

## **Research Plan: The Swiss Power Elite and Field of Power. Tensions between Elite Coordination and Differentiation since the 1950s**

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### **1. Summary**

This project starts from Savage's (2016) argument in *Nature* that elites can be seen either as a coordinated homogenous "class" or as a differentiated heterogeneous and conflictual group. It follows Savage & Nichols' (2018) call for a study of elites in a *historical perspective*. I rely on two competing and complementary theories: Mills' (1956) conceptualization of a homogenous *power elite* allows focusing on elites through organizational networks; Bourdieu's (1989) account of the *field of power* allows shedding light on elites through oppositions of capitals. There have been many socio-historical studies on Swiss elites during the last ten years, but none has focused on networks between elite groups, has tried to identify and analyse the characteristics of a cohesive power elite or has analysed capitals oppositions within the Swiss field of power. Such studies have been realised on other national cases (Denmark, Norway, France), but none has compared the evolution of these tensions *historically*.

This project focuses on the various transformations that Swiss elites witnessed since the 1950s and on the tensions between elite coordination and differentiation implied by these transformations. To do so I ask three research questions on how **(Q1)** the size, density and composition of Swiss elite networks have evolved; **(Q2)** the sociological profile of the Swiss power elite has changed; **(Q3)** the structure of the capitals in the Swiss field of power has transformed. I will compare historically the networks, power elite properties and capitals oppositions of economic, political, administrative and academic elites at four dates (1957, 1980, 2000, 2015).

Building on a Swiss biographical elite database with currently entries on 34'800 individuals I establish *first* a longitudinal analysis of these networks and look at the evolution of their structure. *Second* I identify the most central individuals within these different types of power institutions through a k-cores method developed by C. Ellersgaard and A. Larsen at the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) and investigate the profile of this power elite. *Third* I study the evolution of the Swiss field of power by running multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and class-specific MCA, of which Larsen and Ellersgaard are specialists. This study will be held in the frame of a close collaboration at the CBS with skilled methodologists who have published original studies in prestigious journals.

This collaboration will result in new theoretical perspectives on elite studies by focusing on concepts developed in the study of elite coordination and differentiation. It will also lead to reflexions on using innovative social network and geometrical methods in a more decentralised and internationalised case than Denmark. It will help strengthening collaboration between Swiss and Danish scholars working on elites and networks with the idea of connecting researchers on this topic at the European level. In particular our research will enhance the international visibility of the "Swiss elite database". More importantly it will allow an in-depth study of the relations between a small number of individuals who are probably the most influent in the whole Swiss society.

### **2.1. Current State of Research in Elite Studies**

In the prestigious journal *Nature* Savage (2016) argues that elites can be seen either as a coordinated homogenous "class" or as a differentiated heterogeneous and conflictual group. This project relies on two competing and complementary theories. The first states that elite groups coordinate through vast and complex organizational *networks* and at their helm lays a *power elite* who behaves as a coherent and interconnected group (Mills 1956). The second argues that elites are a very heterogeneous group, a *field of power*, within which individuals compete for *capitals* and specific stakes (Bourdieu 1989). This project

follows Savage & Nichols' (2018) call for a refined study of Mill's and Bourdieu's conceptions of elites, seen either as a homogenous or as a diversified group, in a *historical perspective*. Accumulating powerful resources takes time, sometimes generations, which makes necessary to study elites historically. The aim of this project is to work on Swiss economic (large corporations CEOs/board members), political (parliament/government members), administrative (high civil servants) and academic (university professors) elites since the 1950s, between coordination and differentiation/accumulation of diverse capitals.

