school's policies were and gave different versions of them, underlying the existing individualization of rules regarding pocket money. Both "private" and "institutional" pocket monies are constructs and delimited social markers in schools that show how pocket money takes on different meanings: an institutional delegation of financial education or, on the contrary, a status marker in school.

Concrete individual configurations between private pocket money and institutional pocket money were highly variable. Not all students were afforded these "two" pocket monies; some parents only followed the institution's rules. This was the case for Yulia, a student who came from Russia in the early 2000s and did not have a cash card while at Brillantmont International School (Lausanne, VD). Yulia noted that some students were "rich, so they [didn't] give a damn about pocket money". She explained that many did not follow the school's rules: They did not regularly collect their pocket money and instead used their credit cards. This was the case for Alexei, a friend of Yulia's whom I also interviewed. Alexei's parents had deposited a certain amount of pocket money to be distributed by the school, but by the age of 15, Alexei asked his father for a credit card. He recounted that he "spent it all" in 15 days at the beginning of that year, and then had to make do with the 70 francs a week awarded by his father for the rest of the semester. But Alexei did not regularly collect his institutional pocket money (he said with a wry smile that the school kept the remaining Swiss francs). His narrative shows how prestige and popularity at the school, which he said he was very self-conscious of and sensitive to, relied in part on distancing oneself from institutional pocket money.

Pocket money highlights the respective responsibilities of the school and parents when it comes to money education, and, as such, is often an issue and an object of policy and regulation. At Aiglon College, in 2004–2005, a controversy arose between the school, some parents, and former students regarding new pocket-money policies and the more widespread introduction (or tolerance, depending on the point of view) of credit cards. A year earlier, Aiglon College had introduced a new pocket-money distribution policy: A bank account for each student, who then received the entire quarterly institutional pocket money amount at the beginning of each term. Parents could top up this account as they wished. According to Melvin, an American student who graduated in the late 2000s and was subject to this policy, it was intended to "liberate the school" and "give students more freedom". The school argued that credit cards gave students more autonomy, but the transformation of pocket money from a cash handout to a bank account also aimed at reinforcing the institution's control over students' money by discouraging private individual bank accounts.

The introduction of a bank account that is "validated" institutionally and with withdrawal limits was not that coercive as a policy. Yet, in the 2000s and 2010s, almost every year, the wording of the school's regulations regarding pocket money were rewritten. At the time of the study, several systems coexisted: an institutional bank account, a private bank account for students in their final year, and money afforded by parents to students on their own means. Institutional policy was left to negotiation with each family, who could choose between institutional payment into an account linked to the school and the houseparents. The several reoccurrences of the question of pocket money at Aiglon College in the 2000s and 2010s bore witness to changes in the wealth regime of the student population, the powerful disruption that pocket money introduced (see below), the actual place of money and wealth in school life, and difficulties in regulating money matters.

In 2012, for example, senior-year students at Aiglon were allowed to have a so-called "private" bank account, in addition to "pocket money":

> *It should be emphasized that all parents should strictly observe the pocket money limits set by the school. (…) Credit cards are only permitted if they are lodged with the Houseparents and may only be used in the case of emergencies or for travel to and from the school. All money in any currency exceeding twice the stipulated pocket money value must be handed in to the student's Houseparents at the beginning of each term. Extra sums of money may be left with Houseparents to cover the costs of birthday presents or other legitimate needs.*[8]

In other words, while the school sought to strictly define the amounts, terms, and uses of credit cards (exceptional expenses, gifts, trips), the school's internal regulations and handbook for parents appeared less as an open power struggle between parents

8 Aiglon College Handbook 2012–2013

and the school than as a more modest, institutional aim to assure parents of the existence of an institutional policy. School authorities thus gave "recommendations" that were left to the discretion of the houseparents, who by virtue of their proximity to students and desire to ensure a trusting relationship were unlikely to invade student privacy and, in some cases, came to a direct arrangement with students. In 2015, the school's codes of conduct included provisions for account management in the local banking economy, generalizing the educational role of accounting and turning pocket money into a more formal tool for money management – and creating largely-fictional financial "autonomy" for students, deemed to benefit for many years from their parents' financial support.

5.2 A Fragile Local Economy: Fake Scarcity and Internal Monies

Fictional, too, is the scarcity of means that students possess. Interviews revealed that private pocket money was used not only for personal expenses and social events but also as a way of circumventing some boarding school rules. More precisely, specific uses of pocket money (and credit cards) practically enabled students to break away from the grip of the boarding school (such as cab or train journeys to a nearby town or to Geneva, or ordering food, which was often authorized) or to outright overrule school codes of conduct (like hotel nights on weekends without a responsible adult signing them out, which was unauthorized). At Aiglon College, where the policy was to all appearances very strict, pocket money was used in the 2000s and 2010s as a means of diverting the focus from "survival expeditions" – the hikes and camping trips that students were obliged to make several weekends a year – by renting a cab or ordering food.

More generally, fake scarcity generates parallel markets. Forms of informal trade between boarding students have long been observed in boarding schools (Persell and Cookson 1985). Accounts and recollections of the exchange of rare goods, sweets, magazines, cigarettes, cannabis, alcohol, and other psychotropic drugs were mentioned in interviews. "Making money" through trading goods on campus is also a way to get by and find one's place in an enclosed environment where the circulation and possession of valuable goods are supposed to be monitored (and when including money, mostly forbidden).

As such, trading practices are sometimes (up to a certain point) tolerated as a game or fiction by staff members who attribute great value to students' reflexive discourses on money. In some cases, they attributed an educational value to these practices when students showed discernment. Claire, a teacher and boarding house tutor, was, as many boarding staff were, keen to talk about the contradictions in her work. A former social science student coming from a "modest background", she had a particularly acute idea of how social distance materialized in her relationship with students. In the multiple interviews I had with her, she contrasted the care work for young students who are just "small" "kids" having difficulties being away

from their families, with the social distance continuously reminded by students' consumption, tastes, and "habits of being served by other people". As other teachers did, Claire valued students' reflexivity, derision of their social status, resourcefulness, and autonomy:

> *This student did something funny. Her father didn't give her much pocket money because he wanted her to earn her own money. Some parents want that and others give a credit card… So she bought sweets and chocolates and sold them for three times the price! Because you can't go out of campus, so she built up her little business. She would say, "My father wants me to earn a living, so I'm earning a living!" But then, she made a lot of money… She'd set up an Internet thing, you could call, people would bring you your Mars, even the staff would take it… After that, they stopped, the school didn't really like it.*[9]

The situation of fake scarcity has other consequences. At Aiglon College, pocket money expenses for leisure are monetarily distinguished from those for daily expenses. For the latter, students use specific means of payment. There is a tuck shop on campus that supplies uniforms and school-related products, but students go to the village for their other day-to-day purchases. Standard money is, in this case, replaced by internal or special monies (Zelizer 1989). As a small instrument of payment, their use is regulated, and they mark different activities and different types of social relations.

For everyday expenses such as toothpaste, shampoo, haircuts, or cab fares, Aiglon students receive vouchers locally known as "*bons*" from their houseparents for a specific use, to be given to village shopkeepers. In the mid-2010s, the vouchers were subtracted from a separate account set up by parents at the start of the school year. Expenses would be billed as disbursements from this account, or billed separately as an additional charge, to parents. Internal monies thus play a role in controlling and supervising the economic practices associated with students' "everyday life" by limiting the circulation of official currencies.

Not only does the voucher system leave students little room for maneuvering, but it also establishes a close network of exchange with local shopkeepers. Vouchers, indeed, constituted a local currency and created a local economy around Aiglon. In addition to the voucher system, students could ask their houseparents for advances for emergency expenses, locally referred to as "petty cash". Ancillary expenses generated by students traveling to and from boarding school are the subject of a separate category and separate claims. "Travel money" is neither pocket money nor daily expenses but instead the money needed when traveling (mostly during flights). This internal differentiation of local monies is about controlling not just the use of money but also student travel.

9 Interview, Claire, boarding house tutor and teacher, April 2014, translated from French.

Although not as formal as at Aiglon College, distinctions between "petty cash" and pocket money also exist at other boarding schools. A teacher at Institut Le Rosey explained:

> *It's against school rules to have extra money in your room. And students will be punished if we find out they've got extra money. What we tell them to do is, if they have extra money, to give it to us in a safe in an envelope. For example, if they want to buy a gift for someone or they have a special need, they'll be able to get it. But, having said that, we went to a trade show the other day, and we let them take a little out of their pocket money, and it can be quite expensive, so they were able to take some extra money* (Interview, Susan W., June 24, 2013).

Teachers, houseparents, and boarding tutors have many roles to play as they are supposed to both enforce rules and make judgments on individual situations to gain and keep students' trust. This individualization of the tutor/student relationship, which is expected from the job, is arguably exacerbated by the structures of domination within this relationship. Teachers often recount their awe or surprise at students' wealth expenses and their ease with money and luxury items. They often revealed difficulties in dealing with both the importance of wealth for status at school and institutional rules, which are also part of symbolic rewards in situations of social domination in service jobs (Beaumont 2019; Delpierre 2022).

6 Status: Philanthropic Socialization and Moral Legitimation

Students are introduced to philanthropy through a variety of curricular and extracurricular arenas wherein aristocratic heritage, high society networks, academic knowledge, and internal school cohesion are interwoven. Presented as "new philanthropists"(Aiglon. The magazine 2015: 34), students are encouraged to take part in volunteer work or "service activities", humanitarian trips, and charity work. Gathered under a set of practices that are neither entirely extracurricular nor entirely integrated into school programs, charity activities take on a very important role.

As a form of status legitimation, charity education has been studied from two main angles: As the disinterested learning of a sense of relationships within the family and the group, and as socialization and acquisition of social capital at school (Saint Martin 1993). Giving practices have more rarely been considered as knowledge – i. e., as learning about worldviews and systems of representation – or as a body of explicit, assessable knowledge that contributes to the formation of elites (Sklair and Glucksberg 2021). Through contemporary and elite forms of charity that are philanthropic practices – characterized by long-term action and planning under the form of foundations, which implies fundraising, social events, visibility, and the

production of expertise – committing to charitable causes can be seen as the specific acquisition of inseparably moral and economic elite dispositions. Philanthropic deeds or "privileged benefaction" are also compatible with an ostentatious ethos (Kenway and Fahey 2015). Philanthropy moralizes those who execute it, but has to be visible and achieve great aims (Bosvieux-Onyekwely et al. 2022b).

A recurrent objective in boarding schools, educating "responsible elites" and "global citizens" relates to long-standing practices of charity. Giving practices and the ostentation of charity are central to elite schools (Kenway and Fahey 2015). At the end of the 19th century, the tradition of good deeds, attested to in Catholic boarding schools, also existed in secular international boys' boarding schools such as the École des Roches with the introduction of Baden-Powell's scoutism (Duval 2009). In secular girls' schools, such as the Maisons de la Légion d'Honneur in France, charity work was also an integral part of girls' moral education (Rogers 2005).

In its contemporary form, in elite schools such as Le Rosey, elect student charity committees organize galas, go on humanitarian trips, and build local development projects (such as the construction of a sister school in Mali). The school has its own philanthropic foundation establishing philanthropic norms and often welcomes parents' philanthropic foundations. Former students are often active in their family's philanthropic foundations. Philanthropic endeavors thus contribute to the continuity over time of Le Rosey's social networks, despite social and national differences, by bridging parents, alumni, and current students.

The high visibility and omnipresence of charity-related activities in elite schools, which characterize the social world of economic elites and high society sociability, have arguably expanded and been renewed in Swiss boarding schools over the last 15 years with the introduction of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP); the expansion of schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)[10], which works towards the international diffusion of a sense of ethics under the British royal label; and Round Square, an international network of elite schools formed around the idea of "service" and the formation of virtuous elites. Philanthropy became one of the most important levers for networking among international schools, and the basis for partnerships with other elite schools and NGOs.

The DofE is interesting for its genealogy. It was originally, in the 1960s, presented as a source of individual achievement, aimed particularly at pupils who were "excluded from all distinction and reward" from an academic point of view (Carpenter 1960, 171). "Success" was assessed either physically, morally, or technically, as a direct alternative to academic recognition and skills. This conception of a useful, productive leisure time, which was neither work nor aristocratically unproductive nor military time, illustrates the conversion of aristocratic elites to

10 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a non-governmental player, providing a form of royal certificate for voluntary work by NGOs and institutions operating both in the UK and abroad. Outside the UK, it is mainly international schools and humanitarian NGOs that issue the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

an ethics of service. Although the DofE presented itself as an alternative to Baden Powell's scouting, it underpinned the same reconversions.

In the IBDP, in the 2010s, service was conceived of as an educational product insofar as skills were assessed: The institutionalization of service implied "performance criteria" through which to assess "personal achievements, skills, personal and impersonal qualities and global awareness". Service in the Creativity Action Service (CAS) program of the IBDP was also conceived of as an educational product. It defined an object of knowledge, "global awareness", as an engagement "with issues of global importance", where the aim was to learn "the ethical implications of one's actions"(IBO 2011). Evaluation criteria borrowed from the language of management, establishing efficiency criteria in the organization of charitable work, conceived of as "personal development" of the student – in other words, "results" but also "money well spent"(IBO 2011).

With philanthropic schemes, the interest shown by Swiss boarding schools in pedagogical standardizations of good deeds takes over some of the alternative principles to "academic excellence" that "service" and charity are supposed to convey. While not producing "deserving elites" in the same way that academic merit does, service and philanthropy contribute to elite status-making through academically recognized and acceptable forms of moral legitimation: Producing a "good" deserving elite while legitimizing lavish spending and the symbolic power of wealth equaling greatness.

Before field action, students learn the fundamentals of fundraising (through the help of galas, alumni, and their own charities). All students participate in some way in donations and fundraising, but not all students take part in the time-consuming management practices of charity (presenting the feasibility of the project, communicating the outreach of their action, team building, etc.) that also implies budgeting and accountability (to distribute funds and provision future needs). But practices of planning and administering evidence defining the charitable enterprise as self-interested, technicalized and goal-oriented knowledge are common, especially in CAS programs, bringing community service closer to the contemporary philanthropic field of action characterized by an entrepreneurial spirit and the assessment of risks.

Philanthropy is thus defined as an activity that enhances practical skills. Jane, a teacher and CAS coordinator, presented her intervention among students as limited: She felt she was mainly there to comment on students' experiences in order to instill "reflexivity on their practices". Assessment procedures were depersonalized, mediated by computer programs on which students recorded "proof" of their experience in the form of videos, photos, personal diaries, or even websites created to showcase their projects.

In his ethnography of elite schools in the US, Adam Howard emphasized that service practices are akin to charity in that they do not enable students to develop mutual, equal relationships with individuals from social backgrounds other than their own. On the contrary, students learn the logic of distinction and how to virtuously express their place in society (Howard 2008). In Swiss boarding

schools, through a symbolic process that associates service with students' "personal development" and a developmentalist worldview, the practical experience of charity becomes a legitimate and central teaching content. As actors in their own education and acting in a symbolic space defined by the boundaries of philanthropic action, students learn their place and the language (of "elite responsibility" and "openness") that suits their position.

Service thus becomes a powerful driver for constructing a fictitious "community" and a moralizing collective representation of these students' social group. In both teachers' and students' discourses, "community" is used very extensively, referring at times to the school community (or even more largely, the Swiss boarding school community), the local community (as students also perform charity acts for local residents, hospitals, and retirement homes), and the world as a whole. Committing to the community and serving the community contribute to making sense of a privileged economic elite status through contemporary elite philanthropy.

Although students are first and foremost considered economic agents of the donation process, they enact the entire charitable chain: They are field agents of philanthropy, agents of project-based charity management, and major donors. At one boarding school, I observed the showcasing of philanthropic skills during a meeting of students returning from a CAS project in South Africa:

> [Observation, Spring 2013] *The closed-door presentation conference takes place just before dinner on campus. It's 6 p. m. and the five students – two boys and three girls – seniors aged 16–17, who have just returned from South Africa, rehearse their speeches in the lecture-projection room, setting up their video equipment. The three teachers who accompanied them on their trip are in the front row. Then a heckling audience arrives, the youngest boarders, juniors aged 9 to 12, in evening uniforms.*

The three girls distribute an agenda to the front rows. The room quickly falls silent, and the five seniors launch a PowerPoint presentation with videos and coordinated music. The visual device is effective, as students detail their daily lives in South Africa and the landscape (a local and exotic ambiance), give a few anecdotes, describe the English lessons they taught South African students, and show videos of the American dances and songs they taught and the "traditional" ones they learned in return. This is followed by black-and-white photos of South African children on the shoulders of the seniors, hugs, and the children's faces – photos that the five students comment on in a steady sound rhythm, mixing compassion with efficiency and intensity. A comparison of the earthen soccer field in the South African village with the artificial turf soccer pitch at the boarding school is also highlighted in a photo.

The presentation continues with an overall assessment of what they've achieved on their trip ("What we've managed to achieve"). They project an accounting table detailing funds, repairs, the construction of a library, and the salary for an IT

teacher, as well as a balance sheet and "future objectives" such as the installation of an Internet connection, etc. The presenting students finally address the younger junior students, who will raise funds for next year's trip, for a brainstorming session around fundraising that lasts for about 20 minutes.

If excessive individual spending is theoretically justified by the grandeur of the task, students with the least resources (especially teachers' children) often contested the idea that lavish spending for charity was educational. They considered charity to be about the public image of the school and criticized that most students did not fully commit to the tasks or take them seriously. During fundraising campaigns on campus, small consumption items such as sodas and candy bars may indeed be turned into donations, sometimes justifying raising their prices:

> *There was a chairman of the charity committee, for him it was all about making money, ripping people off. During the evenings, they [the members of the charity committee] would set up a stand and sell unhealthy food, a half-liter bottle of soda for 50 francs [50 euros]. For me, putting money into charity has to come from the heart, honestly. […] I said it wasn't a good idea to do this kind of thing to make money. It's true that we made a lot of money, but it wasn't honest.*[11]

Such price-raising practices are not morally unchallenged, as Lea, a former student and charity committee president, showed. A teacher's daughter, she benefited from free tuition and described her progressive learning while at school of her social distance from other students. She recounted her involvement in the charity committee and her disillusionment with charity practices. She contrasted the moral or even "political" commitment of charity – the ethic of conviction ("honest", "from the heart") – with a morality of economic efficiency ("business", "making money") that corresponded to an ethos of the public demonstration of charity, which she identified with school management and the "majority of students".

7 Discussion

Starting from the idea that elite schools are usually given the job of "regulating the admission of new wealth" (Mills 1956, 60), this article has explored how, over the last decades, financial and economic deregulation has led not only to admitting a new rich to Swiss boarding schools but also to valuing the symbolic power of economic capital. At times of increasing inequality, consumption practices take a renewed part in systems of competition among elites (Veblen 1899; Mears 2020; Lillie and Maxwell 2023). Students at economically elite international schools in Switzerland are far from just showing how "normal" they are and should be, and from relegating

11 Interview, Lea M., boarding school alumna, May 2013, translated from French.

their parents' wealth and their own consumption to the invisible. Students driven to these schools are more generally socialized to make their economic dominant status recognized while acquiring a plurality of moral skills. This is noticeably different from what Rachel Sherman observed among upper-class New York families, whose symbolic work was organized around undermining their dominant status (Sherman 2017). This slightly different approach, based on the materials collected, seems in part due to the social differences observed. Many students I interviewed came from families whose fortune was recently acquired. Their parents, mostly entrepreneurs, had become rentiers of global capital, delocalizing their children's school education to Switzerland.

