

Local power structures and transnational connections. New perspectives on elites in Switzerland, 1890-2020

1. Summary

Recent literature on elites has provided, at first sight, contradictory findings. On the one hand, studies in sociology, management, political science and economic history have underscored the central importance of local elite and governance structures for a successful economic and political development. Such an observation is particularly relevant for the Swiss case; because of the political and economic decentralization of the country, local elites have played a crucial role in local development. On the other hand, recent research has shown that elites, and especially business ones, have become increasingly internationalized. In Switzerland, foreigners now constitute a significant part of business and academic elites while both groups are characterized by the internationalization of their educational and career trajectories. Elites are thus often considered as increasingly disconnected from their local social background.

These contrasting results, stressing both the growing internationalization of elites and the importance of their local rootedness, raise multiple questions concerning the scales of activities and roles of local elites. While recent research has investigated Swiss *national* elites, this project starts from a *local* perspective that will allow us to go beyond methodological nationalism and to analyze how elites have been active beyond their involvement in local power structures. Already at the end of the 19th century, Swiss elites were characterized by their multi-level implication at the local, national and transnational levels. However, following long-term shifts in the scale of political and economic life (such as the centralization of the national state or economic globalization), their spheres of activities have undergone profound changes.

The project will focus on local elites in the three main Swiss cities (Zurich, Geneva and Basel) and will address two research axes: a) the transformations of local power structures; b) the multi-level implication of local elites: from local to transnational connections. On the basis of a long-term comparison of the three local trajectories, these two research axes will be developed in four subprojects focused on specific local elites and institutions: 1) economic elites active in local chambers of commerce; 2) business elites of leading economic sectors and companies; 3) leading members of local art societies and their role in the promotion of cultural institutions; 4) universities and academic elites between local rootedness and international reputation.

Building on previous research and notably a pathbreaking data collection on *national* elites by the Swiss Elites Observatory (OBELIS), this project aims at developing innovative perspectives on local elites thanks to our longitudinal long-term perspective and the focus on the multi-level activities of elites. Such a framing will allow us to go beyond existing knowledge and bring to light a new understanding of the transformation of local elites, occupying leading positions in central and enduring local institutions, from 1890 to 2020, for seven benchmark years (1890, 1910, 1937, 1957, 1980, 2000 and 2020) following the Swiss Elites database of OBELIS.

By bringing together specialists from different disciplines (history, political science, sociology and management studies), the project develops a truly interdisciplinary and integrated perspective in terms of conceptual approach, empirical investigation, and combination of complementary methods. It also includes innovative digital humanities instruments to improve access on data regarding elites in Switzerland.

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2. Project description

Since the early 21st century, the study of elites has undergone a striking revival at the international level. In Switzerland itself, extensive research has been carried out and has contributed to produce innovative knowledge on economic, political, administrative and academic elites (for an overview, see 2.4). We can thus rely on rich and diversified information concerning the profile of *national* elites. However, the *local* organization of elites has remained largely unexplored.

This Sinergia project aims at developing new perspectives on elites in Basel, Geneva, and Zurich. Adopting such a local perspective is especially relevant as Switzerland is characterized by a weak federal state and remains by far the most decentralized political system in Western Europe in terms of taxation, regional infrastructures, or higher education. Swiss political and administrative structures – federalism coupled with subsidiarity – endow local and regional authorities with significant leverage. Furthermore, economic development has revolved around regional specializations such as textiles in Eastern Switzerland, financial sector and machine-making in Zurich, private banking – and more recently the luxury watch industry – in Geneva, or the chemical and pharmaceutical industry in Basel. This polycentric configuration underscores the existence of connected, but distinct, local elites and systems of governance that contributed to the consolidation of successful “economic locations” or *Standorte*.¹

While Switzerland is characterized by its decentralization and the importance of local governance, recent studies on national elites have underscored the growing internationalization of business and academic elites in the context of globalization since the 1990s. Amongst these two categories, foreigners are present in Switzerland in much higher proportion than among European countries (Hartmann 2016; Goastellec & Pekari 2013). International mobility of elites in terms of education and career has also much increased since the 1990s (Bühlmann et al. 2015). This growing disconnection of elites from their local and national environment has been critically commented in the media.