#### *a. Defining Elites: The Power Elite and the Field of Power*

*Elites* are defined as “those who have vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource (...) [which] must have transferable value” (Khan 2012: 362). Working on elites leads to the question of whether the most powerful people are part of a coherent and cohesive “dominant class” which runs the most important institutions of a country and allows them to interact and to be involved in narrow networks. Mills (1956) speaks of a *power elite* in the US consisting of individuals who occupy key *positions* within the “institutional orders” of the society and take “important” decisions. They command within the three *higher circles* (the economy, the military and politics), forming a *triangle of power*. Economic, political and military elites are often interacting and sometimes the same people. They share similar psychological and moral values and the same *character* (Gerth & Mills 1953). Mills emphasizes how elites interact in networks, coordinate and form a homogeneous group at the top of the society.

Some researchers criticize Mills' argument saying that after the 1950s elites are increasingly differentiated, specialized and sectorial (Keller 1963; Dahl 1961; Aron 1965) and that elite relations are often characterised by an absence of direct coordination. Bourdieu, who comes from another school of thinking than these (liberal) thinkers, understands nonetheless the dominant group as polarized and sometimes profoundly heterogeneous. Bourdieu (2011) defines the *field of power* as the space of *positions* of the dominant individuals in terms of *capitals* (*i.e.* assets or resources) of every *field* (*i.e.* a more or less autonomous social “microcosm” with its own “stake” and specific capital; Savage & Silva 2014). It comprises the CEOs of the big firms, high civil servants, politicians, professors, *etc.* Its members can convert a capital into another and move from one field to another. Holders of *economic capital* (wealth) are opposed to holders of *cultural capital* (inherited or acquired intellectual qualifications) (Bourdieu 1989). This field is subject to internal conflicts, competition, formation of internal hierarchies (Savage & Nichols 2018) and accumulation of various opposing capitals (Savage, Warde & Devine 2005).

#### *b. Studying Elite Coordination through Networks Structure and Identification of a Power Elite*

Building on Mills' conceptualisation, some scholars study elite coordination through organizational networks. Elite networks have mainly been studied focusing on *economic elites* through *interlocking directorates* (Mizruchi 1982; Mintz & Schwartz 1985; Scott 1997). Nonetheless, accounts of economic elite networks structure can be applied to other elite groups. Interlocks occur when a person affiliated to the board of a corporation also sits on the board of another (Mizruchi 1996; Windolf 2002). Mizruchi (2013) argues that bankers are central, but this centrality tends to diminish during the recent period given the importance of financial markets over the traditional forms of bank financing. Consequently network density tends to decline (Heemskerk 2007). Useem (1984) identifies a cohesive segment, the *inner circle*, which is the most connected group and is very influential outside the corporate world in the US. Larsen & Ellersgaard (2018a) also identify this group in Europe. Recently a stronger importance of international ties is observed. Bühlmann, David & Mach (2012a, 2013), Timans (2015) and Timans & Heilbron (2018) stress the growing importance of a “cosmopolitan” capital (*i.e.* resources acquired outside a given country). The consequence would be a historical decline of the national interlocks density (David, Mach, Lüpold & Schnyder 2015).

Few scholars have considered elite networks outside the private sector and elite groups as coordinated. Bühlmann, David & Mach (2012b) show that the coordination between political and economic elites in Switzerland happens through personal

interchange (MPs in corporations board/CEOs at the Parliament) and interactions in meeting places (such as the Rotary Club or the Swiss Army). The most complete study on this subject is the work of Ellersgaard & Larsen (2015) and Larsen & Ellersgaard (2018b) within the large network of Danish institutions. They include a large portion of economic, political, administrative (as well as other groups of) elites. The link between individuals is the affiliation to the same power institution (the same board of a big corporation, administrative office, organisational committee, *etc.*). By identifying these ties they link several sectorial elite groups and account for multipositionality of elite members. They identify 423 individuals at the core of the network. They are the most central and represent the *power elite* (Larsen & Ellersgaard 2017). Half of them are part of the business elites, but they are also politicians, high-ranking civil servants, union leaders and scientists. They have a very homogeneous profile based on gender, class background, education and residential criteria. They know each other by means of educational institutions or place of residence which strengthens their cohesion and “class consciousness” (Ellersgaard 2015; Larsen 2015). Their focus on several elite groups is particularly interesting to me, but I will try to go further using Swiss elite data to investigate the historical evolution of the power elite at four moments in history.