Many students came from Russia – such as Mila, Alexei, and Yulia, all cited in the article, as well as others – and made it clear that they dissociated themselves from the "Russian tourists" and "new rich" that they sometimes encountered in the streets in Geneva and Lausanne. They presented the "international education" they received by coming to Switzerland as a self-determination process. Detachment from national stereotypes and from the negative connotations attributed, they thought, to their arrival in Switzerland (such as the search for Swiss citizenship) was crucial. Similar to Schimpfössl's study (2018) of oligarchs' quest for cultural legitimacy in the 1990s and 2000s, Russian students tended to dissociate themselves from wealth as a major social ascription, but they did so by exposing a pragmatic ethos, more so than a meritocratic one, illustrating that "merit" as an overarching regime of status legitimation may not have pervaded all elite schools in the same way in the last decades. Although students rejected an ascribed identity based on wealth (and an ascribed immorality based on capital accumulation in post-soviet Russia), valued "international education", and tried as much as possible to look "normal" (Sherman 2017), they also valued luxury consumption and high society lifestyles.

On the institutional side, the use of local and special monies and the distribution of pocket money can be seen as the establishment of an exchange system based on fictitious scarcity within a social group characterized by its wealth. Schools divest money of its quantifiable aspects – the money of anonymous markets and the "heads" side of a coin, as Keith Hart (1986) theorized it. Special monies only retain the face value of a coin that symbolizes the community wherein it is valid (the social quality of money). In the local exchange system of boarding schools, these two sides of a coin, which are often opposed ideologically and by monetary theories, are interrelated, as the coexistence of institutional and private pocket money shows. Money thus becomes fully reinvested of its social value, as a quantified and qualified measure of one's value in the boarding school world.

Moreover, the propensity of schools to institute charity and service as values that permeate different spheres of collective social life illustrates how the economic socialization of economic elites can be considered a "total social fact". "Service" and its importance for boarding schools in times of extreme inequalities testifies to the

quest for moral entitlement by indecently wealthy elites, as well as to ways elites turn money into prestige while bringing tax avoidance to higher levels.

Elite schools' models and practices of economic socialization would benefit from more investigations into how they participate in capital accumulation. The totalizing aspects of boarding school education reveal how learning about wealth and wealth-related practices involve values associated with both discretion and ostentation. Pocket money, special monies, and philanthropy show different ways in which "money" as a social artifact is differentiated, managed, and used by elites, and especially how public and private uses and arbitrages of money in wealthy families are learned and constructed through education. Such practices show not only how "young inheritors [may learn to] appreciate the privilege of wealth and [are] inculcated ideals of responsibility" (Sklair and Glücksberg 2021), but also how elites learn to relate to institutions and control regarding wealth management. While global elites who set up in Switzerland historically highlight elite practices of avoiding tax (as an invisible form of distribution of money, alongside parent-child invisible or uncontrollable transfers of money at school), philanthropy, institutional pocket money, and the use of special monies issued by school authorities reveal a visible face of giving practices, oriented towards the group rather than to the social redistribution of money (Urry 2013).

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Subjective Career Success of Industrial Workers a Decade After Mass Redundancy

Fiona Köster *

Abstract: This study examines which factors influence the long-term subjective career success of industrial workers, who experienced mass redundancy during the Great Recession. We used two tailor-made surveys to analyze how workers assess the impact of plant closure on their subjective career success. Higher educational attainment and a more internal locus of control correlate with a more positive assessment of post-redundancy career success. We also observe differences in workers' evaluations due to differing plant closure modalities on the meso-level.

Keywords: Plant closure, labour market, subjective career success, longitudinal, meso-level

Réussite professionnelle subjective des personnes travaillant dans l'industrie une décennie après un licenciement collectif

Résumé : Cette étude examine les facteurs influençant la réussite professionnelle subjective à long terme des personnes travaillant dans l'industrie ayant connu un licenciement collectif de 2008 à 2010. Nous analysons l'impact de la fermeture des usines sur la réussite professionnelle subjective à l'aide de deux enquêtes. Un niveau d'éducation élevé et un locus de contrôle interne sont corrélés à une évaluation plus positive de la réussite professionnelle. Nous observons également des différences liées aux modalités de fermeture des usines au niveau mésoscopique.

Mots-clés : Fermeture d'usine, marché du travail, réussite professionnelle subjective, étude longitudinale, niveau mésoscopique

Subjektiver beruflicher Erfolg von Industriebeschäftigten ein Jahrzehnt nach der Massenentlassung

Zusammenfassung: Diese Studie untersucht, welche Faktoren den langfristigen subjektiven Karriereerfolg von Industriebeschäftigten beeinflussen, die eine Massenentlassung aufgrund der Weltfinanzkrise erlebt haben. Anhand zweier Umfragen analysieren wir, den Einfluss der Betriebsschliessung auf den subjektiv wahrgenommenen Karriereerfolg. Höhere Bildung und eine internale Kontrollüberzeugung korrelieren mit einer positiveren Bewertung des Karriereerfolgs. Zudem beobachten wir Bewertungsunterschiede aufgrund verschiedener Betriebsschliessungsmodalitäten auf Mesoebene.

Schlüsselwörter: Betriebsschliessung, Arbeitsmarkt, subjektiver Berufserfolg, Längsschnittstudie, Mesoebene

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1 Introduction

The consequences of mass redundancies are often severe and can leave long-lasting scars that impede the career development and well-being of affected workers. Possible negative outcomes encompass periods of unemployment and income reductions upon re-employment (Jolkkonen et al. 2012; Oesch and Baumann 2015), decreased job quality (Brand 2006), a decline in subjective well-being (Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew 2009), resulting in reduced life satisfaction for both the affected workers and their spouses in cases of unemployment (Nikolova and Ayhan 2018), as well as adverse effects on mental (Mendolia 2014; Marcus 2013) and physical health (Gallo et al. 2000). The negative consequences of plant closures can persist throughout careers (Eliason and Storrie 2006), but not all affected workers experience their job loss as equally adverse.

Our study investigates the influence of personal characteristics and meso-level factors on long-term subjective career success. We use data from two tailor-made surveys conducted among manufacturing workers in Switzerland who experienced plant closures during the Great Recession – a sector known for its high risk of dismissals, automation, and low employment growth (Nedelkoska and Quintini 2018). The surveys were carried out, at time intervals of two years and ten years after plant closures. By focusing our analysis on the subjective long-term assessment of previously displaced workers, we examine which characteristics helped them to overcome this critical life event.

A large amount of literature has investigated the effects of job loss on objective career components, such as wages and promotions. However, subjective components of careers, such as satisfaction and feelings of gratification, have received comparatively little attention. Particularly the long-term consequences of job loss on subjective career success have been under-researched, albeit they appear to be associated with health implications (Faragher et al. 2005). To address this research gap, our analysis focuses on the subjective assessment of career success a decade after plant closures.

We measure subjective assessment – the dependent variable of our study – with an additive scale that captures workers' assessment of their career development, their social status, and the impact that the layoff had on their financial situation. The characteristics that we examined to see which aspects affected the subjective assessment of mass redundancy are socio-demographic attributes (age and gender), acquired resources (education and occupational class), as well as a personality trait (locus of control) and meso-level differences due to company affiliation. Our analysis enables us to evaluate how these attributes, resources, and a personality trait are associated with workers' retrospective evaluation of plant closures and the continuation of their career. Since differing modalities of company closures cannot be controlled nor separated from each other, we carefully reflect and discuss the impact of company affiliation on subjective career success.

2 Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1 Mass Redundancy as a Critical Life Event

Unlike varying but to some extent predictable life events, like the beginning of school or work life, critical life events such as mass redundancies occur rather abruptly. Individuals do not generally expect them to happen during their lifetime, they are unrelated to age, and have a lower probability to arise, which means that a minority of individuals experience them (Filipp 2001). Mass redundancies disrupt careers and leave former workers without employment or steady income, and have the potential to decrease individuals' subjective well-being (Gardiner et al. 2009; Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew 2009). In contrast to dismissals, which often arise from shortcomings of individual workers, plant closures of mid-sized or large companies are primarily exogenous events (Brand 2015). The job loss experienced by affected workers cannot be attributed to their own lack of performance. Instead, external circumstances, such as the Great Recession, can prompt plant closures and entail mass redundancies. In cases of plant closures, targeted policies are more likely to provide noticeable improvements for numerous laid off workers. Hence, case studies are indispensable as they allow to take historical, geographical, and company-specific differences into account.

A growing number of studies describe the negative consequences of plant closures and mass layoffs. Individuals may face a reduction or lack of income (Oesch and Baumann 2015), a decrease in job quality following re-employment (Brand 2006; Farber 2017), a decline of psychological (Marcus 2013; Mendolia 2014; Andreeva et al. 2015) and physical health (Gallo et al. 2000), including an increased risk of mortality (Sullivan and von Wachter 2009), as well as a decrease in life satisfaction (Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew 2009; Nikolova and Ayhan 2018). However, the majority of these studies focus on short- to mid-term consequences.

Workers who lost their jobs due to mass layoffs or downsizing have been found to struggle with a decrease of well-being due to psychological side-effects. They are more likely to develop depressive symptoms and post-traumatic stress disorder when compared to continuously employed counterfactual groups (McKee-Ryan et al. 2009; Andreeva et al. 2015). Beyond a decline of psychological well-being, Sullivan and von Wachter (2009) examined the impact of mass layoffs on mortality rates in companies with a significant reduction in employment (30% or above). Their findings reveal an increase in mortality rates during the first year following job loss, ranging from 50–100%. The mortality rates decline over time but remain elevated by 10–15% for the investigated period of 20 years. However, it must be noted that their sample consisted of displaced older male workers, hence it is unclear whether these findings apply to women or younger individuals (Sullivan and von Wachter 2009).

We expect three types of features to have a decisive impact on the evaluation of mass redundancy and the consequences of plant closures on career trajectories on the micro-level: Socio-demographic attributes such as age and gender, acquired resources such as education and occupational class, and the personality trait locus of control.

Although workers of all five manufacturing plants experienced mass redundancy during the Great Recession and thus largely simultaneously within this study, regional unemployment rates and plant closure modalities varied. For example, a worker who received a sixth-month advance notice regarding plant closure likely had better chances to avoid temporary unemployment compared to someone who received only a three-month notice. As multiple factors interact at the meso-level, e.g., timing of advance notices, the scope of social plans, regional unemployment rates, we refrain from formulating hypotheses regarding the company-specific impact. However, we examine meso-level differences and reflect upon them carefully.

2.2 Career Success

The literature on job trajectories comprises a large body of studies that focus on objective components of career success and occupational trajectories after the occurrence of job loss. However, the subjective evaluation of workers arguably explains their well-being better than objective factors. It is essential to understand the components that define a successful career in order to predict which sub-groups of workers are more likely to struggle after a layoff. A successful career can be defined as "the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one accumulates as a result of work experiences" (Seibert et al. 1999, 417). During the last few decades, the definition has evolved from considering exclusively external and quantifiable factors to include subjective and therefore internal factors of success. Objective components of career success are often measured through differences in wages, numbers of promotions, and whether individuals gain higher hierarchical positions during their work life (Barley 1989). Subjective components, on the other hand, focus on personal evaluations and include whether individuals feel satisfied with their careers, whether they were able to meet their ambitions and achieve self-imposed accomplishments (Judge et al. 1995).

Previous research has shown that objective and subjective components correlate positively, but weakly (Ng et al. 2005), hence indicating that individuals who experienced several promotions, continuously climbed the hierarchical ladder, and increased their income steadily, do not necessarily feel satisfied with their accomplishments. Or vice versa: Individuals who did not benefit from numerous promotions, had a constant level of income, and remained in the same hierarchical position, can be completely satisfied with their careers due to valuing the intrinsic importance of their work and the accomplishments that it brings.

2.3 Socio-Demographic Attributes: Age and Gender

With rising age workers accumulate expertise and gain a broader range of skills, making them more valuable over time (Judge et al. 1995; Ng et al. 2005). However, the positive impact of age on occupational trajectories changes notably in the event of job loss.

The loss of firm-specific capital for workers with high tenures, as well as a possibly necessary change to a related but new occupation, confronts older workers with less favourable labour market outcomes when they try to find and adapt to re-employment (Eliason and Storrie 2006; Oesch and Baumann 2015). Previous research has shown that workers above the age of 55 face an elevated risk of finding re-employment after job loss, with notably longer unemployment periods compared to younger workers, which should have a negative impact on their career satisfaction (Chan and Stevens 1999; Oesch and Baumann 2015). Although a majority of older workers manage to find re-employment within two years of being laid off or business closure, the probability that they quit their newfound job shortly after is twice as high compared to continuously employed older workers (Chan and Stevens 1999). Meaning that financial reasons seem to pressure older workers to lower their standards to accept jobs that do not match their expectations or for which they feel overqualified. The difficulties of older workers who are not close to retirement age yet may be aggravated through age discrimination by employers and their greater reluctance to relocate for a new job to avoid longer periods of unemployment (Tempest and Coupland 2017; Oesch 2020).

A gap between expectations regarding a new employment and individuals' satisfaction with it can also occur among younger workers. The likelihood to find a suitable subsequent job that matches their expectations, however, is higher, which can partially be attributed to the fact that they have lower expectations towards their income and hierarchical position. This provides them with a wider range of opportunities, as there are more positions available. Workers who are close to reaching the retirement age, however, should perceive their job loss as a neutral or positive event as long as they are able to retire without substantial pension losses. This leads us to formulate the following hypothesis:

> *H1: Young workers and those who experienced plant closure shortly before reaching the retirement age assess the consequences on their career success as less severe than middle-aged workers.*

Apart from age, gender differences influence the reintegration into the labour market after experiencing mass redundancy, as well as the subjective evaluation of this critical life event. For instance, women are more likely than men to switch from the manufacturing sector to the service sector for re-employment (Herz 1990; Oesch

and Baumann 2015). Considering the fact that women are often perceived as fitting candidates for occupations that require social and interpersonal skills in particular, the reorientation towards the service sector appears more feasible for them, broadening their search range while looking for re-employment (Lease et al. 2020).

Different prerequisites, such as wage gaps between women and men, contribute to deviating perceptions regarding the consequences of plant closures as well. On average, women earn less than men, even when the type of occupation, field of work and number of working hours are controlled for (Ng et al. 2005; Van der Heijden et al. 2009). Albeit both women and men suffer from wage losses following plant closure, women are likely to suffer proportionately less because they have lower wages to begin with (Oesch and Baumann 2015).

Moreover, women and men tend to emphasise different aspects of career success (Dyke and Murphy 2006). Previous research has found that men value objective factors of career success such as wages, status, or the capability to influence decisions within the organisation higher than women, who, in contrast, highlight the importance of work-life-balance, personal fulfilment, and their occupational contribution to society (Parker and Chusmir 1992; Dyke and Murphy 2006). These findings do not signify that financial aspects of employment are irrelevant for women, but rather that the importance of factors which represent subjective career success differ by gender.

It appears plausible that gender roles affect the importance of work and that career success is defined differently by women and men. Our hypothesis is thus:

> *H2: Men experience plant closure as more detrimental for their subjective career success than women.*

2.4 Acquired Resources: Education and Occupational Class

Across the life course individuals acquire a distinct set of skills and knowledge that contribute to their work-related productivity or economic value – their human capital. Human capital encompasses investments that are not accompanied by immediate gratification and refers to educational, personal, and professional experiences, which promote economic benefits (Becker 1964). The acquisition of skills enables individuals to achieve their career ambitions more easily and is thus likely to increase subjective feelings of gratification and satisfaction, which play a role regarding the subjective assessment of career success (Lortie-Lussier and Rinfret 2005; Ng et al. 2005).

In the aftermath of job loss, individuals with higher educational attainment experience shorter unemployment spells and have a higher probability to being re-employed (Lippmann 2008; Oesch and Baumann 2015), which should have a positive impact on workers' subjective assessment of long-term career satisfaction. Apart from the human capital theory, which postulates that workers with higher

educational attainment are more productive, the signaling theory argues that education serves as an indicator for productivity used by employers and thus promotes the employability of higher educated individuals (Spence 1973). Regardless of the precise underlying mechanism, both theories support the idea that individuals with higher educational attainment are at an advantage compared to displaced workers with lower educational attainment when looking for re-employment. This leads to the following hypothesis:

> *H3: Higher educational attainment facilitates coping with plant closure and results in a less negative assessment regarding subsequent subjective career success.*

In addition to education, the occupational class of a worker may predict how well individuals are able to cope with their job loss, thus influencing the subjective assessment of career success. After plant closures, white-collar workers from the manufacturing sector are in general less restricted regarding labour market opportunities when they search for re-employment and tend to have better chances of being re-employed compared to blue-collar workers (Jolkkonen et al. 2012; Oesch and Baumann 2015). Acquired skills in white-collar occupations are often transferable across sectors. Moreover, they do not depend on expertise in handling machinery or manual processes, which are potentially replaced by automation, hence decreasing matching job offers over time. Although firm-specific and field-specific knowledge is likely to be lost in the aftermath of mass redundancies, the transition to another occupation seems more easily achievable for managers, accountants, and secretaries, compared to welders and assemblers without accepting high income losses (Oesch and Baumann 2015). Income losses following re-employment tend to be lower for white-collar than blue-collar workers (Jacobson et al. 2005). Although this constitutes an objective component of career success, it is still likely to influence the perception of displaced workers' satisfaction with their career development. Our hypothesis thus reads as follows:

> *H4: White-collar workers assess the consequences of mass redundancy on their subjective career success as less detrimental than blue-collar workers.*

2.5 Personality Trait

Work-related achievements are influenced by individuals' characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes. A personality trait that affects the development of careers is locus of control. It determines to which degree an individual perceives his or her decisions and behaviour to influence outcomes in his or her life (Rotter 1966). Those who take the stance that what happens to them is largely dependent on their own abilities and agency have an internal locus of control. Individuals with an external

locus of control do not feel responsible for developments and changes that affect them. Instead, they appraise them as random or induced by others and out of their control.

Previous research has shown that displaced workers in Germany with an internal locus of control are more likely to experience shorter unemployment spells and have higher chances of being re-employed than those with an external locus of control (Uhlendorff 2004). A study that investigated the job search behaviour of unemployed Canadian workers between 1979 and 1986 adds to these findings that an internal locus of control is linked to more intensive job search behaviour and higher expectations for salaries compared to unemployed individuals with an external locus of control (McGee 2015). Caliendo and colleagues (2015) complement this finding by showing an interaction between locus of control and the number of applications that were submitted by German job seekers. Those with an internal locus of control believed that the act of sending out more applications was positively related to receiving suitable job offers. This finding suggests that locus of control affects job search behaviour based on one's attitude towards agency.

The predictive effect of locus of control stems from differences in job search behaviours, which affect the extent of investments unemployed workers display and their willingness to accept a subsequent job that is not a good fit for them, leading us to formulate a last hypothesis:

> *H5: Workers with an internal locus of control evaluate the effect of plant closure on their subjective career success as less negative than workers with an external locus of control.*

3 Institutional Context and Plant Closure Modalities

Our study examines industrial workers in Switzerland who experienced plant closures in the aftermath of the Great Recession and explores which characteristics influence the evaluation of this critical life event. Between 2000 and 2020 the unemployment rate of Switzerland remained relatively stable, albeit the financial crisis led to a small increase of unemployment between 2009 and 2011, as well as in 2020 due to COVID-19, an effect that was cushioned due to short-time work. Our study focuses on the workforce of five manufacturing plants. Four of the manufacturing plants were located in German-speaking regions in the canton of Bern and Solothurn, which had unemployment rates of 1.8% and 2.3% in 2008 (SECO 2022). The fifth manufacturing plant was located in the French-speaking region of Geneva, that had a higher unemployment rate of 5.7% in 2008. A higher unemployment rate for the canton Geneva can be observed for the whole period between 2000 and 2020 (SECO 2022).