In this context, we need new research looking at local elites in a long-term perspective in order to understand how their scales of activity have evolved. The project will be focused on the three urban areas that are the most populated and rank among the most prosperous regions of the country. All three cities are characterized by their high degree of internationalization in terms of foreign population, economic activities and cultural diversity. All three have undergone a successful long term economic development since the 19th century. According to a prominent quality-of-living ranking, Zurich, Geneva and Basel ranked among the top ten cities (out of 450) in the world in 2017 (Mercer 2018).

Building on literature from different disciplines (history, sociology, political science and management studies) and on a pathbreaking database on Swiss elites (developed in the context of OBELIS), this project will address two main research axes in a historical comparative perspective. The first research axis will investigate the local power structures of these cities and their transformation; the second one the national and transnational connections of local elites. In order to address these two transversal axes, four subprojects will focus on specific elites and institutions that played a key role for the development of local *Standorte*. Building upon Mills’ (2000) definition of elites, which includes those who have access to command positions of the most important institutions, each subproject analyzes a specific

¹ The German term *Standort* (plural: *Standorte*) literally means “location”. However, it is frequently used to describe configurations of economic sectors, institutions and governance structures that contribute to ensure the success of either local Swiss regions (e.g. *Standort Zürich*) – or the whole of the country (*Standort Schweiz*) – on international markets, as well as the attractiveness of a region for international firms and investment.

category of elites linked to key local institutions at the economic (chambers of commerce and companies in leading economic sectors), cultural (local art societies), and academic (universities) levels.

The period covered by the project starts at the end of the 19th century. Indeed, while studies of local bourgeois elites and patrician families are available for the three cities selected for the second half of the 19th century (Tanner 1990 and 1995 on Berne, Basel and Zurich; Lüthi 1962 and 1963 and Sarasin 1998a on Basel; Perroux 2003 on Geneva; Schwarzenbach 2007 on Zurich), there exists no similar synthesis concerning local elites during the 20th century.

Axis 1. Local power structures: between power concentration and democratization

The first research axis aims at mapping *local elites* and their power structures. For this purpose, we take into account the persons who lead key *local institutions* that played a major role at the economic, political, academic and cultural levels (namely local parliaments and executive branches, chambers of commerce, universities and art societies). Several authors have shown that until the end of the 19th century local patrician families played a crucial role in urban economic, political, cultural and scientific development (Tanner 1995; Sarasin 1998a; Perroux 2003; Schwarzenbach 2007). The *Daig* in Basel, the private bankers' families of Geneva as well as the industrial dynasties of Zurich were very influent. How has this "local patrician power structure" (Sarasin 1998a: chap. 4), clearly echoing at the local level the "power elite" configuration developed by Mills (2000), evolved during the 20th century? One aim of this project consists in analyzing the changing implication and influence of members of such patrician families in the economic, academic and cultural spheres. Until the end of the 19th century, these persons often held overlapping key positions in different social spheres. Such a multiplicity of institutional positions facilitated the concentration of power within a narrow group (Boltanski 1973). This configuration was very widespread in Switzerland because of its militia system (meaning that the exercise of political mandates or military duties by men represent a citizen's duty and is neither professionalized nor linked to a substantial income), and overlapping mandates were also very frequent at different levels (communal, cantonal and national) in political or economic life. Has this multiple office-holding persisted during the 20th century or can we identify a process of elite differentiation, specialization and democratization? Were traditional "home-grown" male notables challenged or replaced by "new" families, or "newcomers", such as persons originating from other Swiss cantons, foreigners or women?

By analyzing leading positions in key and enduring local institutions, we will also pay attention to the changing role and function of these institutions during the whole 20th century. We will in particular analyze if these have partly lost their significance or if they have been challenged by new institutions.

In his classical study "Who governs?", Dahl (1961) has shown in his first chapter entitled "from oligarchy to pluralism" that the figure of the Mayor of New Haven evolved from the "patrician" to the "entrepreneur" and finally to the "ex-plebes" from the 19th century to the 1960s. However, such long term diachronic studies have remained very rare among urban politics studies (for an overview, Judge et al. 1995 and Stoker 1998). Among the few studies adopting such a long-term perspective, Rieder (2008) has shown for the city of Bern that, despite a clear decline of their general influence, old patrician families have remained very well organized in traditional *Zünfte* (local guilds) and have maintained major influence on some aspects of urban governance (see also Stettler 1993 on Basel).²

² In a different context, Zalio (1999 and 2004) has shown that the economically powerful families of Marseille have remained since the beginning of the 20th century largely excluded from municipal political power. This political weakness was due to the fact that economic elites preferred to remain focused on their business activities, and that their divisions prevented them to prevail over the political left.