### *c. Studying Elite Differentiation through Oppositions of Capitals*

Other scholars build on Bourdieu’s understanding of elites as opposed by various capitals detention. In Norway’s field of power three main oppositions are identified between the dominant: according to the volume of economic capital; the volume of educational and social (*i.e.* network relations) capitals; and between judicial and cultural positions (Hjellebrekke, Le Roux, Korsnes, Lebaron, Rosenlund & Rouanet 2007; Hjellebrekke & Korsnes 2009, 2013). These researchers identify a “core of the core” in the field by means of ascending hierarchical classification. When they compare this group to the rest they find that it is the most connected, by occupying positions in economic/political organisations and trade unions and that they have the highest rate of multipositionality between sectors (Denord, Hjellebrekke, Korsnes, Lebaron & Le Roux 2011). In France, Denord, Lagneau-Ymonet & Thine (2011) state that different fractions of the field of power oppose each other in terms of economic *vs.* cultural and political capitals, as well as in terms of social backgrounds, seniority and belonging to the “state nobility” (having been trained at the *ENA*). In a first attempt to reconcile Bourdieu with Mills, they identify, within the field of power, a power elite (*i.e.* the dominant in terms of capitals), formed by businessmen, trained in schools of power and who have the state under their control. However these studies do not take into account the historical narrative of the transformations of the field of power.

The aim of this project is to focus on the tensions between elite coordination and differentiation using Mills’ *power elite* concept through network analysis and Bourdieu’s account of a conflictual *field of power* through field analysis. To do so, Savage & Nichols’ (2017, 2018) and Savage (2015) conceptualization of elites as “constellations” is promising. They use the metaphor of a group of stars to emphasize the elites’ systemic unity as well as complexity and individual differences. In particular, temporal dynamics and capitals accumulation is central to their perspective. Accumulating resources takes time, often more than one generation, which makes necessary to study elites historically.

### *d. Transformations of Swiss Elites and Tensions between Coordination and Differentiation*

Several findings on Swiss elites show that they experience changes since the 1950s. Mach, David & Bühlmann (2011) and Mach, David, Ginalski & Bühlmann (2016) state that due to the financialization of the Swiss economy since the 1990s the *economic elites* have become more internationalized and diversified. The growing presence of foreigners in large firms leading positions and Swiss bankers’ loss of centrality have caused the decline of the Swiss business network. Bühlmann, David & Mach (2013) note that cosmopolitan capital has become much more important to access power positions. Araujo (2018) stresses that the banking sector in particular has undergone a thorough process of internationalisation. Rossier, Beetschen, Mach & Bühlmann (2015) underline that *academic elites* also share an increasingly international profile since the

1950s. Bühlmann, Benz, Mach & Rossier (2018) state that disciplinary groups such as law professors have lost extra-academic power and Rossier, Bühlmann & Mach (2017) and Mach (2002) show that economics professors occupy dominant positions within science, universities, the state and firms in the 2000s. Pilotti, Mach & Mazzoleni (2010) and Pilotti (2015, 2017) argue that there has been an increasing number of *political elites* with a university degree. The liberal professions (mostly lawyers) are widely represented as well as individuals linked to the private sector. Emery, Giauque & Rebmann (2014) note that *administrative elites* have experienced an increase in economics and management diplomas during the “new public management” wave of the 1990s. Finally comparing more recent findings to the classical study of Kriesi (1980) on power within the Swiss political system Fischer, Fischer & Sciarini (2009) show that members of political parties (and the Parliament) and of the economic and financial sectors in the higher administration have increased their power, meanwhile members of interest groups have lost influence (except for the major employers’ associations).