It is worth noting that the overall share of employment in the industrial sector of Switzerland decreased marginally during the financial crisis, before regaining its former level in 2011. None of the regions where manufacturing plants of our study were located,

Table 1 Overview of Plant Closure Modalities

	Product	Advance notification	Termination pay	Early retirement	District unemployment rate	Additional offers
Plant 1 Geneva	Machine tools	3 months	10 000 CHF, more depending on age and tenure	Available 3 years before retirement age	6.9%	Additional payment if workers had to move or commute 40 km more for a new job
Plant 2 Biel	Print	None	None	None	5.5%	Workers were not reimbursed for their overtime and lost shares of their retirement fund
Plant 3 Solothurn I	Chemicals	4 months	Based on age and tenure, 22 000 CHF for a 45-year-old worker with 20 years of tenure	Available 2 years before retirement age	3.3%	Additional payment if workers had to move or commute 30 km more for a new job
Plant 4 Bern	Printing machines	5–9 months	None	Available for workers aged 57 and above, generous	2.5–2.9%	Workers who found new but less well-paid jobs received additional payments to compensate the wage difference for 6–24 months
Plant 5 Solothurn II	Metal and plastic components	6 months	Based on age and tenure, 33 000 CHF for a 45-year-old worker with 20 years of tenure	Available for workers aged 58 and above, modest benefits	4.6–5.0%	Additional payment if workers had to move or commute longer distances for a new job

Source: Baumann (2016), own illustration.
Note: The district unemployment rate refers to the time of each specific plant closure.

however, experienced a noticeable decrease of employment (FSO 2022). Until 2011, Swiss workers were entitled to 70–80% of their former income in unemployment benefits for 24 months as long as they were previously employed for an equally long period.[1] The age of regular retirement in Switzerland was 65 years for men and 64 years for women at the time.

1 The rate amounted to 80% of workers' former income if they provided for one or several young children or had low wages (not more than 3797 Swiss francs per month).

Although unemployment benefits are standardized at the federal level, major differences in plant closure modalities existed between the five companies, for instance, the timing of advance notices and the presence and scope of social plans. Hence, part of the workers faced more favourable post-redundancy conditions than others. Three out of the five companies offered termination pay and four offered options for older workers to bridge the time until they could enter regular retirement with varying benefits. Only one of the plants shut down without prior notice, leaving those affected without termination pay or social plan and abrupt unemployment. The other four plants stopped their production sites with notices of 3 to 9 months, so that workers could start looking for re-employment opportunities in advance. Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of differences in plant closure modalities.

4 Data and Measures

4.1 Data

Our analysis is based on two tailor-made surveys that address the consequences of plant closure for industrial workers. A first survey was carried out in 2011, roughly two years after plant closure, followed by a second one in 2020, over ten years after the initial job loss. The public announcement of plant closures in the media at the time enabled the examination and selection process of eligible plants. The selection criteria restricted the sample to workers who experienced plant closure during the Great Recession and mid-sized companies from the manufacturing sector. Five out of ten eligible companies agreed to participate in the study and provided address lists as well as some basic information regarding their former workers. The workers of all five plants were invited via letters to the initial survey. Around 60% of the initial participants shared their email addresses to receive further information about the study and research outcomes. Consequently, we invited all displaced workers to the follow-up survey through postal mail, and when possible, also by email.

Both surveys asked participants to provide current and retrospective information about their pre-redundancy working and life conditions. The initial survey assessed information regarding individuals' pre-redundancy conditions through a conventional question-list design, whereas the follow-up survey combined a question-list design and life history calendar.

The exogenous nature of plant closures resolves the problem of endogeneity that social studies tend to face, as unobserved characteristics such as personality traits, engagement or motivation among workers are not responsible for their job loss (Brand 2015). A circumstance that also eliminates the dilemma of reverse causality: A decline of workers' subjective career success has to be interpreted as a result of job loss rather than a factor that led to plant closures, for instance.

Out of 1202 workers 745 individuals responded to the initial survey in 2011, which constitutes a response rate of 62%. More than a decade after plant closures, 337 former workers replied to our follow-up questionnaire. Out of the 1202 workers that experienced plant closures, 293 participants replied to both surveys, which equals 24% of all workers. The response rate of the follow-up survey compared to the initial survey 9 years earlier amounts to 45%. While the initial survey was conducted with self-administered pen and paper interviews (PAPI), computer-assisted self-interviews (CASI) were used for the follow-up survey.

4.2 Measures and Method

Our dependent variable is subjective career success. It reflects how industrial workers assess the impact of plant closure on their long-term subjective career success. The variable is measured with the following three items that we subsequently use as an additive scale: "About 12 years ago you experienced a mass layoff at [participant-specific former company's name]. Please rate how this event affected the following areas of your life: career, social status, financial situation." Participants provided responses on a 7-point scale, ranging from a very positive to a very negative impact, with the option to choose a neutral answer. Approximately 20% of workers indicated that the plant closure had no impact on their career trajectory or financial situation, while this proportion increased to around 50% for social status. While the majority of workers reported a negative impact on their career trajectories and social status, the situation was reversed concerning their financial well-being. Nevertheless, a considerable number of workers regarded the consequences of the mass layoff positively.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the three selected items is 0.83, which signifies a high internal consistency and justifies the creation of an additive scale that depicts workers' subjective career success a decade after plant closures. To facilitate the interpretation of the data, we transformed the dependent variable into a scale ranging from 0 to 100, where 0 indicates that the plant closure had a very negative impact on all three aspects, while 100 means that a worker experienced the plant closure as very positive regarding all three aspects. The mean value of subjective career success is 55 with a standard deviation of 22 across the sample.

We use the following independent variables: *Gender* (male/female), *age categories* referring to the time of plant closure (17–40, 41–54, 55–62, 63–65), *education categories* (no more than lower secondary education (compulsory school), upper secondary education (VET/Matura/higher vocational education/PET), and tertiary education (University/University of Applied Sciences)). Furthermore, we created a dummy variable for *occupational class* that separates blue-collar from white-collar workers – arguably the decisive hierarchical distinction within our manufacturing companies. Managers, professionals, technicians, and clerks are defined as white-collar workers and craft workers, plant and machine operators, assemblers, and elementary

jobholders as blue-collar workers. *Locus of control* was measured through a single question asking participants whether they believe that they can determine their own fate. In our analysis, 10 indicates complete self-determination and 0 that respondents believe to have no self-determination at all. By further adding a dummy variable for each of the five *companies*, we try to account for meso-level differences between workers such as the timing of advanced notices, social plans including early retirement options and termination payments as well as regional unemployment rates. Table A.1 in the appendix shows descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables.

We implemented weights to account for the attrition between the initial survey and the follow-up survey based on socio-demographic and acquired resource variables. Due to insufficient information provided by the companies, we were unable to assign weights to the initial sample of all 1202 workers. Missing values of our sample were logically imputed through available data of the life history calendar section of the follow-up survey or the initial survey if information was available. After this process, only 1 missing value for age and occupational class remained. Missings of socio-demographic and acquired resource variables from the initial survey were imputed through chained equations by the iterative chain equations command (ice) in Stata (Royston 2009).[2] The two missing values in our final sample were taken from the estimates of the imputed chained equation.

We mitigated systematic attrition concerns through inverse probability weighting, using logistic regression to estimate participation probabilities. The resulting weights were applied to rectify the underrepresentation of individuals expected to be particularly vulnerable to adverse long-term consequences following plant closure. The noteworthy shift in composition, from 59% blue-collar workers in the initial survey to 42% in the follow-up survey, underscores the importance of this adjustment. Furthermore, we observed a 7% decrease in participation among workers aged 55 to 62 and a 6% decline in individuals with compulsory education within our sample – groups we anticipated to be disproportionately impacted by plant closure. Distributions of gender, locus of control, and company affiliation remained largely stable across both survey waves.

5 Results

Our analysis is based on bivariate and multivariate linear regression models that assess whether socio-demographic attributes, acquired resources, the personality trait locus of control and company affiliation affect the assessment of subjective career success more than a decade after plant closure. Figure 1 shows bivariate results, which indicate variations in subjective career success across age, gender, education,

2 The proportion of missing values in the initial survey amounted to 2.3% for age, 3.4% for education and 1.8% for occupational class.

and occupational class. It reveals that workers between the age of 63 and 65 perceive the impact of plant closure on their subjective career success as the most positive on average, which may be due to an inclination to view early retirement as a satisfying end of their careers. Subsequently, we observe that 17- to 40-year-olds report the highest levels of subjective career success, which is only slightly lower for 41- to 54-year-olds. Conversely, workers aged 55 to 62 exhibit the lowest average levels of subjective career success. Furthermore, observe a small difference between women and men, and a larger confidence interval for women, which can at least partly be attributed to the comparatively small proportion of women in our sample. Regarding acquired resources, workers with upper secondary education, or a university degree appear to perceive the impact of plant closure on their subsequent career as less negative than workers with no more than compulsory education. However, the confidence interval for compulsory education is large, which suggests that former workers with compulsory education experienced the consequences of the plant closure quite differently. Blue- and white-collar workers show similar assessments regarding their subjective career success following plant closures.

Figure 1 Differences in the Assessment of Subjective Career Success (0–100%), Weighted (N = 268)

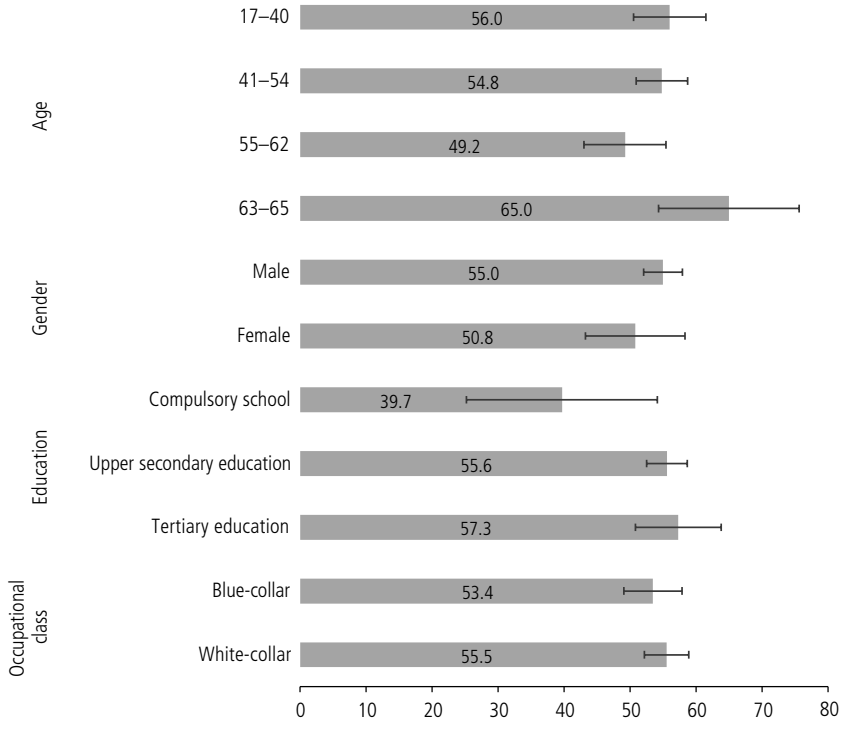

Figure 2 shows that the average assessment of subjective career success varies across age categories and between companies. Due to our limited sample size, we use age categories to visualise the results. The light blue area in the background represents the confidence interval across all plants. The high values for subjective career success for 63- to 65-year-olds across companies are consistent with our assumption that early retirement is predominantly seen as a positive outcome of mass redundancy. Only older workers of Plant 5 show a lower assessment of subjective career success compared to younger workers. Another striking observation is that the subjective career success of workers aged 55 to 62 in Plants 3 and 4 appears to be 15 to 20 points higher on average than in the other three plants.

Figure 2 Average Subjective Career Success (0–100%) Across Age Categories Divided by Company Affiliation, Weighted (N = 268)

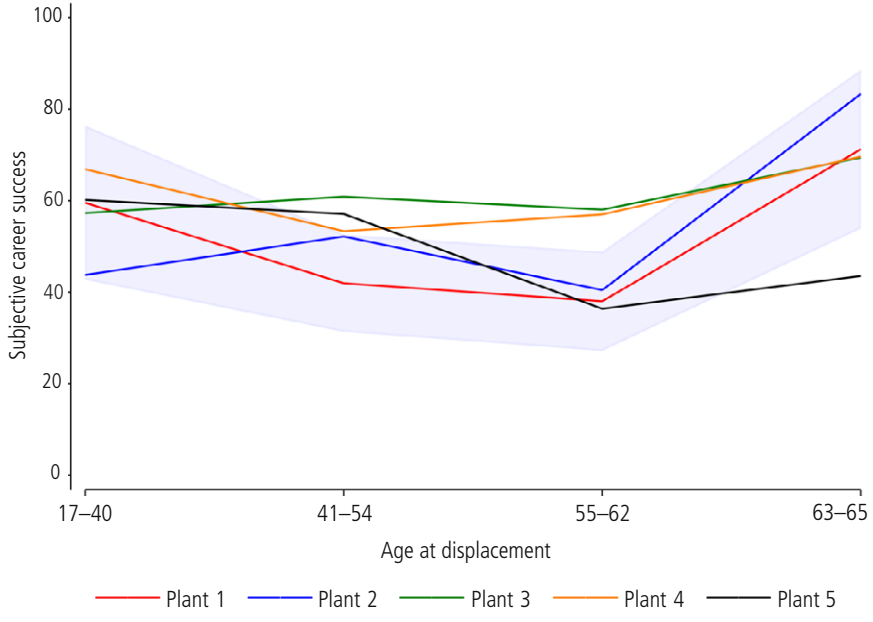

Table 2 depicts the results in more detail and shows four models, which compare how each factor influences workers' subjective career success. In what follows, we discuss findings for micro-level variables for each model and elaborate the meso-level impact of company affiliation at the end of this section.

The coefficients of model 1 indicate that former workers between the age of 17 to 54 assessed the consequences of mass redundancy on their subjective career success

similarly. Whereas those aged 55 to 62 evaluate their subjective career success on average as 6 points lower than 17- to 40-year-olds and 63- to 65-year-olds as 10 points higher. However, we do not observe a significant difference between the subjective career success of 17- to 40-year-old workers and workers of higher age categories.

Model 2 includes all socio-demographic attributes and acquired resources, namely age, sex, education, and occupational class. The association between age and subjective career success remains largely unchanged, besides a slight decrease of the coefficient for the oldest age category. Gender predicts a marginally higher assessment of subjective career success for men than for women by approximately 2 points without being statistically significant.

The coefficients of education predict a significant difference, indicating that subjective career success is on average 16 points higher for workers who had an upper secondary or tertiary education at the time of mass redundancy compared to workers with compulsory education. In contrast, we observe no tangible difference between blue- and white-collar workers.

Model 3 depicts the results of a linear regression that includes only one micro-level variable, the personality trait locus of control. A higher internal locus of control is associated with a more positive assessment of subjective career success following plant closure. Every second increase on a scale reaching from 0 to 10, signifies a 3 points higher assessment of subjective career success on average. Meaning that former workers who perceived themselves as completely self-determined at the time of plant closure, evaluate their subjective career success on average 16 points higher than those with the highest external locus of control.[3]

The final model 4 includes all independent variables and controls for company affiliation. It shows similar, often marginally smaller coefficients that are comparable to model 2. The difference between educational categories remains significant at the threshold of $p < 0.05$ for upper secondary education and $p < 0.10$ for tertiary education compared to compulsory education. While the coefficient of locus of control decreases marginally but remains significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

In addition to the analysis of individual factors, we performed a likelihood ratio test to examine whether company affiliation had a joint effect on the assessment of subjective career success. The test reveals that company affiliation has an impact on former workers' assessment [LR $chi^2(4) = 11.49$; $Prob > chi^2 = 0.02$]. Additionally, we tested whether the coefficients of two different companies are the same using F-tests. The coefficients differed at the threshold of $p < 0.10$ between

3 Corresponding to previous findings (Preuss and Hennecke 2018), we conducted a robustness check and ran the same analysis with comparable employment states for locus of control. This check was necessary because the authors observed a slight and temporary decrease in the otherwise stable locus of control during unemployment. Hence, we used values for locus of control from the initial survey if workers were employed or retired but values from the follow-up questionnaire when they were unemployed during the initial survey and employed or retired during the follow-up survey. The results are consistent.

Plant 1 and 3 [F(2, 255) = 2.35; Prob > F = 0.10], Plant 2 and 3 [F(1, 255) = 3.61; Prob > F = 0.06] and Plant 4 and 5 [F(2, 255) = 2.92; Prob > F = 0.06]. As well as at the threshold of $p < 0.05$ between Plant 1 and 4 [F(2, 255) = 3.94; Prob > F = 0.02], Plant 2 and 4 [F(1, 255) = 5.70; Prob > F = 0.02] and Plant 3 and 4 [F(2, 255) = 3.10; Prob > F = 0.05].

Table 2 Linear Regression Models of Subjective Career Success

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age (ref. 17–40)								
41–54	−0.54	3.87	−0.57	3.61			0.78	3.60
55–62	−5.98	4.70	−6.57	4.18			−5.49	4.14
63–65	10.14	6.32	7.66	6.22			8.56	6.64
Male			2.35	4.74			1.78	4.55
Education (ref. compulsory)								
Upper secondary			15.93*	6.84			14.40*	6.63
Tertiary			15.70*	7.69			14.29†	7.50
Blue-collar			0.70	3.11			1.55	3.01
Locus of control					1.64*	0.69	1.40*	0.66
Company (ref. Plant 2)								
Plant 1	−1.48	5.13	−2.37	5.26	−0.32	5.61	−0.75	5.39
Plant 3	11.40*	4.59	9.74*	4.50	9.79*	4.50	8.59†	4.51
Plant 4	11.44*	4.88	11.79*	4.66	9.67†	4.96	10.80*	4.52
Plant 5	4.13	5.55	4.51	5.25	5.92	5.41	4.97	5.18
Constant	48.73		32.79		38.63		25.44	
Adj. R^2		0.06		0.09		0.08		0.11

Note: †p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, weighted (N = 268), locus of control from initial survey.

Most of the variance of our linear regression models is explained by the personality trait locus of control (adjusted $R^2 = .08$ in bivariate analysis). The socio-demographic attributes age and gender do not add explanatory power to differences in subjective career success of laid off industrial workers and neither does occupational class. Only education, locus of control, and company affiliation explain some of the variance

that the impact of plant closure had on former worker's assessment regarding their subsequent subjective career success.

6 Discussion

The objective of this article was to determine which factors affect long-term subjective career success of industrial workers following plant closure. Given the extensive amount of literature regarding objective components of career success, such as the impact of layoffs on wages or promotions, we examined the role of workers' subjective satisfaction with their subsequent career instead. Our analysis provides four main findings:

First, socio-demographic attributes do not appear to impact industrial workers' assessment of their subjective career success more than a decade after plant closure. Although the coefficients of age categories indicate a more positive assessment of the consequences of plant closure for workers between the age of 63 and 65 compared to 17- to 54-year-olds, and a slightly lower one for those aged 55 to 62, no significant difference was found. The higher coefficient of subjective career success for workers aged 63 years and older is likely attributable to the fact that those workers perceived early retirement as a satisfying end for their careers and made use of it instead of embarking on the difficult task of finding suitable re-employment options. Men and women reported comparable levels of subjective career success, signifying that both were equally affected by the layoffs.

Second, acquired resources are partially associated with long-term subjective career success. Compulsory education seems to predict a more negative assessment of subjective career success following plant closure, however, the small number of workers in that category prevents us from drawing strong conclusions. Moreover, former workers with an upper secondary education and tertiary education assess the consequences of plant closures similarly, which contradicts our assumptions. The comparable evaluation of subjective career success between blue- and white-collar workers is likely explainable through a stable share of employment in the industrial sector before, during and after the Great Recession in Switzerland. Although, the process of automation and low employment growth is notable for the industrial sector worldwide, Switzerland was largely unaffected and maintained labour market and employment opportunities that allowed blue-collar workers to continue their career without changing professions.