The concept of local governance has become prominent in recent urban studies, economic history, sociology, as well as political science, literature analyzing a) the contributions of local governance mechanisms (Le Galès 2002), b) the formation of industrial districts and local forms of cooperative governance (Zeitlin 2008), as well as c) local production systems (Crouch et al. 2001 and 2004). These studies focusing on how economic, political, academic and cultural actors sustain the economic development of cities and regions have underscored that the exercise of power was largely based on collaborative mechanisms between local actors from different social spheres and institutions. Such a perspective underlines how crucial it is to look at how the various elites and institutions interact and collaborate over time in order to develop, defend and promote their local *Standorte*.

Axis 2. Nested scales: national and transnational connections of local elites

This project also aims to overcome the national framing of existing research on elites and to look at their different, or nested scales of action. Scrutinizing elites and institutions at the local level will enable us to overcome the limitations of the “methodological nationalism” approach, which considers the nation-state as the relevant unit of analysis (for a critique see Beck 2007). Indeed, as underlined by Le Galès (2002), European cities have a longer history than national states, and their elites often resisted centralization of power at the level of the national state. The robustness of European cities can largely be explained by the local rootedness of their elites, and their keen interest for the development of their region. However, these locally embedded elites were also active and present at the national and inter/transnational level and we will thus jointly analyze these three different levels. From 1848 onwards, some public policies and financial resources were centralized at the federal level and the different *Standorte* were part of one single national market and political system. In the more recent period, various authors have underlined that the current economic globalization has simultaneously challenged the national state and enhanced the agency of local economic and political actors. Some authors use the term “glocalization” to stress these increasing interconnections between the different levels (see Cox 1997; Swyngedouw 1997; Roudometof 2005).

The changing scales of political and economic life, due, for example, to the consolidation of the national state since the 19th century or to economic globalization in the more recent period, has affected the relations of local elites to their city and to the “outside” world. As underlined by Wagner (2010), a key and old characteristic of elites relates to their capacity to play at different levels: a cosmopolitan way of life was widespread among elites during the 19th century. In his classic study of influence in a small American city, Merton (1968) distinguished between “local and cosmopolitan influentials”, with each category displaying a different attachment to and implication in their local community. In order to refine this distinction, the *transnational perspective* developed by historians and sociologists is very helpful (Saunier 2006; Faist et al. 2013, Eichenberger et al. 2017 on Switzerland). It stresses the multiple involvement and “social spaces” of actors from the local to the global level. As an example, recent studies on Swiss *national* elites have underscored that business elites leading the largest companies also held executive positions in local chambers of commerce or sectoral trade associations. This has clearly changed after 1990, when top managers of the largest Swiss companies deserted national and regional business associations to privilege investment in global business networks (David et al. 2009; Mach et al. 2016). Similarly, Federal Assembly members long held political mandates simultaneously at the cantonal or local levels, but abandoned such practices in the recent period (Pilotti 2017; Di Capua et al. 2017). With the decline of multi-level office-holding by single individuals, the presence of local elites at the national or transnational level has clearly changed, but not necessarily waned completely.

The multiple scalar activities and involvement of elites is not limited to the occupation of multiple institutional power positions at different levels as illustrated above; it also refers to various types of social experiences, from the place of birth, social exchanges, education or career stages that go beyond the local level. With such a transnational perspective, we will analyze the long-term evolution of local elites and institutions in their multiple scales of activities. We will examine potential differences between elites from different social spheres, the evolution of local elites in terms of national and transnational activities and see if we can indeed identify the emergence of “disconnected” elites (such as those active at the local/regional level vs. those inserted in inter/transnational networks).

In order to address these two research axes, the project is divided into four subprojects and transversal data collection on local political elites:

- **(S1)** Chambers of commerce: local actors with transnational connections (Coordinator: M. Leimgruber, UZH)
- **(S2)** Locally embedded and globalized corporate elite in three major economic sectors (Coordinator: E. Davoine, UNIFR)
- **(S3)** Art societies and cultural institutions: from patronage to market (Coordinator: S. Ginalski, UNIL)
- **(S4)** Universities and academic elites: between local rootedness and transnational connections (Coordinator: A. Mach, UNIL)
- **Transversal data collection:** Local political elites will not be analyzed by a specific subproject. However, we will gather basic data on local political elites and integrate results from ongoing research projects (see 2.5).