These changes are critical to understand historical tensions between elite coordination and differentiation. There was a traditional compromise between economic interest groups, political parties and the state administration (Kriesi 1980, 1998). These groups could *coordinate* by means of expert committees and parliamentary processes (Rebmann 2011; Mach 2015) or business associations (David, Ginalski, Mach & Rebmann 2009). These associations were powerful meanwhile unions were traditionally weak (Christiansen, Mach & Varone 2017). The “militia” system also facilitated multipositionality between politics and the economy. However elite coordination has changed. All of the aforementioned groups have progressively experienced a specialisation and sectorialisation process, which has made them less “close” to each other. Moreover recent transformations of the Swiss elites, in particular the internationalization of the profiles of economic and academic elites, have implied less coordination through these institutions (Bühlmann, Beetschen, David, Ginalski & Mach 2015, 2017). My objective is to focus on the consequences of these transformations on the tensions between elite coordination and differentiation through networks based on the affiliation to the same power institutions and oppositions of capitals between the 1950s and the recent period. I build on these studies on Swiss elites to systematize network and field analysis on all available groups of elites, which has not been explored so far.

## **2.2. Current State of Own Research**

In August 2013 I became part of an SNSF project team co-supervised by Felix Bühlmann and André Mach. My dissertation (Rossier 2017) investigated the affirmation and transformations of economics in Swiss universities, economists’ influence on the state and firms and their international ties. I obtained my PhD in June 2017. I am working since last October on a research project on the life course of French activists of the 1960s and I am affiliated to the NCCR LIVES to write a book to be submitted to Oxford University Press and several articles on that topic in collaboration with Olivier Fillieule.

I developed several skills in academia. First I learnt how to submit and publish articles in international journals. Four articles of mine have been already published/accepted (Rossier, Beetschen, Mach & Bühlmann 2015; Rossier, Bühlmann & Mach 2017; Bühlmann, Benz, Mach & Rossier 2017; Rossier & Bühlmann 2018), three as the first author and three in high-ranking international scientific journals: *Minerva* (impact factor of 1.4 in 2016), *European Journal of Sociology* and *Historical Social Research*. I have also two book chapters already published: Bühlmann, Rossier & Benz 2018 (edited by Routledge); Rossier 2018. I plan to submit several other articles and have various ongoing research collaborations (a comparative analysis of feminization of economists, a book project on economics power, a research project on scientific networks...), and in particular, I am about to submit an article to the journal *Sociology* as its sole author (March 2018) and the *Revue française de science politique* as first author (April 2018).

Since the beginning of my academic career I have attached great importance to the presentation of my research results. I was able to give more than 10 presentations in international conferences at prestigious universities: London School of Economics,

Central European University (Budapest), University of Manchester, University of Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne, Corvinus University of Budapest...

At the methodological level I went to several summer schools in order to learn new methods: social network analysis, multiple correspondence analysis, sequence analysis and linear and GLM regression models. I have become acquainted to the best specialists of these methods. Some of them have joined my PhD committee.

Finally I learnt to work independently on methodological and theorization issues, data analyses and writing. I also developed skills by working on a team: collaborating on data collection, data coding, management of our database and having interdisciplinary insights from the other members of the team (sociology, political science, history).

### **2.3. Detailed Research Plan**

#### *Research Objectives*

There has been a great deal of socio-historical research on Swiss elites during the last ten years, but none has focused on networks between elite groups or has tried to identify and analyse the characteristics of a cohesive power elite, as Ellersgaard and Larsen did for Danish elites in the 2000s. Moreover none has analysed capitals oppositions within the Swiss field of power through correspondence analysis methods, of which Ellersgaard and Larsen are specialists too. The *aim* of this project is to study the tensions between elite coordination and differentiation by unveiling the evolution of the structure of the Swiss elite networks and field of power. It will be carried out in close collaboration with C. Ellersgaard and A. Larsen at the CBS and responds to three research questions on: **(Q1)** how the structure and composition of Swiss elite networks has evolved; **(Q2)** how the power elite's properties and sociological profile have changed; **(Q3)** how the structure of the Swiss field of power according to capital oppositions has transformed. Thanks to the "Swiss elite database" I can complete the Danish team's input by providing a longitudinal perspective to focus on the impact of the elite transformations on the tensions between elite coordination and differentiation since the 1950s. I will focus on a historical comparison of the networks, power elite properties and capitals differentiation of economic, political, administrative and academic elites at four benchmarks (1957, 1980, 2000, 2015).