Third, the personality trait locus of control, is associated with former workers' assessment of subjective career success following plant closure. The higher a worker's internal locus of control was and therefore the perception that they can influence outcomes in their lives, the more positive was their evaluation of subjective career

success. This finding is in line with our hypothesis and previous research results, which suggests that individuals' perception of agency and ability to influence outcomes in life can impact their behaviour, such as job search behaviour. However, the locus of control appears to be affected by periods of unemployment (Preuss and Hennecke 2018), which suggests a co-determined relationship between locus of control and the assessment of subjective career success after plant closure.

Fourth, company-related factors influence the perception of consequences associated with plant closures. However, we cannot determine which specific factors contribute to workers' subjective career success, because regional unemployment rates, timing of advanced notices, and social plans are intertwined. It is likely that workers aged 55 to 62 at Plant 4 reported a higher subjective career success on average due to early retirement options without significant pension losses starting from age 57. In contrast, workers at Plant 2 agreed to wage cuts a year before plant closure in an attempt to prevent it, but ultimately faced mass redundancy without advance notice or the opportunity to negotiate a social plan. This likely explains the comparatively negative assessment of the impact of plant closure on their subjective career success. Workers at Plant 1, located in the French-speaking canton of Geneva with the highest regional unemployment rate, may have had limited re-employment opportunities. Despite generous termination pay, language barriers could have prevented former workers from seeking jobs in the larger German-speaking part of Switzerland. In addition, it was the only plant that employed a notable proportion of cross-border workers before it closed. Therefore, French cross-border workers at Plant 1 may have faced even greater challenges in finding similar employment opportunities in France or nearby Swiss border regions. Due to the interconnectedness of factors at the meso-level, we can only make assumptions about what might lead to differences in the assessment of the impact that plant closure has on workers' long-term subjective career success. To shed light on the impact of these factors, future case studies on plant closures could benefit from mixed methods designs.

In terms of limitations, our data did not allow us to control for the existence of partners and their respective employment status at the time of plant closure. Coupled workers might take more time to look for suitable re-employment options if they have an economically active partner before entering the labour market again (Mazerolle and Singh 2004). However, cohabitation was also found to accelerate the re-employment process (Jacob and Kleinert 2014). Future research could therefore clarify if differences between relationship statuses and living arrangements influence the job search behaviour and long-term subjective career success of laid off workers.

Although we were able to analyse the consequences of mass redundancies for manufacturing workers during an economic crisis, our findings are not necessarily generalisable for other sectors. The share of employment in the industrial sector of Switzerland remained largely stable throughout and after the Great Recession, which

facilitated the re-employment process. However, this circumstance that does not necessarily hold true for other countries. Furthermore, we are limited to a rather small sample size and observed traces of response bias, which indicate that workers who perceived the plant closure more negatively were less likely to participate in the follow-up survey conducted in 2020. Consequently, the results of our analysis are likely to depict a more optimistic outlook on the impact of plant closures on workers' long-term subjective career success. To mitigate this issue, we applied weights to adjust our sample to the initial survey sample. However, we lack comprehensive information related to our baseline sample, which impedes us from providing weights that account for all 1 202 workers.

To conclude our findings, most displaced workers evaluated the consequences of plant closures on average as a neutral rather than a critical life event that did not influence their subjective career success substantially. Yet we observe a notable proportion of workers, who deviate towards a positive or negative assessment, without being able to predict their subjective career success through socio-demographic attributes. Education as an acquired resource and the personality trait locus of control are associated micro-level indicators of subjective career success after plant closure. Furthermore, we observed meso-level differences due to workers' company affiliation and differing plant closure modalities.

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Appendix

Table A.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Distribution of Variables of the Final Sample

		N	Percent or mean
Subjective career success		268	55.29
Age	17–40	74.31	27.73
	41–54	107.95	40.28
	55–62	69.37	25.89
	63–65	16.37	6.10
Sex	Women	44.55	16.62
	Men	223.45	83.38
Education	Compulsory education	26.43	9.86
	Upper secondary education	208.65	77.86
	Tertiary education	32.92	12.28
Occupational class	Blue-collar	159.89	59.66
	White-collar	108.11	40.34
Locus of control		268	5.93

Note: Weighted sample (N = 268).
Upper secondary education encompasses pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, Matura and higher vocational education. Tertiary education encompasses University and University of Applied Sciences.
Values for all independent variables correspond to 2011. Only the dependent variable subjective career success was assessed in 2020.

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Income Inequality Considering the Cost of Living. An Admin-Data Approach Studying the Swiss Case

Oliver Hümbelin*, Rudolf Farys**, Tina Richard* and Ben Jann**

Abstract: Cost of living is an important aspect of economic well-being, which is often neglected in inequality studies. Based on a Gini decomposition using admin data, this study estimates the relevance of minimum and average cost of living in Switzerland in relation to inequality and highlights the significance of direct taxes, everyday goods, housing, and health care premiums. Cost of living significantly increases disposable income inequality. Regional differences exist, which are primarily attributed to the design of welfare instruments.

Keywords: Cost of living, inequality, Switzerland, welfare state, admin data

Le coût de la vie et son impact sur l'inégalité des revenus. Une approche admin-data sur le cas de la Suisse

Résumé: Le coût de la vie est un aspect important du bien-être économique, qui est souvent négligé dans les études sur les inégalités. Basée sur une décomposition de Gini utilisant des données administratives, cette étude estime la pertinence du coût de la vie minimum et moyen en Suisse par rapport à l'inégalité et met en évidence l'importance des impôts directs, des biens de consommation courante, du logement et des primes de soins de santé. Le coût de la vie accroît sensiblement l'inégalité du revenu disponible. Toutefois, les différences régionales sont principalement attribuées à la conception des instruments de protection sociale.

Mots-clés: Coût de la vie, inégalité, Suisse, État providence, données administratives

Lebenshaltungskosten und deren Auswirkungen auf die Einkommensungleichheit. Eine Verteilungsanalyse unter Einbezug von Administrativdaten der Schweiz

Zusammenfassung: Lebenshaltungskosten sind ein wichtiger Faktor des wirtschaftlichen Wohlstands, der in Ungleichheitsstudien oft vernachlässigt wird. Auf der Grundlage einer Gini-Dekomposition unter Verwendung von Administrativdaten schätzt diese Studie die Relevanz der minimalen und durchschnittlichen Lebenshaltungskosten in der Schweiz aus einer Perspektive der Ungleichheit. Untersucht wird die Bedeutung von direkten Steuern, Gütern des täglichen Bedarfs, Wohnkosten und Krankenkassenprämien. Lebenshaltungskosten erhöhen die Ungleichheit des verfügbaren Einkommens signifikant. Regionale Unterschiede existieren, die in erster Linie auf die Ausgestaltung der Instrumente des Wohlfahrtsstaates zurückzuführen sind.

Schlüsselwörter: Lebenshaltungskosten, Ungleichheit, Schweiz, Sozialstaat, Administrativdaten

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1 Introduction[1]

Inequality studies usually focus on the distribution of income. The cost of living is often neglected, even though it is not incomes but the possibilities to consume that serve as the relevant benchmark for an economic welfare analysis (UN 2011; OECD 2013). Generally speaking, cost of living are living expenses of private households that are mandatory in a way as they are needed to make for a living. Expenditures for housing, health insurance premiums, direct taxes, and out-of-pocket expenses for daily necessities are regularly incurred costs that weigh heavily or lightly on household budgets, depending on a household's financial situation. While households have some leeway in how much they spend on living expenses like food, housing, or health insurance premiums, it is not possible to completely dispense with these costs. The cost of living is also linked to the place of residence. For instance, housing costs are strongly influenced by the regional housing market. Health insurance premiums, the system of premium reductions, and taxes also depend on the design of welfare state instruments. This might vary regionally, especially in strongly federal organized countries like Switzerland. Despite to the large number of studies on income inequality, little is known about the extent to which cost of living influences economic inequality. Against this background, our paper studies the importance of the cost of living from an inequality perspective by answering two research questions: How relevant are the costs of living for inequality analyses? How significant are regional differences in Switzerland?

The paper starts with an overview of existing studies in section 2, where it becomes evident that cost of living is an important component for inequality analysis. There are several studies that address specific issues but there are no studies that provide a holistic view from a distributional perspective. We, therefore, develop a procedure on how cost of living can be included in distributional analyses of inequality by introducing a minimal and an average cost of living scenario (section 3). Based on linked tax data of the year 2015 from six large Swiss cantons, which allow us to map the financial situation of about 45% of the Swiss working population, we assess the effects of the cost of living on the inequality of disposable income after cost of living is accounted for. More specifically, we quantify the effect of housing costs, health insurance premiums (including individual premium reductions), and direct taxes. We find strong increases in inequality of incomes comparing pre vs. post cost of living distributions between +10.9 (minimal) to +25.9 (average) Gini

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points. Elements in the design of welfare instruments like taxes and the premium reduction system slow down these mechanics but reinforce regional differences within Switzerland (see section 4). We conclude that cost of living is an extremely relevant topic from a perspective of inequality which should receive more attention in research and policy alike (see section 5).

2 Cost of Living in Inequality Studies

2.1 Change of Cost of Living Over Time and Differences Within Countries – International Review of the Literature

Lately, research on the evolution of economic inequality has received much attention in many countries (Chancel et al. 2021). Yet, few studies address the importance of the cost of living. There are studies that highlight the importance of the implications of changes in prices across time. Argente and Lee (2021) argue that neglecting the prices of specific goods leads to misperceptions in the assessment of consumption opportunities and income inequality. They support their argument with an analysis of consumption data in the US, based on which they calculate income-dependent price indices for the years 2004–2016. In doing so, they find that annual inflation varied significantly by income class and exacerbated inequality, particularly in the aftermath of the 2007 financial crisis. Albouy et al. (2016) examined how developments in the US housing market have affected housing costs in recent decades. They show that low-income households are disproportionately affected by this development. Moreover, with inflation rising sharply in 2022 (OECD 2022), questions about the burden on households have increasingly come to the fore. To this end, Handrich (2022) calculated the income-related burden of additional expenditures for Germany as a result of inflation in 2022 based on a statistical model. According to the analyses, inflation hits low-income households the hardest. Households in the lowest decile have to pay 5.3% more of their net household income to afford the same standard of living as in the previous year, assuming a moderate inflation trend. For high-income households, the increase is significantly lower at 1.1%. Kröger et al. (2022) come to similar conclusions. Based on energy expenditure data for Germany, the authors find that rising gas prices, as a result of the war in Ukraine, affect low-income households disproportionately more than socioeconomically strong groups, and this, therefore, exacerbates inequality.

Some studies also point to the importance of regional differences within a country. Azzoni and Servo (2002) analyse wage inequality in the 10 largest metropolitan regions of Brazil in the 1990s. They use nominal and real wage data that

reflect cost-of-living differences through regional price indices. Accounting for the cost of living leads to a reassessment of income inequality across regions. Surinov and Luppov (2021) also developed a procedure for measuring income inequality adjusted for regional purchasing power and show for Russia that this is associated with a more equal distribution of household incomes overall. Finally, Hillringhaus and Peichl (2010) criticize the omission of expenditures when assessing inequality and poverty in Germany. Their analysis incorporates regionally divergent costs of living and points out that previous analyses overestimate poverty rates for northern, eastern, and western Germany and underestimate them for southern Germany. Generally, they find a reduction in income inequality when the analysis accounts for regional prices.

2.2 Switzerland-specific Literature

For Switzerland, no studies are available that include the cost of living from an inequality perspective. However, various reports point to the specific costs that are expected to be associated with income-related burdens and indicate where changes have occurred in recent years.

In the "Distribution Report 2020," Lampart and Schüpbach (2020) examine the change in the burden of expenditure in Switzerland for the period between 2000 and 2019. They emphasize that despite increases in lower and middle wages, the distribution of income has become significantly more unequal due to sharp increases in top wages until the financial crisis in 2008. This unequal distribution is exacerbated by the marked increase in health insurance premiums, which have doubled on average over the past 20 years. The rising premium burden is increasingly less offset by premium reductions for lower and middle income households.

The variety of factors associated with regional differences within Switzerland can also be gleaned from studies by economists at Credit Suisse. Since 2006, they have regularly published an assessment of the financial attractiveness of housing in Switzerland's municipalities and cantons. They determine the freely disposable income of a middle-class household for each municipality and canton. Factors considered include the tax burden, health insurance premiums and premium reductions, location-based rent and real estate prices, family allowances, and commuting costs (Rühl et al. 2016). Unsurprisingly, the canton ranking reveals that rural cantons such as Uri and Glarus, characterized by low housing costs and minimal tax burdens, place the least strain on household budgets. In contrast, urban cantons like Geneva and Basel-Stadt are more expensive, primarily due to high housing costs. Schüpbach et al. (2021) further delineate differences by household type. Pronounced differences between cantons can be observed for families with children. These variations can be attributed to family allowances, contributions to childcare costs, and family-specific

tax regulations. In the family-specific intercantonal ranking, families live most favorably in the canton of Valais.

In a study on the cost of living in old age, Meuli and Knöpfel (2021) conclude that residence-specific factors are especially relevant for assessing inequality in old age. Among other considerations, they focus on financial inequalities related to care costs and find that disposable income depends not only on the initial financial situation of pensioners but also on location-specific fixed costs such as rents, health insurance premiums, and taxes. It is also influenced by regionally varying social transfers and care costs.

2.3 Research Gap and Contribution of the Present Study

Overall, previous research indicates that the cost of living is a relevant factor in inequality and that it can vary over time and across regions. Recently, inflation and rising energy prices have garnered increased attention, though studies based on current data are not yet widely available. Trends in the general housing market costs have also been explored. Overall, rising housing costs tend to exacerbate inequality because individuals with low incomes must allocate a larger share of their household budgets to housing. However, when regional living costs are considered in income inequality analyses, this typically results in a reduction in overall income inequality compared to an analysis that overlooks regional differences. This can be attributed to the fact that more expensive regions are often associated with both higher wages and higher living costs.

Furthermore, the discussed studies and reports for Switzerland are based either on a collection of aggregate data or on simulation calculations for sample households. Relevant cost factors can still be derived from these. At the same time – as a holistic perspective is missing – it is unclear to what extend living costs contribute to economic inequality and how relevant regional differences are. For a comprehensive classification, individual data on income distribution and information on cost of living is needed. Furthermore, data is needed that allows to capture relevant features of the regional heterogeneity within Switzerland. In a federal organized country like Switzerland, it is especially important to be able to address the situation at the cantonal level since key welfare instruments like direct taxes and health care premium reductions vary in design by canton, which plays a crucial part in the assessment of the post living cost income distribution.

To address these issues, we develop an analytical framework to be able to assess the importance of cost of living from an inequality perspective that takes regional differences into account by combing linked tax data with data on expenditures for daily needs as described in the following section.

3 Analytical Strategy, Data, and Methods

3.1 Distributional Analysis with Linked Tax Data

Tax data are a powerful source for mapping the financial situation of the population (Hümbelin and Farys 2016). Our data comprises six cantons out of the WiSiER data (Wanner 2019) that were further enriched as part of the SNSF-project "Inequality, poverty risks and the welfare state" (SNSF-project 178973) with data on direct taxes, health care premiums reduction payments, and other canton-specific benefits. This provides a reliable picture of the financial situation of all households, and it makes it possible to analyse the relevance of taxes and health care costs, as it is the aim of this study. Since the data is linked to several registers, it allows us to validly measure household incomes. Additionally, the data can be used to determine the municipality of residence of each household, enabling us to incorporate regional differences in the analysis. We use data for the cantons of Aargau (AG), Bern (BE), Geneva (GE), Lucerne (LU), St. Gallen (SG), and Valais (VS) for the year 2015 which is the latest year at hand. The data cover parts of both German- and French-speaking Switzerland. Our analyses are based on permanent residents in private households. We further restrict the data to the working-age population and their children and describe the financial situation for 3 079 340 individuals which represents 45% of the population below the age of 65 (as of 2015). We use the OECD equivalence scaling for household incomes (for more details regarding the data preparation see Hümbelin et al. 2023a).

To examine the relevance of living costs from an inequality perspective validly, it is necessary to comprehensively map all incomes. We include market income from (self)-employment and assets recorded in the tax data, all taxable social security benefits, private transfers, and non-taxable means-tested benefits (such as social assistance, supplementary benefits, or individual premium reductions). We employ different income concepts for our analyses. The relevance of living costs is quantified by comparing the distribution of income before and after deducting living costs (disposable incomes). For some analyses, the population is divided by income class to highlight income-dependent effects. This classification uses income before means-tested benefits are added.

3.2 Analytical Strategy

To map cost items, we use official sources or rely directly on our data, aiming to cover the cost of living as comprehensively as possible. However, conceptually, it is not entirely clear how to account for cost of living in all cases. We thus implement two approaches to assess cost of living for daily needs and housing costs:

- *Minimum cost of living:* Following this approach, we determine how much households require to cover the minimum cost of living. This essentially adheres to the guidelines of the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS). These guidelines assess entitlement to social assistance and are often used for the definition of the poverty line for statistical purposes.
- *Average cost of living:* Another scenario captures the impact of the average cost of living on income distribution. For this, we draw from the average costs recorded in the national Household Budget Survey HBS, which offers detailed insights into expenses in Switzerland.

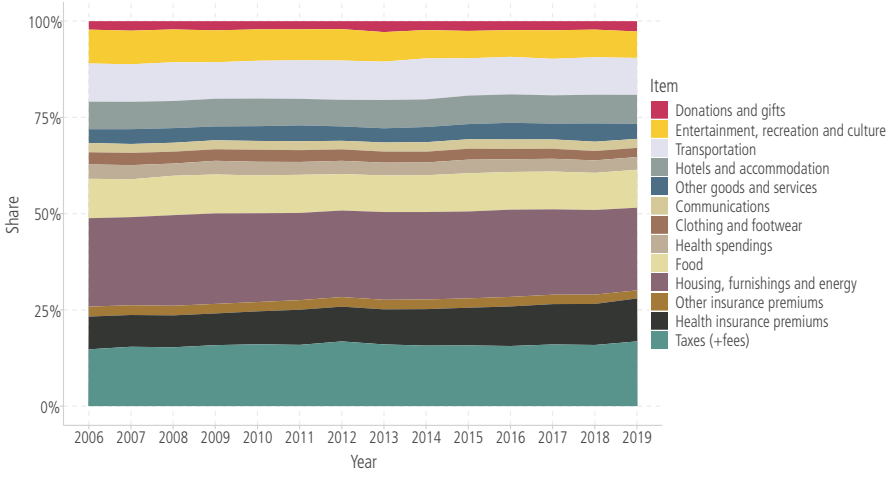
Once the cost of living is established, its effect on income distribution can be determined empirically using the following analytical techniques:

- *Aggregated effects:* We employ a method suggested by Reynolds and Smolensky (1977), commonly utilized in distributional studies (Caminada et al. 2019a; Causa and Hermansen 2020; Hümbelin et al. 2021b). This method relies on Gini coefficients as a measure of inequality. By contrasting the Gini coefficient of incomes before and after factoring in the cost of living, we can quantify the shift in inequality due to living costs. To gauge the significance of each cost component, differences are calculated by sequentially adding the items. Since the sequence of the inclusion influences the size of the effect, we evaluate all effects uniformly, comparing the income distribution after all transfer payments (prior to accounting for living costs) with an income distribution where each cost item is individually considered. This leads to a slight overestimation of the importance of the single components. To ensure individual effects aggregate to the case where all cost items are included simultaneously, all effect estimations are scaled proportionally.
- *Income-related effects:* The analysis is complemented by a calculation of the average burden of each cost item on household budgets along income deciles. This provides information on the extent to which households are burdened by the expenditures depending on their income position. Households are divided into income deciles based on income before means-tested benefits, as this income best reflects economic performance of a household. However, the burden on household budgets is calculated based on income after transfer payments, as this is the income available to households to cover the cost of living.
- *Regional differences:* In a final analytical step, we investigate the importance of regional differences. In federal Switzerland, these come especially to bear at the level of the cantons and the municipalities. They are particularly reflected in the different design of instruments such as cantonal and municipal taxes, but also in different costs of health insurance premiums and the models of individual premium reductions.