#### *Research Questions*

##### **Q1: How has the size, density and composition of the Swiss elite networks evolved?**

For this question I establish a comparison between elite networks through time and try looking at the evolution of their structure in terms of size, density and composition.

I make the hypothesis **(H1)** that since Swiss elites have become more globalized the largest components of the network will be less dense, looser and smaller at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I assume that given the particular internationality of the profile of economic elites and the fact that they are less close to the Swiss centres of power, economic elites (particularly bankers) will be less central since the 1980s. I also hypothesize for the same reasons that across the entire period foreigners will not occupy central positions. However it is still assumed that members of the business associations, MPs and members of the economic and financial sectors of the administration will be central. It is expected that individuals which bridge networks communities (of politics, of business, *etc.*) will be found in traditional places of sociability: expert committees, business associations or the Parliament.

##### **Q2: How has the sociological profile of the Swiss power elite evolved?**

Following Ellersgaard and Larsen's research strategy I will identify the most central individuals within different types of Swiss power institutions (corporations, business associations, Parliament, political parties, academic organisations, expert committees) through a particular type of social network analysis using a "k-cores" algorithm method (see below). Then I

investigate the composition of the Swiss power elite using descriptive indicators to unveil their sociological profile and compare historically the groups identified for the four cohorts.

I make the hypothesis (**H2**) that given Ellersgaard and Larsen's results the power elite will have a more homogenous profile in terms of gender, social background or education than the rest of the elites. A large proportion of men and people with university diplomas from disciplines and university programs that "count" (e.g. economics and law) are expected. People with business associations background might be more important than unionists. Given the marginal positions of foreigners in the networks I assume that they will only form a small proportion of this group. The percentage of economic elites within the Swiss power elite might be important until the 1980s, but after that might decrease. Academic elites being more internationalized might tendentially decrease at the same period. It is also likely that the power elite will be composed of more economists and less lawyers across time and that in general they will detain more university diplomas than before.

### **Q3: How has the structure of the Swiss field of power transformed according to capital oppositions?**

For this question I investigate historically the structure and composition of capitals in the Swiss field of power getting together the (political, economic, administrative and academic) elite groups.

I make the hypothesis (**H3**) that like in France or in Norway, there will be a strong opposition amongst elites according to their social backgrounds, volume of economic capital (wealth and power over firms), cultural capital (educational resources) and social capital (relations to other members of the elites). Since Switzerland is particularly prone to multipositionality (e.g. between economic and political elites), these kind of configurations should be a resource too. However, contrary to both these countries, in Switzerland internationality has become particularly important, so cosmopolitan capital should be a strong factor of opposition, mostly in the recent period. I also assume that given the progressive specialisation of elites, oppositions between elite groups must be stronger during the recent period.

#### *Data*

In order to answer these questions I rely on a prosopographical database, the "Swiss elite database" (developed by the Swiss Elite Observatory)<sup>1</sup>, currently with entries on 34'800 individuals. It was initiated by André Mach and Thomas David ten years ago and data were collected within four SNSF-funded projects since 2003. These data include extensive biographical information on Swiss elites (according to their power position in the higher Swiss circles) such as: gender, date and place of birth, profession, profession of the parents, political party membership, military rank, education (place and date of studies), name of the PhD supervisor, prizes and distinctions, research or other types of funding and information on the career, such as beginning and end of each career spell, professional function, institution and country.

To study Swiss elite networks (**Q1**) and the Swiss power elite (**Q2**) I will use Larsen and Ellersgaard's social network analysis method (who have worked with very similar data based on the positions in institutions of power), but I will take into account Swiss specificities. Indeed the Swiss political, academic and economic systems differ in numerous ways from the Danish. In particular Switzerland is a federal country, with several languages spoken. I will keep in mind those particularities when I establish the elite population for the four cohorts, also considering individuals having influence at the cantonal level. The four most important groups when looking at elite coordination in Switzerland are the economic, political, administrative and academic fields (Bühlmann, Beetschen, David, Ginalski & Mach 2017). According to the so called "positional approach" (Mills 1956; Lukes 2005), I define elites by occupying a high-ranking position in a powerful institution. *Political elites* are affiliated to the federal/cantonal government or parliament as well as major political parties. *Academic elites* are affiliated to the major academic organisations (SNSF, disciplinary academies of sciences, etc.). *Economic elites* are affiliated to the top

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.unil.ch/elitessuisses/>

110 Swiss corporations as well as major business associations and unions. *Administrative elites* are affiliated to the seven federal departments as well as extra-parliamentary commissions (*i.e.* expert committees). Two individuals affiliated to the same power institution will be tied in the network. The link in the network is therefore defined according to the interaction, acquaintance or recognition within the same institutional structure. To study the Swiss field of power (**Q3**) I will run correspondence analyses on the sociological properties of the four elite groups aforementioned to unveil their oppositions of capitals.

Table 1: Types of Elites, Institutions and Numbers for the four dates

Type	Institutions	1957	1980	2000	2015
Political	Federal Government, Parliament, executive committee of major political parties	267	290	283	255
	Cantonal governments	171	175	171	154
Academic	Executive committee of academic organisations, university vice-chancellors, faculty deans	165	295	282	316
Economic	CEO/board president of 110 largest corporations, executive committee of major business associations and unions	313	325	324	370
	Other board members of 110 largest corporations	700	784	723	759
Administrative	High-ranking civil servants	103	119	108	118
	Expert committees	1749	2766	1763	1536
<b>Total</b>		<b>2804</b>	<b>4090</b>	<b>3288</b>	<b>3307</b>

### Methods

*Social network analysis* (SNA) is a relational method which focuses on ties between individuals or organisations (Borgatti, Everett & Johnson 2013; Mercklé 2011). Graphically networks are represented in the form of “nodes” linked between each other through “edges”. Several indicators of size, density and cohesion of a network exist as well as the structural centrality of the nodes, *i.e.* their social importance in a given network (Godechot 2010). I will use SNA to study the composition, size and density of each of the elite networks at the four dates and compare them (**Q1**).

Larsen & Ellersgaard (2017) provide a methodology in order to identify a power elite. They use a two-mode network of diverse powerful Danish institutions and individuals that occupy top positions within them. In this network they use a weighting procedure to account for heterogeneity of the network (Larsen & Ellersgaard 2017: 58-59), which will help me to handle institutions with large numbers of individuals (*e.g.* expert committees). To identify a cohesive and central group they use a modified version of *k-cores* (Seidman 1983) on the largest component of the network. K-cores are central subcomponents within which all individuals have the highest possible number of internal ties. This method which is fully reproducible for other national contexts (Larsen & Ellersgaard 2017: 62) will allow me to work on **Q2** in order to identify the Swiss power elite for the four dates and compare the social properties of these four groups.

*Multiple correspondence analysis* (MCA) is a multivariate geometrical method summarizing a plurality of cross-tables. It is generally represented graphically through two clouds: a cloud of categories and a cloud of individuals. They are constructed based on the logic of two (or more) axes of oppositions. The more distant the individuals are the less common properties they share (Le Roux & Rouanet 2010; Lebaron & Le Roux 2015; Börjesson, Broady, Le Roux, Lidegran & Palme 2016). I will use MCA to study the Swiss field of power, taking the elite groups together and focusing on their oppositions of capitals. I can run four MCAs to compare the four periods, but I will most likely take all the four dates together and run a class-specific MCA (Hjellebrekke & Korsnes 2016), which allows comparing the intensity of each factor of opposition for each given subgroup (here the four cohorts) and compare them. Larsen and Ellersgaard are specialists of class-specific MCA and have written an R-package to run it (Larsen, Andrade & Ellersgaard 2012) (**Q3**).