Cost of Living in Switzerland

The statistics from the Household Budget Survey can be consulted to illustrate expenditures in Switzerland. Figure 1 shows the cost items as they are listed in these statistics and how their composition has changed from 2006 to 2019.

Figure 1 Composition of Household Spending in Switzerland



Source: HBS statistics 2006–2019. We integrated 'Alcoholic beverages' into 'food', 'home furnishings' into 'housing', and 'energy, supplementary health insurance and mandatory premiums' into 'health insurance premiums', as well as 'fees' into 'taxes' to get a more compact view. Social security contributions are excluded.

Housing and energy costs are the largest expenditure items in the household budget, accounting for about a quarter of total expenditures. Overall, the share of housing and energy costs has remained constant since 2006. However, when housing and energy costs are broken down into costs for renters and costs for homeowners, it becomes apparent that costs for homeowners have fallen significantly due to low mortgage rates, while rents have risen (Schärrer et al. 2022).

Taxes represent the second-highest expenditure share. On average, expenditures for taxes and fees burden household budgets between 13–15% of total expenditures. However, the tax burden varies greatly by income class (as well as by canton and municipality) since it is highly progressive. In recent decades, tax rates have been adjusted. For instance, since the 1980s, taxes have been reduced much less for middle-income earners than for top-income earners, both at the federal and especially at the cantonal level. In some cantons, taxes on middle incomes even increased slightly from 2000 onward (including Aargau and St. Gallen). Tax reforms or reductions since the 1980s have predominantly benefited the upper income brackets, and their

incomes have also risen disproportionately. This has resulted in a weakening of the income tax progression (Lampart and Schüpbach 2020, 13–14).

Expenditure on health insurance premiums for basic insurance also accounts for a notably large share. The data indicates that the share of total expenditure has continuously increased since 2006. While the share of spending on premiums was 6% of total spending in 2006, it steadily rose to 8% in 2019. This trend is expected. Since the Health Insurance Act (KVG) was enacted in 1996, health insurance premiums have increased in tandem with the consistent growth in healthcare costs over the long term. The growth in premiums between 1996 and 2015 is substantial: While in 1996, the average monthly premium per capita in Switzerland was CHF 128, in 2015 the average monthly premium was CHF 274, representing a doubling in 20 years (BAG 2022).

Another group comprises numerous smaller expenditures. These consist of the most important consumer goods that form the so-called basket of goods (BFS LIK 2022). This includes everyday items such as food, clothing, expenditures for health, accommodation, transport, and culture.

According to the Household Budget Survey, in 2019 an average Swiss household was left with an income of CHF 1 232 per month at free disposal after covering all expenses described above. This "free" income is often described as savings amount (BFS 2022b).

For further analyses, we categorize the cost of living into four groups: 1) expenses for everyday necessities, 2) mandatory health insurance premiums, 3) housing costs, and 4) direct taxes. These encompass the primary cost items associated with the cost of living in Switzerland. Below, we explain how we determine their values for the analysis. Detailed information can be found in Hümbelin et al. (2023a).

Costs for Everyday Necessities

In the *"minimum" scenario*, we rely on the basic needs as defined by SKOS Guidelines. Accordingly, CHF 986 per month is available for a one-person household. The additional amount per person decreases for each additional person in the household, based on the SKOS equivalence scale. For instance, the basic need for two people is CHF 1 509. Such needs in social assistance are intended to cover all living expenses, but costs for housing and health under compulsory health insurance are covered separately (see below). Stutz et al. (2018) recently evaluated the level of basic needs in social assistance. They suggest that food expenses and actual transport costs are underestimated. They also note that the SKOS social assistance budget, grounded in general expenses, overlooks bottleneck situations like premiums for insurance policies that cannot be terminated immediately, rental costs that surpass guidelines, or taxes that are due. Stutz et al. (2018) state that there is little potential for savings in basic needs, which are largely fixed in nature, without accepting severe limitations, such as health risks.

For the *"average" scenario*, we use the empirical consumption expenditures of single-person households under the age of 65, excluding expenditures for housing costs and health insurance premiums. As per HBS statistics, the average expenditure for this type of household is CHF 2 057 (based on the 2015–2017 pooled evaluation from HBS). Using this as a reference, amounts for larger households are adjusted using the SKOS equivalence scale to ensure comparability with the minimum scenario. For instance, the amount for a two-person household is CHF 2 689.

According to the HBS, there are some variations between cantons regarding the cost of everyday goods (BFS 2021). Hence, we make minor regional adjustments in both scenarios for the cost of everyday goods, ranging from a factor of 0.95 (Bern and St. Gallen) to 1.01 (Aargau). In general, regional differences in the cost of living related to day-to-day goods in Switzerland are quite small. This observation aligns with the assessment of the Prices Section of the Federal Statistical Office, which maintains that regional price differences in Switzerland are negligible.

Housing Costs

The structural survey is large-scale survey that is part of the population census and the sole source with information on net rents paid in Switzerland (BFS 2024). It reveals regional differences in the housing market. Notably high rents are found in Geneva, while the cantons of Aargau and Lucerne closely align with the Swiss average. Since 2010, residents of the cantons of Bern, St. Gallen, and Valais have been paying rents below the average (BFS 2022a). The significant regional differences in rents can largely be attributed to economic activity. Rents are especially high in economically robust urban centers and their surrounding areas. This is evident in regions like greater Zurich, Geneva, the canton of Vaud, and the Basel area. In contrast, areas like the canton of Jura and the Neuchâtel regions of the southern Jura foothills, due to their weaker economic activity, typically exhibit below-average rent levels.

For our purposes, we utilized rental cost estimates from the structural survey, available in the linked tax data. We harnessed the information from approximately 191 000 observations (2011–2015 pooled dataset) to develop a statistical model that estimates typical rents for each municipality. The model leverages household size and the average income of each municipality to predict rents as recorded in the structural survey. Using the model's parameters, we then impute the local expected rent value for all households in the dataset. This allows us to gauge the typical housing costs for households, taking into account their place of residence and household size.[2] For the *"average" scenario*, we apply the mean estimated rent. For the *"minimum" scenario*, we use the 20th percentile, aligning with the premise that social assistance

2 The procedure introduces some endogeneity into the analysis, as housing costs are estimated based on income, which is then part of the analysis. An approach to remove the endogeneity would be to estimate the expected rent for a given household by omitting the data of that specific household from the computations (leave-one-out procedure). However, because incomes are aggregated by municipality, the endogeneity problem is negligible.

agencies set ceilings on the housing costs they cover. To determine the total rent cost, we add 20% to the net rent for additional expenses. By establishing this procedure, we address two issues. Firstly, we disentangle voluntary from involuntary costs, as housing costs are assessed against the local housing market and regardless of the effective costs that might be driven by individual preferences and random components of finding an affordable apartment. Secondly, we establish a common measure for both renters and homeowners.

Cost of Health Insurance Premiums

We use statistics from the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) to obtain the age-specific average premium burden for each municipality. In addition to individual factors such as age and the chosen deductible rate, the premium amount also depends on the place of residence. Insurers determine premiums for the upcoming year based on anticipated costs. In this context, insurers can set up to three different premium levels within a canton according to premium regions defined by the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA). Among the six cantons studied, the cantons of Bern (average CHF 374 per month) and Geneva (CHF 420 per month) have notably high expenditures for health insurance premiums. Costs are significantly lower in the cantons of Valais (CHF 301), Lucerne (CHF 313), Aargau (CHF 320), and St. Gallen (CHF 328). Broadly speaking, health insurance premiums are generally higher in Ticino and French-speaking Switzerland, especially when compared to central Switzerland, where the premium burden is comparatively low.

In the *"average" scenario*, we use the average cost as reported in the FOPH statistics. For the "minimum" scenario, we use the same values but apply a 10% discount per person, reflecting the expectation of social agencies for beneficiaries to choose lower-cost health insurances.

At the same time, the Swiss system offers targeted relief to insured individuals through *Individual Premium Reduction contributions* (IPR), which are implemented by the cantons. The cantons set specific eligibility requirements, decide on the reduction amounts, and establish the processes and payment modalities. We account for these canton-specific premium reductions by using the actual payout data from the cantonal authorities. While the number of eligible recipients has declined over the past 20 years, the support provided has risen. There are considerable cantonal differences: Berne offers benefits to a relatively large number of people, but at a lower level, while Geneva provides significantly higher payments. These discrepancies arise from varying subsidy system designs across cantons. Procedures for assessing entitlement also differ; some cantons automate the process using tax data, whereas others require annual applications. Access to IPR is inconsistent across cantons because of different information strategies and application procedures. Studies have shown that a considerable number of eligible individuals do not receive means-tested benefits like IPR. For instance, in Basel-Stadt, it is estimated that 19% of those eligible do not receive IPR (Hümbelin et al. 2021a).

Direct Taxes on Income and Wealth

Switzerland's federal structure is reflected in the distinct sovereign tax systems of its cantons. Additionally, municipalities can levy taxes within the bounds of cantonal authorizations. As a result, direct taxes in Switzerland are imposed by the federal government, cantons, and municipalities. The direct federal tax covers only income, whereas cantonal and municipal taxes encompass assets as well.

Cantonal tax rates differ significantly. Permissible tax deductions, such as those for children or single-parent families, also vary widely between cantons, potentially leading to uneven tax burdens across cantons. Another distinction is in the tax progression structure. Except for the cantons of Uri and Obwalden, all cantonal income tax rates are progressive, though the degree of progression varies among them (SSK CSI and ESTV 2021). The tax system profoundly influences income distribution (Hümbelin et al. 2021b; Hümbelin et al. 2021c; Hümbelin and Farys 2018).

To gauge the impact of direct taxes on income and wealth, we can – in both scenarios – refer directly to the actual tax amounts paid. A comparison of the available cantonal data reveals that, on average, residents in the cantons of Geneva (~24 500 CHF) and Bern (~14 400 CHF) pay more in taxes, whereas in the canton of Valais (~11 800 CHF) and Aargau (~11 400 CHF) lower average taxes are levied (see Hümbelin et al. 2023a).

4 Importance of the Cost of Living for Inequality of Disposable Incomes

To illustrate the significance of the cost of living on the income distribution, we present the income-related cost-of-living burden as a percentage of income after transfers, grouped by income deciles. These deciles divide households into ten equally sized groups based on their equivalized household income. The lowest-income group (1st decile) has an average income of CHF 21 350, while the middle group (5th decile) averages CHF 39 000. The highest-income group (10th decile) boasts an average income of CHF 132 150. In Figure 2 and Figure 4 the burden related to cost of living is displayed on the y-axis while the separation by income classes is shown on the x-axis. Therefore, it gets visible how much of their income the respective income classes must use to cover cost of living.

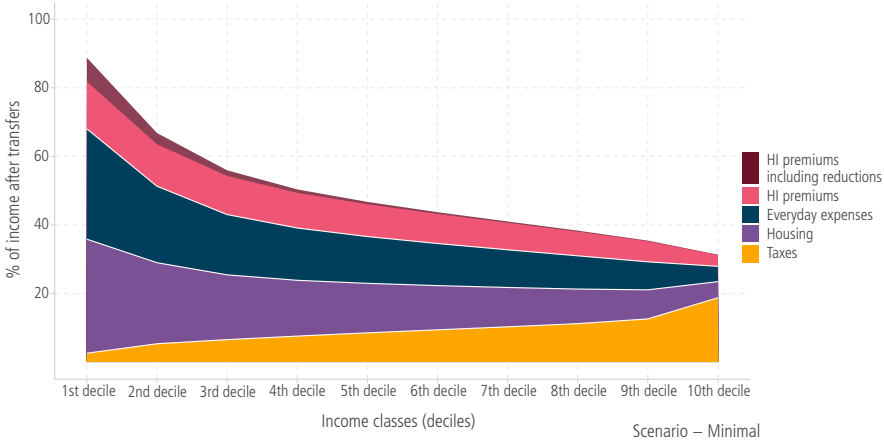
To highlight the influence of costs on income inequality, the Gini coefficient is calculated both before and after accounting for the cost of living (see Figure 3 and Figure 5).

4.1 Scenario – Minimum Expenses

In the *"minimum" scenario*, the impact of living costs is shown when a minimum standard of living is assumed. These minimum expenses are based on the absolute necessities in accordance with the social subsistence minimum as described in the

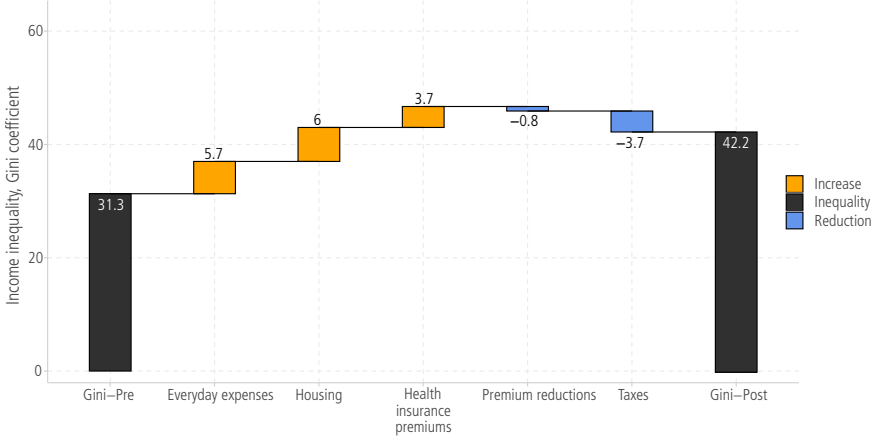
guidelines of the Swiss Conference for Social Assistance. This is true for everyday expenses, health insurances premiums (including reductions), and housing costs. Taxes are included as they are levied.

Figure 2 Burden of Minimal Living Costs on Household Incomes



Data: WiSiER-Data 2015 (AG, BE, LU, SG, VS, GE) linked with additional information, own calculations.
Note: HI (health insurance).

Figure 3 Effects of Minimal Cost of Living on Inequality of Disposable Incomes



Data: WiSiER-Data 2015 (AG, BE, LU, SG, VS, GE) linked with additional information, own calculations.

Figure 2 illustrates that the lowest-income 10% of the population are significantly burdened by essential outlays for daily necessities and housing costs. Roughly a third of their income is allocated to goods for daily needs, while another third covers minimal housing expenses. Although low-income groups are exempt from federal taxes, cantonal and municipal taxes sometimes do not have exemptions below the poverty line. As a result, even those with very low incomes incur tax obligations. In our analysis, the lowest-income group uses 3% of their income for taxes.

Health insurance premiums constitute approximately 21%, but mitigation by premium reductions results in a remaining burden of 14%. It is evident that this relief diminishes as income increases, though it extends into middle-income brackets. In total, the lowest income group utilizes about 82% of their post-transfer income for essential expenses. This is in line with the expectation since the minimum expenses are pegged to the subsistence minimum as defined by SKOS, which also informs the determination of social assistance payment amounts. Across the nation, roughly 3% of the population benefit from social assistance. The financial burden of minimum living expenses recedes as income grows. The top 10 percent income earners allocate about 31% of their income to these costs. Of this, taxes constitute the most substantial portion at 19% while regular expenses for daily necessities (4.5%), health insurance premiums (3%), and housing (4.5%) – aligned with minimal living standards – account for only 12% of post-transfer income.

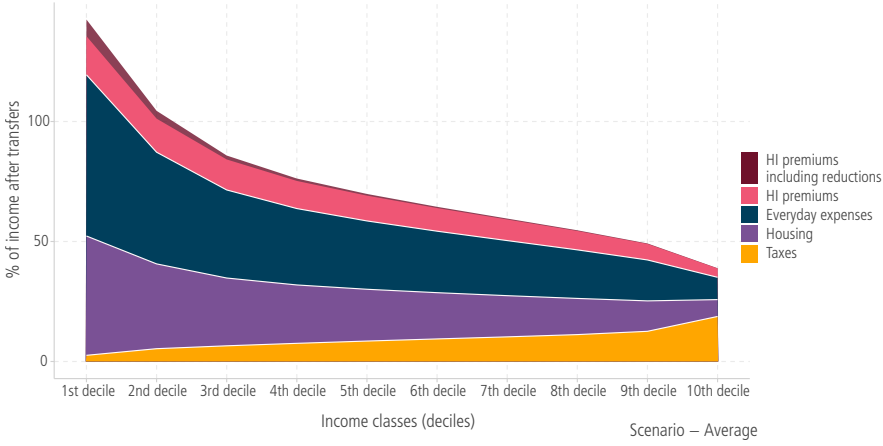
Incorporating living expenses results in a marked surge in the inequality of disposable incomes, as illustrated in Figure 3. The Gini coefficient jumps from 31.3 before factoring in these expenses to 42.2 after considering daily expenses, housing costs, and health insurance premiums. This corresponds to an increase in inequality of 34%.

4.2 Scenario – Average Expenses

The *"average" scenario* shows the effects on inequality of disposable incomes associated with an average standard of living. Cost respectively increases for everyday expenses, health insurance premiums, and housing (but not for taxes). In addition, the analysis shows to what extent average expenses can be borne depending on income class.

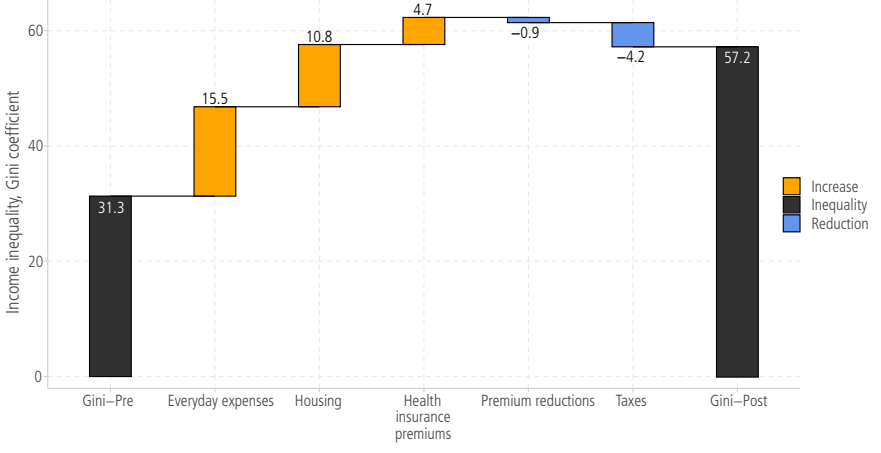
As depicted in Figure 4, assuming an average cost of living results in a generally higher burden for all income classes, with the burden decreasing as income increases. Up to the 90th percentile, all income classes allocate 50% or more of their income to cover basic needs. For the poorest 20% of income groups, the cost of living would surpass their income. For the lowest-income 10%, expenses exceed their income by 135%. Only the highest-income 10% group experiences a significantly reduced impact from the cost of living.

Figure 4 Burden of Average Living Costs on Household Incomes



Data: WiSiER-Data 2015 (AG, BE, LU, SG, VS, GE) linked with additional information, own calculations.
Note: HI (health insurance).

Figure 5 Effects of Average Cost of Living on Inequality of Disposable Incomes



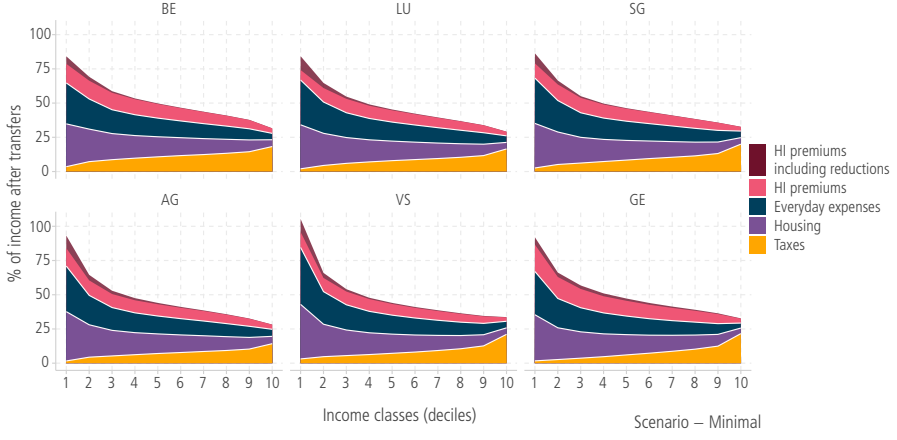
Data: WiSiER-Data 2015 (AG, BE, LU, SG, VS, GE) linked with additional information, own calculations.