## 2.4. Schedule and Milestones

Table 2: Project Schedule

Year	2018						2019											
Month	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Literature review	Q1	Q1	Q1				Q2	Q2	Q2				Q3	Q3	Q3			
Data coding and analysis	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q3	Q3	Q3	Q3	Q3	Q3
Writing			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1			Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2			Q3	Q3	Q3	Q3
Papers submission						Q1						Q2						Q3
Paper review									Q1						Q2			
Conferences			EAEPE Nice									AFS Lille		ESA Paris				
Meeting with other team				Lyon						Paris						Uppsala		
Preparation of other post-doc project											X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

I plan to write and submit three articles to high-ranking international peer-reviewed journals during my stay: in December 2018, June 2018 and December 2019. During the first phase of my project (July 2018-December 2018), I will code and analyse my networks data and write and submit the first article for **Q1**. During the second phase (January 2019-June 2019), I will work and submit the article for **Q2** and during the third (July 2019-December 2019) for **Q3**. Results will be presented in at least three conferences.

During this same period I have three stays abroad planned. 1) With Pierre Mercklé (Lyon) who is a recognized network analyst (see Mercklé 2011) to help me improve my analyses of the temporal network data. 2) With François Denord (Paris) who is a specialist of Mills (see Denord & Réau 2014) and who will guide me on theoretical issues regarding the power elite. 3) With Mikael Börjesson (Uppsala) who is a recognized specialist of correspondence analysis and was part of my PhD committee. In order to present intermediary results in joint workshops, discuss research matters, establish further research strategies and organize small data sessions to produce results together I will go to meet each researcher for one week in Lyon (October 2018), Paris (April 2019) and Uppsala (October 2019). These already existing collaborations will help my postdoc project since I will be able to discuss theory, methods and results with other specialists of SNA and MCA. Moreover they will help me strengthening other collaborations in order to implement other projects in the future.

Finally the last months of my stay in Copenhagen will be dedicated to preparing another postdoc opportunity, e.g. SNSF instruments such as another *Postdoctoral.Mobility* (August 2019 or February 2020).

## 2.5. Relevance of the Host Institution

According to the 2015 Shanghai Academic Ranking<sup>2</sup>, the CBS ranks within the top 100 of universities in social sciences (and within the top 15 of European universities). This good reputation at the international level as well as complete access to the university infrastructure promises to be a good research environment. More specifically I chose CBS and in particular the Danish elite team for the following four reasons.

*First* A. Larsen and C. Ellersgaard are scholars with experience in research and publishing. They have been able to publish papers in some of the best sociological journals in the world, the *Journal of Consumer Culture* (Järvinen, Ellersgaard & Larsen 2014), the *Socio-Economic Review* (Larsen & Ellersgaard 2018a), *Social Networks* (Larsen & Ellersgaard 2017) and *Sociology* (Ellersgaard, Larsen & Munk 2013; Toubøl & Larsen 2017), which rank (in the order) 4<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> in the

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.shanghairanking.com/fr/FieldSOC2015.html>



*Web of Science* journal ranking according to their 2016 impact factor for the category “sociology”<sup>3</sup>. They have experience in publishing in the best sociological journals and will be able to pass it on to me in order to get published in such prestigious journals.

*Second* they also are a very dynamic team working on several projects including networks and careers of the Danish power elite. Other researchers of the department are also involved in elite studies, for example Lasse Folke Henriksen who focuses on pathways to the elite as well as Leonard Seabroke who works on transnational elites. This intense research activity will without a doubt lead to more innovative papers within the field of elite studies in a near future. Moreover I will be able to participate in the weekly data and methods workshops as well as in the meetings of their research group. I will also participate in the several seminars and conferences of the Department of Business and Politics. This department also edits a working paper series for which I have been invited to write one or two papers.

*Third* the Danish team are skilled methodologists. They are specialists in using SNA, working on big data. Moreover their mastering of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is also important. They have written the R Package *soc.ca* for using MCA (Larsen, Andrade & Ellersgaard 2012). They will also be able to teach me their techniques of data retrieving from different internet sources (data “scrapping” and “crawling”) which will enable me to constitute huge databases and work with Big Data in the future.

*Fourth* the Danish team have experience in presenting their major results in the media. In 2015 they published a book on the Danish power elite where they presented their findings on the core of the Danish institutions network and the profiles of the 423 most powerful Danish (Bernsen, Larsen & Ellersgaard 2015). This book had a huge impact on the media and became the centre of attention at the national level. Recently they have published a second book where they try to “map” the different centres of power in Denmark (Larsen, Ellersgaard & Steinitz 2016). They are able to publish in international journals, but are also very at ease with local media, commenting issues addressed in the public sphere.

## **2.6. Relevance and Impact**

This research is important because it will be the only one of its kind on the different groups of Swiss elites as a whole. It will also increase the visibility and the value of the Swiss elite database at the national and international levels. Theoretically it follows the call of Savage (2016) and Savage and Nichols (2018) for a renewal of elite studies, in particular for working on elite coordination and differentiation on a historical basis and a rich theoretical output is expected from this project. Methodologically it will establish contact between two teams with great skills and creativity in using quantitative methods in an innovative way. It will also be interdisciplinary by essence (sociology, political science, history) and will take advantage of the knowledge of different disciplines in order to enrich its analyses. Finally it addresses scientific concerns, but also media and public issues on political and economic powers. It will thus enhance the studies of inequalities in European societies hoping to get other researchers and more generally the public to understand new dimensions of inequalities of economic and symbolic nature through analyses of the profiles and the networks of the most powerful individuals.

During my stay I will write three articles and target high-ranking international peer-reviewed journals, some with Ellersgaard and Larsen, and at least one with no co-author. Discussions on the elite network (**Q1**) will lead me to submit an article to journals such as *Social Networks*, *Economy and Society* or the *Socio-Economic Review*. Emphasis on the resources of the Swiss power elite (**Q2**) will potentially interest editors of journals such as *Sociology* or *The Sociological Review*. Finally emphasis on the Swiss field of power (**Q3**) will allow me to publish in journals such as *European Societies* or the *British Journal of Sociology*.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://jcr.incites.thomsonreuters.com>

In terms of communicating my results I plan to attend three conferences: I will present preliminary results on **Q1** at the economic sociology session of the *European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy* (EAEPE) annual conference in Nice in September 2018, results on **Q2** at the social networks session of the *Association Française de Sociologie* (AFS) conference in Lille in June 2019 and preliminary results on **Q3** at the *European Sociological Association* (ESA) conference in Paris in August 2019.

### **2.7. Relevance for Personal Career Development**

My stay in Copenhagen for 18 months will be decisive for my further academic career for three reasons in particular. *First* on a methodological ground I will be able to deepen my skills in different quantitative methods with renowned experts. The Danish team do not only use methods such as SNA or MCA, but also actively contribute to their further development (*e.g.* by writing R packages). I can learn a great deal from their very innovative use of methods, which will be useful subsequently when I look for a teaching position in methods as well as a data analyst position in other research teams or on my own scientific projects. It is worth noting that these skills and techniques in SNA (such as the k-cores method for example) will then be used to analyse other topics not necessarily related to elite studies when heading back to Switzerland. This is the advantage of such methodology: it is transferable to a lot of other subjects and will help me finding a stable position in economic sociology or the sociology of networks. *Second* and on a theoretical level collaborating with this team will make me open new conceptual perspectives on the study of elites and social inequalities. I will be able to use this knowledge in order to conceptualize my research questions in an original way. *Third* this exchange will help developing the ties between the Swiss and the Danish elite teams, with possibly more collaborations in the future, such as meetings, conferences, other joint publications as well as research stays with other scholars. The purpose is to integrate teams working within the study of elites and networks at the European level. Moreover I will be able to benefit from their numerous connections with other researchers in order to enlarge my personal network.

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