In the average scenario, the Gini coefficients stand at 31.3 before costs and rise to 57.2 after costs (as shown in Figure 5), a difference of 25.9 Gini points (GP). This disparity is roughly double compared to the minimal scenario (+10.9 GP). As illustrated in Figure 5, everyday expenses contribute the most to the cost burden (+15.5 GP), followed by housing costs which add another 10.8 GP, and health insurance premiums adding 4.7 GP. The impact of the latter is slightly mitigated by premium reductions (–0.9 GP). Direct taxes play the most significant role in reducing the Gini coefficient (–4.2 GP).

4.3 Regional Differences

A final analytical step examines differences within Switzerland adopting the minimal cost of living approach. Figure 6 reveals similar overall patterns, but some cantonal differences become evident. People in the cantons of Valais and Geneva experience a somewhat more unequal burden. For the lowest-income group, the cost of living, especially housing costs, is challenging to manage. Variations in the effectiveness of welfare state measures are also apparent. In the canton of Lucerne, the lowest-income group benefits from highly targeted relief via premium reductions. The slightly elevated overall tax burden in the canton of Bern is notable. Meanwhile, in the canton of Geneva, the tax progression places a relatively heavier burden on the highest-income groups.

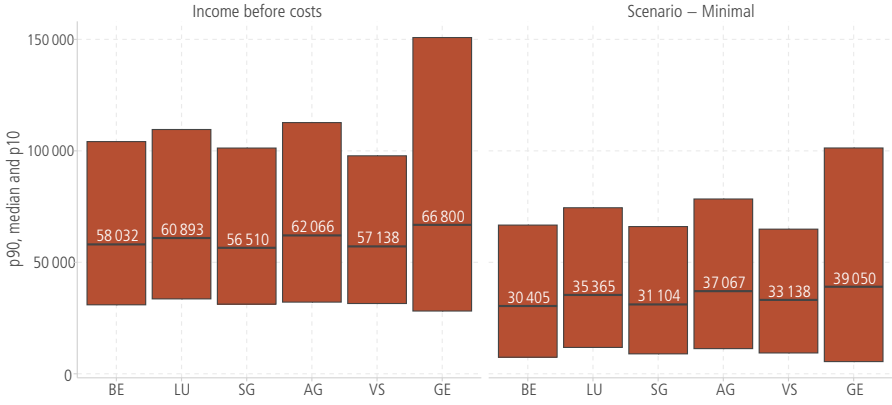
Figure 6 Cost-of-Living Burden on Household Incomes by Cantons



Data: WiSiER-Data 2015 (AG, BE, LU, SG, VS, GE) linked with additional information, own calculations.
Note: HI (health insurance).

The extent to which the respective income groups are burdened by living costs is on the one hand a consequence of the different costs incurred, but also of the existing incomes. Figure 7, therefore, shows the median income per canton before and after deduction of the cost of living. In addition, the limits of the 10% with the highest income (p90) and the 10% with the lowest income (p10) are shown, so that an impression of the income distribution per canton can be gained.

Figure 7 The Effect of Costs of Living on Disposable Incomes by Canton



Data: WiSiER-Data 2015 (AG, BE, LU, SG, VS, GE) linked with additional information, own calculations.
Note: Shown are median equivalized household income (p50) and 10th and 90th percentiles (p10 and p90).

In the canton of Geneva, incomes before the cost of living are the highest compared to other cantons, at CHF 66 800. The lowest incomes are in St. Gallen, at CHF 56 510. However, incomes in Geneva are also the most unevenly distributed. This is in part due to the fact that Geneva is an urban canton, and urban regions tend to have significantly more uneven income distributions. When accounting for living costs, the remaining incomes are generally lower. The shifts between the cantons, considering regionally varying living costs, are notable. Incomes decline more sharply in the cantons of Bern and Geneva, which face comparatively higher taxes and, particularly in Geneva, elevated housing costs. In relative terms, incomes decrease less in the cantons of Lucerne, St. Gallen, Aargau, and Valais.

After factoring in the minimal cost of living, median disposable incomes remain highest in Geneva. However, the poorest (p10) segment also has the lowest income there. Due to higher average costs, the median income in the canton of Bern becomes the lowest after accounting for living expenses. Overall, inequality between cantons slightly intensifies after considering the cost of living, by 1.9 Gini Points.

Table 1 Inequality Within Cantons Before and After Cost of Living

	Gini-Pre	Everday expenses	Housing	Health insurance	Premium reductions	Taxes	Gini-Post
BE	29.2	+6.0	+6.5	+4.1	−0.7	−3.1	42.0
LU	29.2	+5.4	+5.5	+3.1	−0.8	−3.3	39.1
SG	28.7	+6.1	+6.2	+3.5	−0.7	−4.1	39.8
AG	28.9	+4.5	+5.1	+3.1	−0.8	−2.5	38.3
VS	27.6	+5.9	+5.8	+3.0	−0.8	−3.9	37.6
GE	41.7	+5.7	+6.1	+4.8	−0.9	−6.1	51.3

Data: WiSiER-Data 2015 (AG, BE, LU, SG, VS, GE) linked with additional information, absolute change in Gini coefficient, own calculations.

As shown in Table 1, we measure higher Gini coefficients when costs are considered. The difference is most pronounced in Bern – especially with respect to housing costs – while it is lower in other cantons. Welfare instruments do reduce inequality to a smaller degree. The most variability between cantons is found for taxes, followed by health care premium support.

5 Conclusion

In this study, we assessed the importance of the cost of living to the inequality of disposable incomes. This is especially crucial in a wealthy but expensive country like Switzerland. It ranks as the most expensive country in Europe, with an average household expenditure that is 70% higher than the EU average (Eurostat 2022). This context also puts its generally high wages into perspective. Moreover, significant differences arise in housing costs based on the place of residence. For instance, cities such as Geneva and Zurich have consistently ranked among the world's most expensive cities, while living in peripheral areas is considerably cheaper. Additionally, due to Switzerland's federal structure, there are cantonal disparities. The assessment of direct taxes on income and assets, as well as the distribution of premium reductions – a welfare instrument designed specifically to reduce the burden of healthcare premiums – can vary widely within Switzerland.

Our analyses reveal that the cost of living substantially exacerbates inequality, whether one assumes a minimum necessary cost of living (+10.9 GP) or an average one (+25.9 GP). The main reason for this effect is the high costs for basic goods in Switzerland, which means that low incomes are disproportionately burdened compared to middle incomes and the affluent. Based on our calculations,

the lowest-income 10% of the population must allocate 82% of their income to minimum cost of living. If we consider an average cost of living for everyday expenses, housing, and healthcare premiums, 20% of the population would not be able to afford it. The average cost of living poses a relative burden of 70% to 50% for middle-income groups. In contrast, the incomes of the highest-earning group are impacted to a much lesser degree. While this segment pays a significant amount in taxes, expenditures on health insurance premiums, housing, and everyday items pose minimal concern for the wealthiest, which leaves up a large proportion of their income at free disposal that might be spent on luxury goods or used to accumulate wealth (which might also be a component that contributes to rising wealth inequality in Switzerland; see the world inequality database cited in Hümbelin et al. 2023b).

The most significant changes in the two scenarios studied relate to everyday expenses for food, clothing, mobility, and the like. While the assessment basis for social assistance provides only a lump sum of 986 CHF per month (for one person), Swiss citizens spend an average of 2 057 CHF per month. This indicates that the impoverished must manage with considerably less than the general population. It also emphasizes that the determination of the limit of absolute needs for daily living expenses is not trivial but can be derived solely more or less justifiable by theoretical or empirical means.

Regardless of our assumptions, the significance of housing costs is notable (+6 to 10.8 Gini points). Given the rising rents in recent decades, it becomes evident that compensation mechanisms for low-income earners should be increasingly implemented in this domain. An income-dependent evaluation of rental costs from the structural survey reveals that rents in the average to low-price segment show limited elasticity (seeTable 11 in Hümbelin et al. 2023a). From middle income classes downward, housing costs are comparable or only marginally lower. Additionally, the impact of housing might be even more pronounced since, for our simulation, we assume uniform residential situations across all income classes. The dynamics might differ if homeownership were considered. Nevertheless, a tax-data-based analysis on homeownership by income class reveals that merely 5% of the lowest-income group reside in self-owned housing (see Figure 14 in Hümbelin et al. 2023a). For the highest-income group, this percentage rises to 34%.

Inequality is marginally offset by premium reductions (−0.8 to −0.9 GP). As designed, these reductions alleviate the strain on the lowest-income groups. Yet, the inequality-augmenting aspect of health insurance premiums prevails (+3.7 to 4.7 GP) since, by design, mid to high income groups incur the same charges. The equalizing influence of progressive taxes is more pronounced (−3.7 to −4.2 GP) as the progression is more steeply structured. As those with higher incomes contribute more, the tax imposition fosters immediate economic equalization. Furthermore, taxes underpin public goods that benefit every societal layer. However, even though taxes do result in diminished income inequality, in comparison to the effects of other

living costs components, this impact remains relatively modest. It is worth mentioning that Switzerland's tax ratio stands below average at 21.4%, whereas the unweighted OECD average is 25.3%. Countries like Denmark (44.4%) and Sweden (34.3%) manifest particularly elevated tax rates. In comparative studies, Switzerland emerges as a nation with a relatively subdued inequality-mitigating influence through taxes. For instance, Caminada et al. (2019b, 130) observe: "In this country, it appears to be difficult levying redistributive taxes from the affluent and mobile persons. As a result, the amount of taxes paid by rich people is relatively low."

Our analyses further indicate that there are considerable differences among the cantons we studied, both in terms of income distribution and the cost of living. In the urban border canton of Geneva, the median equivalized household income stands highest at CHF 66 800. In the other cantons studied, the median income fluctuates between CHF 56 510 (St. Gallen) and CHF 62 066 (Aargau). In Geneva, however, the variations in income are notably larger, an observation partially attributable to the canton's urban nature. The cost of living is also markedly elevated, encompassing taxes, housing costs, and health insurance premiums. Taxes and health insurance premiums similarly peak in Bern. Nonetheless, based on the household budget survey, regional disparities in spending on everyday necessities remain minimal. When regional differences in the cost of living (covering everyday expenses, housing, health insurance premiums after accounting for reductions, and taxes) are incorporated, this initially translates into an escalation in income inequality between cantons (+1.9 GP) which is mainly caused by the different tax systems. While the analysis shows that regional differences in cost of living are partly influenced by the design of welfare instruments that differ by cantons, the variation within these cantons remains hidden. Further research could dwell in this direction by studying for example urban/rural differences and other regional mechanics that might affect regional differences within Switzerland.

We conclude with a reflection in which we highlight the limitations of our approach and emphasize the resulting need for further research. Conceptually, pinpointing how living costs should be integrated into an inequality evaluation poses challenges. One strategy entails leveraging detailed, regionally expansive consumption expenditures that can be aligned at the household tier, thereby facilitating an analysis centered on actual expenditures. However, such data sets are scarce internationally. Moreover, the efficacy of this method remains debatable since household expenditure on specific goods might oscillate based on individual preferences. In the realm of a distributional examination, it appears more pertinent to concentrate on indispensable expenses. The emphasis, therefore, shifts towards delineating the essentials for an adequate lifestyle. Defining "adequate," though, remains elusive. Hence, we opted for quantifying living expenses across two scenarios. Conceptually precise is the approach that utilizes the absolute minimum expenses, where the social subsistence threshold, as per the SKOS guidelines, provides a benchmark. To offer

a holistic perspective, the average scenarios illustrate the variance when operating with expenses exceeding the bare essentials but are still common.

In summation, our findings confirm that inequality metrics consistently amplify when one assesses an income distribution with subtracted costs for living, irrespective of the chosen scenario. The empirical evidence suggests that inequality studies should accord greater emphasis to the dimension of living costs.

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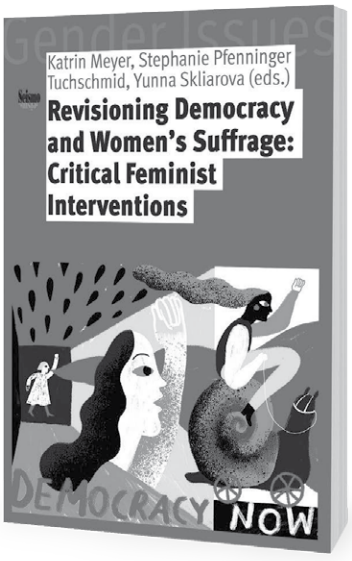

Katrin Meyer, Stephanie Pfenninger Tuchschmid, Yunna Skliarova (eds.)

Revisioning Democracy and Women's Suffrage: Critical Feminist Interventions

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This anthology addresses the current understanding of democracy from a feminist, intersectional and transnational perspective with a particular focus on the relevance of women's suffrage in Switzerland since 1971, and analyses challenges for women's political participation worldwide. It points to the significance of memory politics, political struggles and discourses on citizenship and human rights that shape democracies today. Furthermore, it examines how digitalization affects women's democratic participation, exploring both the opportunities it opens up and the barriers it may create, while also expanding the concept of democracy beyond traditional state institutions.

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Sustainability as Proper Investment: Organisational and Field Level Effects of Grand Challenges in the Case of Swiss Banking

Hannah Mormann* and Raimund Hasse*

Abstract: For business firms Grand Challenges (GCs) have become both a social expectation they must meet and a promising opportunity to make profits. Based on the insights of the organisation-society approach, we use the example of banks to show how social and ecological problems are translated into manageable objects and how this translation corresponds to changes at the field level. We identify new forms of collaboration, the emergence of new professionals, and the further trainings of established professionals as a promising research perspective.

Keywords: Sustainable investments, banks, field complexity, institutional theory, translation processes

La durabilité en tant qu'investissement approprié : effets des "Grand Challenges" sur l'organisation et le terrain dans le cas du secteur bancaire suisse

Résumé : Pour les entreprises, les "Grand Challenges" (GCs) sont devenus à la fois une attente sociale à laquelle elles répondent activement et une opportunité de réaliser des bénéfices. En partant de l'approche de la société organisationnelle, nous montrons pour les banques comment les problèmes sociaux et écologiques sont traduits en objets gérables et comment cette traduction correspond à des changements au niveau du terrain. Nous identifions de nouvelles formes de collaboration ainsi que l'émergence et la formation continue de professions comme une perspective de recherche prometteuse.

Mots-clés : Investissements durables, banques, complexité du terrain, théorie institutionnelle, processus de traduction

Nachhaltigkeit als passendes Investment: Organisatorische und feldspezifische Effekte von Grand Challenges am Beispiel Schweizer Banken

Zusammenfassung: Für Unternehmen sind Grand Challenges (GCs) sowohl zu einer gesellschaftlichen Erwartung geworden, der sie aktiv begegnen, als auch zur Möglichkeit, Gewinne zu erzielen. Ausgehend vom Organisationsgesellschafts-Ansatz zeigen wir für Banken auf, wie soziale und ökologische Probleme in handhabbare Objekte übersetzt werden und wie diese Übersetzung mit Veränderungen auf der Feldebene korrespondiert. Wir identifizieren neue Formen der Zusammenarbeit sowie die Entstehung und Weiterbildung von Professionen als vielversprechende Forschungsperspektive.

Schlüsselwörter: Nachhaltige Geldanlagen, Banken, Feldkomplexität, Institutionentheorie, Übersetzungsprozesse

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1 Introduction

Grand challenges (GCs) have become a trending topic in both societal and academic discourse (Tihanyi 2020; Gehman et al. 2022). Even organisation and management research has begun to address GCs, mainly by emphasising the interplay between GCs and business firms (Gümüşay et al. 2020). In these discussions, the argument often appears that GCs have become both a social expectation that should be met and a promising opportunity to make a profit. Against this background, we address the effects of the GCs discourse on organisations and fields.

A specific focus on organisational effects is crucial, because many believe that proper responses to sustainability and other so-called GCs require the involvement of business firms and other established organisations (Kaufmann and Danner-Schröder 2022). The hope is that these organisations substantially contribute to global responses to social and ecological problems and that business firms and other organisations can supplement, empower, or even replace efforts made by nation-states and individuals. In fact, many firms do not merely "talk a good game" on these issues but also reformed their formal structures, which increasingly signals compliance with social and ecological responsibilities (Etzion and Ferraro 2010). New positions and departments have been set up that focus on sustainability, annual reports and non-financial reportings cover the topic, and new professionals such as sustainability managers and consultants come on the scene (Ghadiri et al. 2015).

Nonetheless, concerns persist that these highly visible responses are nothing more than greenwashing (e. g., Schumacher 2022). In other words, reforms signalling compliance with GCs are mainly viewed as empty talk – or as public relations exercises aimed at giving the impression that companies are committed to the UN's now institutionalised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (e. g., Tricks 2022). The argument is that firms have no genuine desire to contribute to an endeavour that, for many of us, is clearly urgent and essential. Instead, they prefer to stay on the same track without losing their legitimacy – and thus only pretend to be concerned about social and ecological problems.

To some extent, organisation research supports this critical view. Significant evidence indicates that organisations tend to be rather adaptive with respect to communication and formal structures, but more inert regarding organisational practices and core activities (e. g., Meyer and Rowan 1977; Giuliani et al. 2017). However, scholars have questioned simplistic views about decoupling of formal structures and communication from practices and core activities (e. g., Sahlin and Wedlin 2008; Bromley and Powell 2012). Their main argument has been that, at least in the longer run, the institutionalisation of new formal structures either initiates a dynamic that cannot be stopped, or simply fails (Hallett and Ventresca 2006).

Even the authors who developed the thesis of a decoupling of formal structures from practices (Meyer and Rowan 1977) have modified their initial perspective.

In a critical reflection, Brian Rowan stated that due to new modes of auditing and evaluation (e. g., Power 1997), increased demands for transparency (Strathern 2000; Gibel and Nyfeler 2022), and competition, decoupling can no longer be maintained in the 21st century (Meyer and Rowan 2006). More recently, Patricia Bromley and John W. Meyer (2015) have also hinted at organisational changes that cannot be reduced to mere communication and impression management. They claim that organisations have become more sensitive to stakeholders and thus need to expand their purposes. Although notions of loose coupling still play a role here, the authors emphasise that organisations tend to incorporate norms and values regarding what it means to be "proper social actors" (Meyer and Bromley 2013, 366). As an unintended consequence, then, organisations extend their activities far beyond what may have been their genuine missions.

Against this theoretical background and with a particular focus on the sustainability objectives inscribed in the UN SDGs, we ask which changes can be observed when organisations get involved in social and ecological concerns. On the one hand, and in line with the controversy about decoupling, we are interested in impacts on organisational core activities. On the other hand, and in an extension of this controversy, we also consider that changes in organisational structures can potentially, have further effects – that these changes are related to changes in field structures at the societal level. Our twofold research question is thus: *How are societal expectations regarding ecological and social problems translated into core activities, and which dynamics at the societal level of fields correspond with these changes?*

Conceptually, we utilise insights from approaches that highlight translation processes (Czarniawska and Sévon 1996; 2005) as well as field approaches (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Wooten and Hoffman 2016) and core assumptions of the organisation-society approach (Arnold et al. 2021; Borraz 2022). On this basis, we develop a conceptual framework that assesses the role of organisations in the process of societal transformation realistically – that is, by neither overestimating nor underestimating their role (Arnold and Mormann 2019), by equally considering and comparing organisational changes and field dynamics (see also Ocasio 2023).

Our empirical focus is on high-status banks in Switzerland. Banks have profound effects on society (Carruthers 2011). What banks do and how they operate concerns classic sociological questions about inequality, for example, which is mediated and reinforced by unequal access to credit (e. g., Sunstein 1991). Furthermore, banks can also steer investment in specific directions and favour one industry over another (e. g., Shih 2008). This mediating function plays a central role in the current sustainability discourse regarding the financeability of sustainable development. We therefore chose banks, rather than production companies, as a starting point for studying organisational and field level changes.

Regarding empirical data for our case study, we refer to publicly available publications of the professional associations Swiss Banking and Swiss Sustainable

Finance (SSF) and of federal agencies (e. g. Federal Office for the Environment) as well as the sustainability and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reports of two major Swiss banks and one private bank.[1] In addition, we quote from two ethnographic interviews with so-called ultra-high net worth individual (UHNWI) advisors who are or were employed by these two banks and also have experience as client advisors in Swiss private banks.

The article is structured as follows: In the following section, we present the conceptual foundations of our study by combining the research literature on translation with research on societal fields and the organisation-society perspective (2). In the third section, we focus on the institutionalisation of GCs at the societal level (3.1), shed light on professional changes at the organisational level (3.2), and analyse increased field complexities inscribed in new relationships between banks and specialised service providers such as aggregators of so-called ESG company data and rating agencies (3.3). After summarising our empirical findings, we finally address a research perspective that, according to the analysed empirical case, seems to be neglected in current discussions on the transformative potential of GCs: the role of professionals as definers, interpreters, and utilisers of new circumstances at the organisational level and the emergence of new organisational relationships at the field level (4).

2 Conceptual Framing: Translation Chains in the Society of Organisations

To examine how organisations address and deal with social problems, research on translation processes can be used as a starting point. The fundamental notion of translation is that "to set something in a new place is to construct it anew" (Czarniawska and Sevón 2005, 8). Translation is conceptualised in organisational research as a complex negotiation process in which meanings, claims, and interests change and prevail. Linguistic aspects play a central role in this process, as the work of Mueller and Whittle in particular has shown (Mueller and Whittle 2011). Thus, an institutionalist research perspective suggests a closer analysis of language (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 82) – not only as a rhetorical strategy (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005), but also as a constitutive process (Zucker 1977; Zilber 2007; Hasse and Schmidt 2010). We therefore consider how the phrase "grand challenges" (GCs), which appears particularly frequently in the sustainability discourse, is utilised and which meaning the banking sector attributes to it.

Czarniawska and Sevón (2005) introduced the notion of translation as an alternative to the diffusion model in institutional theory (Strang and Soule 1998;

1 All SSF publications used in the paper, which are published by the Swiss Sustainable Finance Association in cooperation with the Center for Sustainable Finance & Private Wealth at the University of Zurich and other partners, can be found on the following website: https://www.sustainablefinance.ch/en/ssf-publications-_content---1--3037.html (accessed 05 January 2023).

Hasse and Passarge 2015). They also drew a sharp distinction with the notion of decoupling, mentioned above, that seemed to dominate neoinstitutionalist research after the programmatic contribution of Meyer and Rowan (1977). In contrast to decoupling, translation emphasises the circulation of ideas and practices as highly interactive and moving through various routes (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006).

Translation research examines in how and by whom ideas, concepts, and social problems are translated and edited (see Sahlin and Wedlin 2008). Czarniawska and Mouritsen (2009, 161) use the term "manageable objects" when describing how complex things and people are turned into separate objects: "When things to be managed are not objects or are complex objects, the managers turn them into new types of objects in order to make them manageable". Using the work of financial analysts and their investment advice for projects and start-ups as examples, the authors illustrate how manageable objects are constructed in translation chains. For example, analysts do not decide on a material technology, but on whether the technology enables development into a business in the first place. To do this, they seek the advice of experts, rely on market analyses, and tie their funding to conditions the project makers or start-ups must meet in implementing their business ideas. As Czarniawska and Mouritsen (2009, 163) summarise, "the technology-as-thing must be translated and become a proper object of investment".

We mainly consider this concept when we examine the role of organisations as agents of transformations towards sustainability. We can tackle the first part of our research question – *How are societal expectations regarding ecological and social problems translated into core activities?* – by mobilising the concept of manageable objects from translation research. To answer the second part of the research question – *Which dynamics at the societal level of fields correspond with these changes?* – we include insights from the sociology of fields and the organisation-society approach.

The starting point of the organisation-society approach is the succinct observation that organisations play a crucial role in practically all sectors of society. Social structure and change as well as the definition and handling of problems are systematically related to organisations and their practices and decision making (Arnold et al. 2021, 341). In contrast to the bulk of research in organisational sociology, this research perspective does not restrict itself to organisational effects of changes in the institutional or technological environment. Instead, it mainly focuses on interdependencies between an organisation's inner and outer life or on the dynamics between the organisational and field levels. As elaborated programmatically by Arnold et al. (2021), the classics of the organisation-society approach – such as Arthur Stinchcombe (1965), James Coleman (1986), and Charles Perrow (1989) – have shown that and how the emergence and proliferation of bureaucratic organisations have affected society. The new research front involves the extent to which new forms of organisation and organisational collaboration influence society (Arnold et al. 2021, 343). We are therefore interested in organisational changes triggered by social development and, at the same time, starting points for changes at the field level.

Our empirical investigation focuses, first, on individual banks and their translation of sustainability expectations into organisational changes regarding communication (e. g., public relations and marketing), formal structures (e. g., jobs and training programs), and practices (e. g., investment approaches). The second focus is inspired by the organisation-society approach. Here, the research interest is on the effects of the involvement of different organisations on the processing and transformation of societal problems and current challenges. We summarise the translation process in the context of sustainability and the role of organisations at the field level schematically as follows:

1. At the societal level, normative expectations addressed at organisations often originate in public discourses, in which experts and social movements create (awareness of) problems. In current society, most of these problems are interconnected and global (e. g. migration, poverty, climate change); they are concerns of a so-called world society which is characterised by a dense grid of international organisations (Boli and Thomas 1999). In this context, social and environmental problems are translated and institutionalised into feasible concepts.
2. At the organisational level, new organisational modes of communication and façade management are a likely response – and the more established and institutionalised the problem, the more likely it is that this reaction can be observed. This response can have (intended or non-intended) effects on organisational practices and core activities, even when different degrees of loose coupling remain and different pathways to changes in practices and core activities can be observed.
3. Organisational changes with respect to discourse, formal structure, and practice correspond to changes at field level. In our case, this includes changes in the requirements for the banking profession, such as advisory skills and regulatory knowledge, and the emergence of new third parties, such as rating agencies. This increase in complexity at the field level is reflected in new (competitive and collaborative) relationships among organisations.

3 Sustainable Investment: From Grand Challenges to Manageable Objects

3.1 Translating Social and Ecological Problems Into Feasible Concepts

Unlike related terms such as as "problem" or "uncertainty", "challenge" is not a key concept in social or organisational theory. Instead, it serves as an empirical indication of crucial societal concerns. Inequality, environmental pollution, and poverty, etc. are prototypes of current grand challenges (GCs). Unlike some authors in organisational and management research, we do not consider GCs as an analytical concept (see

Gehman et al. 2022) but discuss them as discourse material. That is, they provide information about major societal concerns and how organisations and society in general (should) deal with them.

GCs gained wider attention in the late 1980s in the context of U.S. science policy (Flink and Kaldewey 2018, 264). However, the concept's origins can be traced back – ideologically exceedingly unsuspiciously – to the mathematician David Hilbert (1862–1943). More than a century ago, Hilbert listed 23 problems that he believed would and should occupy mathematics in the coming decades (Hilbert 1902; see George et al. 2016). The idea of GCs was then pushed and mainstreamed by Bill Gates who echoed the Hilbert anecdote when he presented the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Health Initiative at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2003 (Howard-Grenville 2021). However, Gates was not at all interested in mathematical problems. Instead, he identified 14 GCs in addressing HIV/AIDS and malnutrition, and a lack of access to health care and adequate resources (Varmus et al. 2003). Since then, GCs have been institutionalised and codified. Climate change, gender inequality, environmental pollution, and poverty are prototypes of current GCs.

One ubiquitous list of GCs is the UN's list of so-called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (George et al. 2021). In September 2015, 193 UN member states adopted a specific set of goals under a sustainable development agenda. They defined 17 SDGs comprising 169 sub-goals to be achieved by 2030. From our point of view, the list of SDGs embodies a particular way of dealing with GCs, namely by suggesting that challenges mentioned above, such as climate change and gender inequality, are, in principle, manageable tasks and objects.

Compared with the descriptions of misery and suffering as, e. g., outlined by Pierre Bourdieu and many Marxist thinkers (Bourdieu and Accardo 1993), the underlying idea of GCs suggests a strikingly different image: it is more like a "sports event" during which we can get things done together. In principle, everyone is invited to participate, but GCs in the form of SDGs seem to be primarily for managers (and not for politicians and administrators, nor for scientists or representatives of social movements). For managers, then, GCs are not necessarily a threat. They can also be seen as an opportunity to enhance one's status as a world saviour or at least as a conqueror of new markets.

Linguistic analyses are fundamental for both the institutionalist research perspective (see Berger and Luckmann 1967; Hasse and Schmidt 2010; Hasse and Mormann 2017) and the discourse theory branch in translational research (e. g., Mueller and Whittle 2011). In linguistic terms, the use of the word challenges in sustainability discourse points to a twofold meaning:

Firstly, GCs can be viewed as a means of institutionalising social and ecological problems by translating them into constructive and workable formats, aiming to to turn complex problems into manageable objects (Czarniawska and Mouritsen

2009). The starting point of this translation process is the belief that GCs indicate non-particularistic and non-idiosyncratic concerns. The implication is that everyone, including organisations, must be concerned about these problems and help to tackle them. This means that banks, for example, are also addressed when it comes to contributing to the sustainable development of society – a remarkable turn of events for organisations identified not long ago as "catalysts of disaster" (Fligstein and Goldstein 2011).

Secondly, organisational responses to GCs can be categorised and measured in a way that allows the organisations themselves to be evaluated. This implies that any organisation can respond to these challenges using established management means, but their success may vary. One evaluation criterion assess the progress that has been achieved and that can be reported. A crucial feature of responses to GCs – such as the SDGs – is that they can be categorised and measured so that organisations can be evaluated. GCs thus have the potential to trigger besides competition other inter-organisational dynamics.

This double meaning of challenges proves instructive in interpreting recent developments in the Swiss banking sector in the context of sustainable investments. Section 3.2 focuses on the organisation-specific handling of challenges as we examine how individual banks turn the SDGs into manageable objects, leveraging or recycling existing knowledge assets and professional tools. Section 3.3 focuses on the second meaning of challenges, shedding light on the possibility of sustainability competition among banks and considering further inter-organisational dynamics.

3.2 Translational Effects on the Organisational Level: Upgrade From a Communication Mode to an Investment Criterion

The institutionalist argument that organisations adapt to societal expectations is underlined in our empirical material insofar as the interviewees emphasise that demand on the client side has led to an expansion in the supply of sustainable investments. Thus, professionals do not explain the growing offer of sustainable investments with a fundamental cultural change in organisations or regulatory aspects of banks, but simply with the increasing demand on the client side.

In the following, we work out the structural effects of the societal expectation regarding sustainability or, more concretely, the translational effects of the growing demand for sustainable investment opportunities at the organisational level of banks. The Swiss banks surveyed in this paper present the UN SDGs in their publicity materials (i.e., websites, client brochures, and annual reports) as an overarching framework that directs their activities. A client brochure published by a private bank it says, for example:

> *However, the SDGs were never intended as a framework for financial investments but are a set of environmental and social goals set by governmental*

> *and non-governmental organizations […]. We have developed an approach to make the SDGs investable in our equity and bond portfolios.* (Private bank, 2021 client brochure, p. 30)

One of the banks prominently states on its website that it is a founding member of the CEO Alliance on Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD). This is an alliance of 30 CEOs worldwide that aims to leverage the insights of private sector leaders to realise long-term investments in sustainable development in line with the SDGs. In recent years, many committees have been established on ESG topics, including climate, biodiversity, or social issues, such as diversity and education. These newly formed committees and initiatives encourage or invite companies to send company representatives, including board members. Companies sometimes interpret their mere membership in a sustainability-related committee as expertise and present it accordingly.

Banks seem to consider SDGs as an essential marketing topic for banks and often use them for presentation purposes. For example, portrayals of the organisation as a pioneer in implementing the SDGs can be found in all current annual and sustainability reports of the banks studied. Banks use this vital tool to signal their responsibility and commitment to sustainability to stakeholders. Beyond this representation, however, sustainability has recently become embedded in products and services. We view this as another step forward. We explore below the extent to which sustainability is no longer (just) a communication issue but is reinterpreted as an investment criterion.

Rebranding of Jobs and Upskilling

The rebranding of positions occurs when organisations (banks, consulting organisations, or companies in various industries) appoint someone from the existing management structure to be responsible for sustainability-related issues (Schumacher 2022). Also, the banks studied did not initially create new jobs, instead of changing job titles adding "ESG", "sustainability", "climate", or "environment". However, the surveyed banks also promoted or appointed a high-ranking "Chief Sustainability Officer", "Head of Sustainability", or "Head of ESG", who coordinates the organisation's sustainability-related activities with external stakeholders and service providers.

Furthermore, we can observe an extensive range of training courses on the subject of sustainability. However, bank employees seem to have made use of these mainly on a voluntary and private basis. In some cases, however, corresponding training measures are already part of professional target agreements, as participants in training courses on sustainable finance reported to us. Whether driven by increased demand from organisations or individuals seeking career opportunities, the amount of continuing education offered by financial or accounting institutions, banking associations, and business schools and universities on sustainability and ESG has grown immensely.

Interestingly, a recent survey of Swiss banks shows that the traditional banking industry feels well prepared to incorporate sustainability aspects into its practices (FOEN/SSF 2020, 23). According to the survey, traditional banking and finance education already provides a sufficient basis to meet demand. Thus, the respondents emphasised that the question of bank employees' labour market capability is primarily formulated in technological terms; that is, the task assessment is more oriented to technological change than sustainability. The perception is that digitisation will affect work processes, making current job or skill profiles obsolete. In terms of sustainability, on the other hand, respondents believe that advisors' technical expertise can be internalised. However, the requirements of regulatory developments are seen as necessary for the job profile of the traditional banker. Legal competencies are considered a challenge, especially concerning developments in the EU area.

In the SSF market study series cited above, the financial market players surveyed see client advisory services as one of the most critical potential obstacles to SI's further growth in the coming years. In the FOEN and SSF study mentioned above, Sustainability in Financial Education and Training in Switzerland. Analysis and Recommendations (2020) also primarily sees the need for education and training in sustainable finance as a frontline function of banks. The study explicitly recommends building "advisory competencies on sustainable financial products that enable them [bank employees] to anticipate sustainability and environmental preferences of their clients, advise them and serve them with appropriate financial services" (FOEN/SSF 2020, 12).

Established tools in banking play a central role in developing corresponding competencies. The following section explores how these are recycled and further developed in translation processes at the organisational level.

Recycling and Advancing Professional Tools

In organisational practices, the UN SDGs serve as comprehensive and open frame of reference, but there exist also established sector-specific goals and criteria. One of these involves the so-called ESG factors, which encompass most of what it means to be a proper and good finance organization. As noted above, ESG is the abbreviation for environmental, social, and governance. E factors relate to topics such as greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency, S factors to occupational safety, health protection, diversity and social commitment, and G factors to the company's management and control processes (see Table 1).

There is no universally applicable and complete list of ESG factors. Banks and other financial actors use different lists of criteria to evaluate financial assets. These lists are divided into ESG groups, subgroups, and individual factors. An indication of how each factor can be assessed and measured is provided. Within banks, corresponding lists with varying degrees of detail are used as a checklist in advisory meetings and/or as a pool of possible variables in different rating approaches.

Table 1 Selection of ESG Factors Based on a Publicly Available ESG List

Examples for environmental factors	Examples for social factors	Examples for governance factors
Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes of CO^2)	Relations with local communities (yes/no)	Integrity of conduct/conduct frameworks (yes/no) (Alignment with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights)
Emissions of air pollutants (tonnes of air pollutants)	Freedom of association and right to organise (yes/no)	Bribery and corruption (yes/no) (Compliance with United Nations Convention against Corruption; identification of insufficient actions taken to address breaches in procedures and standards of anti-corruption and anti-bribery; convictions and violations of anti-corruption and anti-bribery laws (number of cases and amount of fines); presence/lack of anti-corruption and anti-bribery policies
Emissions of water pollutants (tonnes of water pollutants)	Minimum age and child labour (yes/no)	Accountability/rule of law (yes/no) (Alignment with the Worldwide Governance Indicators [World Bank])
Fossil fuel sectors (% or total)	Equal representation (average ratio of female to male board members; average ratio of females to males in total workforce)	Internal controls and risk management policies and procedures (yes/no) (Alignment with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights)
Compliance with Paris Agreement targets (yes/no)	Workplace health and safety (rate of accidents; number of workdays lost to injuries, accidents, fatalities, and illness)	Discrimination (Gap between males and females or any other minority groups in the given region in education access and/or outcomes, representation in government positions and/or boards, salary income, etc.; lack of a diversity strategy in place (e. g. age, gender, minority groups); percentage of employees and individuals in governance bodies as per the various diversity categories defined in GRI standard 405-1.

Continuation of Table 1 on the next page.

Continuation of Table 1.

Examples for environmental factors	Examples for social factors	Examples for governance factors
Use of renewable sources of energy (% or total)	Contribution to human rights projects (Engagement in social projects aimed at supporting and advancing human rights issues in regions of concern; number of cases of severe human rights issues and incidents; presence/lack of processes and measures for preventing trafficking in human beings; presence/lack of human rights due diligence; presence/lack of a human rights policy)	Observance of disclosures, information rules and practices (Reliance on high quality, broadly recognised national, EU-based or international frameworks when preparing non-financial statements, including disclosure of the framework chosen; compliance with Non-Financial Reporting Directive)

Source: https://www.openriskmanual.org/wiki/List_of_ESG_Factors (accessed on 28.8.2023).

Considering ESG factors in financial investments is not a new phenomenon for the banking sector. Many investors and asset managers have already been considering listed topics into account in the fundamental and quantitative analysis of financial investments. These include not only societal trends such as population ageing but also an assessment of reputational risk and, in addition, regulatory developments have been incorporated into decisions. Recently, however, according to all respondents, relevant and material ESG issues have been considered much more systematically than in the past, when one or only a few factors were included only cursorily. One client advisor described the transition at the bank where he is employed as follows:

> *Overnight, [name of the bank] starts saying, "We are now sustainable". And then you have an increase like that. But nothing has happened. Then you put an ESG score over existing mandates, kick out the Malaysian arms producer and the palm oil farmer, and say you are sustainable. But you may only have changed your asset allocation by 5 percent. The 95 percent that was a normal portfolio before is now suddenly "sustainable" just because you put this ESG score on top of it.* (Interview quote with a UHNWI advisor who has worked in various large and private banks)

The transition to sustainable investments, which is reflected in the portfolio of the major bank, was only possible because the bank could draw on manageable objects (the "ESG score"). ESG factors play a central role in this translation process because banks use them to assess whether and to what extent an investment can be classified as "sustainable". However, the advisor offers a pithy example to clarify that this results in only minor changes in the portfolio: the bank no longer invests in companies from the weapons industry or producers of the controversial palm oil. He thus provides two examples of investments that currently meet with disdain in society.

In sum, a more comprehensive and systematic consideration of ESG factors in investment decisions and in advisory services for bank clients has led to the development of new categories and definitions in banks at the organisational level, but these are in constant flux. Nevertheless, in the case of the banks studied, the loose coupling between talking about sustainability and acting toward sustainability – in the sense of a concrete contribution to social transformation by the banking organisation – cannot be dismissed out of hand. Such an assumption also seems to be supported by the lax statements of the client advisor above. In our paper, however, we argue for a closer look at decoupling scenarios and give attention to translational effects at both the organisational and field levels. For the latter, it seems worthwhile to look at the dissemination of financial products and sevices labelled as sustainable investments (SIs).

3.3 Translational Effects on the Field Level: Dissemination of Sustainable Investment

In Switzerland, analysts point to the steady growth of sustainable investments (SIs). Since 2018, the professional association Swiss Sustainable Finance (SSF) and a university centre for sustainable finance have jointly published an annual market report. In the market survey, financial market players (i. e., asset owners and asset managers) are asked about their investment decisions. In 2017, the volume of SI was CHF 390.6 billion, rising to CHF 1.1 trillion in 2019 and CHF 1.9 trillion in 2021. In the following, we want to shed light on the proliferation of sustainable financial products and services. In doing so, we analyse how sustainability is *translated* in the different underlying investment approaches.

A few years ago, sustainable financial investments were a niche product mainly offered by specialiced banks (e. g., Alternative Bank Switzerland) (see, for instance, Lenz and Neckel 2019 for the German financial market). Today, however, sustainability seems to have gone mainstream in the financial market. The consideration of sustainability as an investment criteria did not emerge and spread as an exogenous factor out of the blue. Instead, it is based on the rebranding banking activities and the further development of existing investing approaches.

To explain the impressive growth rates mentioned above, the market study's authors point to a broader acceptance of SI approaches and a generally positive market development. In 2021, SI mandates recorded their highest growth rate of 109%. For the study authors, these results underline the anchoring of sustainable investments in Switzerland (SSF 2022, 6).

Opening the Black Box of Sustainable Investment Products and Services

We explore how sustainability is translated into financial products and services by looking closely at the different approaches. Table 2 provides an overview and briefly describes these.

Table 2 Overview of Different Sustainable Investment Approaches

Sustainable Investment Approach	Definition
ESG Engagement	Activity performed by shareholders with the goal of convincing management to take account of *ESG criteria* so as to improve ESG performance and reduce risks.
ESG Voting	Refers to investors addressing concerns of *ESG issues* by actively exercising their voting rights based on *ESG principles* or an *ESG policy*.
Exclusions	Excludes companies, countries or other issuers based on activities considered not investable. Exclusion criteria (based on norms and values) can refer to product categories (e. g., weapons, tobacco), activities (e. g., animal testing), or business practices (e. g., severe violation of human rights, corruption).
Norms-Based Screening	Screening of investments against minimum standards of business practice based on national or international standards and norms.
ESG Integration	The explicit inclusion by investors of *ESG risks and opportunities* into traditional financial analysis and investment decisions based on a systematic process and appropriate research resources.
Best-in-Class	Approach in which a company's *ESG performance* is compared with that of its peers based on a sustainability rating. All companies with a rating above a defined threshold are considered as investable.
Impact Investing	Investments intended to generate a measureable, beneficial social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. Impact investments can be made in both emerging and developed markets and target a range of returns from below-market to above-market rates, depending upon the circumstances.
Sustainable Thematic Investments	Investment in business contributing to sustainable solutions, both in environmental or social topics.

Source: SSF Market Study 2022, 13.

Notably, almost all approaches refer to the ESG construct (e. g. ESG principles, ESG criteria, ESG issues, ESG performance, or ESG risk and opportunities). As illustrated in Section 3.2, different criteria lists are subsumed under the ESG heading. However, it can be stated that ESG factors act as manageable objects regarding sustainability in the financial sector. In the following, we describe which cross-organisational relations are involved when we examine the participation of different organisations at the field level in creating and further processing manageable objects as ESG in the presentation of the different SI approaches.

SI approaches can be divided into two groups: pre- and post-investment decisions. ESG voting and ESG engagement are approaches to so-called *post-investment decisions*. These involve assessments and measures for investments that have already been made. They aim at active intervention – in Hirschman's words, "voice rather than exit" (Hirschman 1970). In organisational research, such approaches have recently been investigated under the heading *shareholder activism* (e. g. DesJardine

et al. 2023). The remaining six approaches play a central role in advising investors in advance of their investment decisions, so-called *pre-investment decisions*. Since this majority of sustainability approaches are crucial for resource allocation, we exclusively discuss these approaches. In our paper, we refer to SSF market studies in the period 2016–2021 (sources: SSF 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022).

In 2021, 73 percent of the total volume of sustainable investments implemented the *exclusions* approach. Exclusions mean that companies that permit child labour, produce weapons, or mine lignite, for example, are excluded from consideration as investments. They are evaluated as "non-investable" and can no longer be included in the portfolio. Exclusion criteria can relate to product categories (e. g., weapons, tobacco), activities (e. g., animal testing), or business practices (e. g., serious human rights violations, corruption). This approach is by no means new, but has been practised by banks since time immemorial. Lists of exclusion criteria vary from bank to bank and are related to each bank's in-house opinion ("Hausmeinung").

However, the exclusions approach vividly demonstrates the subjectivity and volatility of valuations in the context of sustainable investment decisions. As illustrated in the market studies, the proportion of exclusions varies from year to year. The growth of exclusions in 2021 was mainly because coal exclusions had doubled compared to the 2020 study. This continued the trend from the previous year, when coal moved up from tenth to fourth place on the list of frequently named exclusion criteria. The exclusion approach excludes investment in particular companies, industries, or countries on the rather vague basis of "values and norms". Since 2020, the criterion "very low ESG performance" has appeared on the list of exclusion criteria used by financial market players in Switzerland to make investment decisions.

According to *norms-based screening*, investments are screened for compliance with minimum standards of business practice based on national or international standards. In our case, the Swiss Association for Responsible Investment (SVVK-ASIR) has developed a specific screening approach based on standards. One of the most important standards against which portfolios are screened is the UN Global Compact. Furthermore, the ILO Conventions, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are mentioned as the basis for screening potential investments in companies. In contrast to the exclusions approach, screening involves a positive selection of potential investments and an explicit reference to standards set by international organisations.

The *ESG integration* approach entails incorporating ESG data when assessing the risks and opportunities of corporate success. In particular, risk management and risk reporting related to climate change play an important role for asset managers implementing ESG integration. The authors of the market study (SSF 2022, 57) attribute this to the fact that the risks associated with climate change have become more prominent in the public debate. Various methods are used to integrate ESG factors into financial analyses and investment decisions. These include, for example,

"ESG benchmarks" and the systematic consideration of "ESG research and analysis" in sustainability ratings and evaluations by external providers. When the interviewed advisors, presented in the excerpts in Section 3.2, talked about today's more systematic consideration of ESG criteria, they were primarily referring to the implementation of the SI approach *ESG integration*. In 2021, ESG integration was cited as the second most practised approach (behind the traditional *exclusions* approach) by the financial market players surveyed in the market study. (ESG Integration accounted for 67% of total sustainable investment volume; SSF 2022, 7).

Based on ESG ratings, the *best-in-class* approach compares a firm's ESG performance with that of its peers, either within the same sector, or across the entire investment universe. Companies or issuers with a rating above a certain threshold are considered investable; those below it are not. In best-in-class ratings, each bank defines its own peer groups and thresholds. This approach is a variant of ESG integration. The choice of peer group is critical to whether and to what extent an investment is considered sustainable.

In particular, the ESG integration approach and its variants, which have become mainstream in recent years (or as one interviewee said, "ESG integration is really nothing new. Banks have been doing it for years, more or less"), are essentially concerned with assessing the regulatory or reputational risks of companies arising from negative externalities (see Section 3.2). This approach's corporate focus or risk perspective is reflected in ratings that assess whether and to what extent ESG issues affect a company's profitability but not its positive or negative impact on climate change, gender equality, or health, for example. Therefore, ESG integration approaches have attracted accusations of greenwashing (e. g. Lashitew 2021).

Such accusations are less common for so-called impact investing and sustainable thematic investments. However, the prevalence of these two investment approaches is very low compared to the other SI approaches. *Impact investing* is designed to achieve a measurable, positive social and environmental impact in addition to financial returns. In theory, these returns can be below or above the market average, but in practice, most of the asset managers surveyed are not willing to accept financial returns that are below market returns in exchange for positive social or environmental impacts. In 2021, impact investing accounted for Switzerland's smallest share (5 %) of sustainably invested assets. The approach is strongly associated with asset classes such as private debt and equity, which are generally low in volume. It is almost exclusively used by asset managers as it requires specialised expertise and extensive resources.

Like impact investments, *sustainable thematic investment* is mainly used by asset managers (and not by asset owners). The top sustainable themes in 2021 were energy, followed by social themes (e. g., community development, health) and other environmental themes (e. g., water, cleantech). Overall, in 2021, sustainable thematic investments experienced the most significant growth of all approaches. A growth, the market study found, was driven primarily by large thematic asset providers.

The dissemination of SI approaches in the Swiss financial market shows that investments under the sustainability label have now become mainstream. This means that individual banks cannot differentiate themselves from the competition through ESG integration because most banks do practice such an investment approach. However, a differentiated picture emerges if one takes a closer look at the individual approaches. Only a small proportion of the total volume of sustainable investments in Switzerland is made based on criteria that can be considered sustainable impact. This means, then, that it is primarily the implementation of this approach that gives banks the opportunity to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

The sustainability assessment reflected in most of the SI approaches presented has so far focused on the risk of climate change and other ESG issues on financial investments and assets. The *impact perspective*, which assesses the effects of a company's economic activity on climate change, has been a much less considered ESG approach to date. Considering the risk *and* the impact perspective is often referred to as the "double materiality" approach, meaning that the material impacts on both financial assets and the Anthropocene are systematically included in investment decisions and the valuation of companies (for more on this, see Dittrich and Kob 2021).

The widespread approaches that are based on exclusions (of problematic economic activities) and ESG integration are examples of pre-investment approaches that require a standardised evaluation of a huge amount of corporate data. Consequently, new collaborations with specialists such as external data providers and rating agencies, have emerged. In the next section, we will illustrate the role of ESG rating agencies and translation effects at the field level.

Triggering Dynamics towards Field Complexity

Over time, the terms "SI" and "ESG investing" have become largely interchangeable. The demand for companies' ESG data, in turn, has spawned a variety of agencies offering such products (e. g., Abhayawansa and Tyagi 2021), and over 160 companies worldwide now specialise in ESG rating. These ratings increasingly influence decisions, with potentially far-reaching impacts on asset prices and corporate policy. Furthermore, a growing number of academic studies about the impact of sustainable finance rely on these ratings in their empirical analyses (e. g., Albuquerque et al. 2018).

The best-known ESG rating agencies include KLD, Sustainalytics, Moody's ESG (Vigeo-Eiris), S&P Global (RobecoSAM), Refinitiv (Asset4), and MSCI. These and other organisations promise to enable institutional and private investors to screen companies for their ESG performance, just as credit ratings reflect creditworthiness. However, essential differences exist between ESG ratings and conventional credit ratings. Firstly, creditworthiness is relatively clearly defined as the probability of default, whereas the definition of ESG performance is vaguer. Thus, interpreting what ESG performance means is an important part of the professional service provided by ESG rating agencies. Secondly, compared to the established

accounting standards, ESG reporting remains in its infancy. There are competing reporting standards for ESG disclosure, many of which are voluntary or limited to individual countries. This leaves companies with significant discretion over what they disclose in their annual reports. Therefore, ESG rating agencies refer to information they obtain from different sources, and their summaries must be based on different reporting standards. Both these differences help to explain why the divergence among ESG ratings is so much more pronounced than among credit ratings.

In a recent study, Berg et al. (2022) identify three causes for the sharp divergence among ratings: scope, measurement, and weighting. First, a divergence exist between different providers' ratings regarding scope. For example, rating agency A includes lobbying activities, while rating agency B does not. Second, rating agencies measure the same attribute with different indicators. For example, a company's labour practices may be assessed using employee turnover or, alternatively, the number of labour court cases filed against the firm. Third, weighting leads to divergence – namely, when rating agencies evaluate the relative importance of attributes differently. For example, the "labour practices" indicator may carry more weight in the final rating than the "lobbying" indicator (see Table 1 in Section 3.2).

References to external ratings seem to be an integral part of banks' sustainable investment activities. The existence of multiple rating agencies and their different ESG constructs leads to a high level of complexity for banks, which has to be managed at the organisational level in the form of coordination tasks. Furthermore, the possibility of being able to refer to different ratings offers a great deal of leeway (see Sauder and Espeland 2006, 220) which in our case means that bank advisors can strengthen their position as intermediaries who can choose between different ratings and, in doing so, reduce information costs for clients. However, this presupposes comprehensive expertise on the construction of ESG ratings. How banks as consumers respectively users of ratings react to the multiple ESG ratings and what response strategies they develop in detail is still an open question (see Pollock et al. 2021; Rindova et al. 2018).

The statements of the bank advisor quoted above in section 3.2.2 (e. g., "Then put an ESG score over existing mandates […]".) appear to support banks' strategic usage of ratings in the context of sustainability. Such *strategic conformity* (e. g., Oliver 1991; Suchman 1995) is identified in a growing body of work in CSR that focuses on "more proactive, value-creating responses to institutional pressures" (Pedersen and Gwozdz 2014, 249). According to this literature, individual organisations seek to reap the benefits of their engagement in the context of CSR (or sustainability) by looking for opportunities to go beyond institutionalised expectations (Damert and Baumgartner 2018). Similarly, individual banks could also endeavour to gain a comparative advantage over other banks by taking a differentiated (or even critical) approach with multiple ESG ratings and thus become a pioneer in sustainability and impact investing. Pollock et al. (2018), for example, also point this out when

they examine the emergence of cooperative relationships between organisations and rating agencies, which consists, for example, in the participatory design of criteria, weightings or data sources for ratings. In conclusion, however, it can be said that the growth of the market for sustainable investments in Switzerland is based on the (re)evaluation of financial assets, in which not only banks but above all rating agencies play a central role.

4 Summary and Discussion

Many banks – and Swiss high-status banks included – have begun to support the idea that business firms should consider social and ecological problems. They signal their compliance by adapting communication and formal structures to related expectations. These expectations originated from public discourses, in which experts and social movements have established (an awareness of) ecological and social problems.

Problems such as the negative consequences of climate change and social inequality, summarised under the sustainability label, have been institutionalised as grand challenges (GCs). Although there are concerns that GCs might not provide proper perspectives for organisation research (Seelos et al. 2023), we used the term "challenges" as a starting point to distinguish two related lines of empirical research whose interplay we consistently pursued in our paper: the question of how societal expectations regarding sustainability have stimulated changes at the organisational level of banks, and the question of changes at the societal level of fields.

By observing dynamics triggered by the translation of sustainability expectations we find effects that go beyond decoupling, greenwashing, and loose talk: On the one hand, organisations face internally the challenge that even merely signalling compliance with GCs requires organisational adaptation. New professional groups have entered the stage and new forms of collaboration between old and new professional roles in banking and between different organisational units (e. g. marketing, communications, product development, advisory services) emerge. On the other hand, translation processes at the field level are create new cooperative and competitive relationships around the topic of sustainability in the banking sector. We took a special look at the role of ESG rating agencies, which are essential in the development of the broad range of sustainable financial products and services (so-called SI investment approaches). In sociological research, rating agencies are regarded as "*the* relevant actors of financial market capitalism" (our emphasis; Matys 2023, 207), but the landscape and the leading players in the context of sustainable finance are constantly changing. For example, we can currently observe how the market for ESG ratings is consolidating, the further development of sustainable financial products is being strongly influenced by the setting of global standards and

the implementation of stricter anti-greenwashing guidelines, and legal regulatory attempts are being made.

According to our empirical findings, banks have accepted the challenge of contributing to sustainable social development. They have found a viable way to deal with this challenge by turning a complex problem (e. g., the consequences of climate change) into manageable objects. References to the UN SDGs and the matching of these goals with what the banking world had already been established as ESG goals can be seen as a prototypical example of the translation of social expectations into an economic context. In Switzerland, many banks and other organisations, such as rating agencies, are involved in this translation process. With this finding, we can confirm research on fields (e. g., Hoffman 2001; Hoffman and Ocasio 2001) and the organisation-society perspective, both of which focus attention on the active role of organisations in creating social change.

The example of Swiss banks also illustrates that organisations signal their commitment to sustainability not only by reforming formal structures and adapting their communication to social expectations, but also by developing new services and products that have created a new, exponentially growing market for sustainable investments. Further translations of sustainability into investment criteria occured due to a reinterpretation: factors such as climate change or demographic change, which were once reduced to general risk factors for companies and factored into investment decisions, are now systematically and comprehensively included. This reinterpretation, however, did not come out of the blue, but required the further development of established professional concepts and tools. With this finding, we can confirm research on translation processes that focuses on the translation and editing process on which the inscription of new environmental conditions into an organisation's existing structures and processes is based (see Sahlin and Wedlin 2008).

Regarding formal structures at the organisational level, shifts towards sustainability materialise as the rebranding of existing jobs and an increased demand for further qualification of employees. The latter indicates that banks think that the knowledge and expertise required to deal in with sustainability has not (yet) been built up – that they lack absorptive capacities to cope with new tasks. However, banks see the lack of knowledge and expertise less in terms of sustainability challenges (which would result in a demand for knowledge and expertise from the natural or social sciences) and more in the area of data processing and digitisation. This points to the central role of constructing manageable objects that can be inscribed in financial products – and, as illustrated by the example of aggregation and further processing of ESG data, the keyword "digitisation" also implies the possibility of the further processing of manageable objects.

As far as sustainable investment (SI) products are concerned, new categories have been invented and definitions are constantly in flux. Although sustainability is still mainly seen as a risk factor for a company and its investors, we now also find

approaches that evaluate an investment in terms of a company's impact on climate change, biodiversity, or health. SI approaches, such as impact investing or sustainable thematic funds, which require even more advisory expertise, can potentially initiate a status competition between banks based on environmental and social quality criteria. However, the observable field dynamics are currently limited to the emergence of new organisations, such as ESG rating agencies, and their interaction with banks to develop sustainable financial products and services collaboratively.

The "success story" of sustainable finance to date, measured in terms of the spread of sustainable financial products and services, is primarily due to the fact that risk avoidance and long-termism could be used as quality criteria for both sustainability and financial performance. This helped to turn a potential conflict between the economy and ecology into a win–win situation (Brandtner and Bromley 2022). Besio and Meyer (2022, 23) describe a similar case, using the example of energy cooperatives, as the recombination capacity of organisations.

Based on the combination of approaches that shed light on translation processes with insights from field research and core assumptions of the organisation-society approach, we have illuminated a transformation process which has led to the inscription of environmental and social criteria in financial products and services. This transformation is based on translation processes during which these criteria are operationalised as manageable objects. However, not only banks but a much broader range of organisations, experts, and authorities are involved in this process, including scientists, the UN, regulators, associations, consultants, and rating agencies. Organisational changes within banks are based on this transformation at the societal level of fields. However, banks cannot simply adapt to this process. They must change their formal structure, recruit new experts and professionals, and qualify their workforce in order to translate novel expectations and develop new products and services. We thus conclude that this interrelated change process at both the organisation and field levels triggers changes that profoundly affect organisations' core activities and practices.

Beyond this conclusion, our case also hints at the emergence of new professionals and further trainings of established professionals. Traditional bankers have not driven the turn towards sustainability, but rather, other professionals have entered the field, including communications specialists, data scientists, and sustainability consultants. These professionals, often working in academic institutions, think tanks, and rating agencies, developed the fundamentals that traditional bankers could utilise. Considering this observation, a fruitful research perspective would be to examine in more detail the extent to which various professionals play different roles in transformation processes.

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