2.1. Goals of the projects

The interdisciplinary research agenda sketched above is inspired from literature and methods in history, political science, economic sociology, and business management. It is articulated around four subprojects mentioned above and developed below. Each subproject addresses the two research axes previously developed – local power structures and national and transnational connections – in a historical comparative perspective.

2.1.1. Chambers of commerce: local actors with transnational connections (S1)

This subproject will focus on the role of Chambers of Commerce (CoC) in the structuring of local business elites and power relations along different nested scales. CoC have been the most comprehensive gathering point for commercial and industrial elites in Basel (1876), Geneva (1865), and Zurich (1873) for almost 150 years. As such, they played a central role in the collective mobilization of these milieus, most notably towards local political authorities. Their presidents enjoyed a prominent statute, and CoC officials were active in virtually all collective endeavor of local business elites (Richard 1941). They can be considered as the successors of guilds (*Zünfte*), cartel-like associations that organized the economy in medieval and early modern cities (Gruner 1956: 12-15; Maurer 1924; Landolt 1939).³ The specificity of CoC is that they represent the whole spectrum of commercial and industrial activities – artisanal trades being represented by local *Gewerbe* associations – in one central body while each guild represented one specialized domain or branch of economic activities only. CoC are thus a particularly appropriate object to investigate the evolution of local power structures.

In spite of their importance during the whole 20th century, as well as their role in the nurturing of competitive business infrastructures in their respective cities, the history as well as the functioning of CoC has remained largely

³ While scholars have underlined the contribution of guilds in the production of social capital, trust, and economic growth (Epstein 1998; Greif, Milgrom and Weingast 1994), others have pointed out their roles in the exclusion of outsiders such as foreigners and women (Ogilvie 2011; Carnevali 2011).

uncharted. Their specific role in the organization of the bourgeois elite along the 20th century also remains a terra incognita. Apart from insider accounts (Richard 1924; Henrici 1927; Scherrer 1952; CCIG 1990), only few studies on local CoC are currently available (Humair 2004 and 2012; Bruegel 1986; NZZ 1977). Rieder (2008) has underscored continuities in the organization of patrician and bourgeois milieus between the 19th and 20th centuries, but do not focus on the role of CoC.

This research gap is especially glaring in comparison with the comprehensive studies available on German (Groser et al. 2010), American, British (Bennett 2011) and French CoC (Lemercier 2003, 2007; Giraud & Healy 2015). Urban studies have also underlined the importance of CoC in organizing business interests in European cities (Le Galès 2002: 193-196). CoC are also crucial objects within research on both industrial districts (Daumas & Lescure 2014) and regional economic development (Crouch 2003). Furthermore, international research on business interest associations has identified CoC as central in explaining continuity between pre-modern and modern forms of business organization (Lanzalaco 2008: 304).

Our first research step will be to collect systematic data on CoC committees – permanent bodies composed of 15 to 35 people at each date – as well as their key salaried officials. We will then investigate the extent of their presence in other key institutions (local parliaments and governments, cultural institutions such as *Kunstvereine*, as well as other bourgeois socialization groups, such as Rotary Clubs) and investigate which types of elites were active in CoC. This material will provide a rich empirical basis to investigate the lasting power of patrician families, the emergence of “newcomers”, such as women or foreigners, as well as their transnational connections. The noticeable new role of women as directors or presidents (as of 2018, most major Swiss CoC are now presided by women) show that these institutions do witness some degree of change. The profile of CoC executive committees will also enable us to assess whether CoC did (or not) integrate from the 1960s onwards incoming international elites from foreign firms in their structures. One key indicator in this context will be the integration of local CoC within the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). The comparison of individual trajectories in Basel, Geneva and Zurich will also enable us to pinpoint differences and commonalities between the way CoC did function in the different cities under scrutiny and the specificities of their relationship with the political and cultural sphere.

In a second research step, we will investigate the evolution of the different CoC, and provide a thick description of their main activities (Wickham 2017) along our two research axes. Throughout the 20th century, CoC set up and supported crucial transport infrastructures and economic institutions such as stock and labor exchanges, as well as commercial and industrial fairs. We will investigate the influence of CoC in the evolving political contexts of the 20th century. For example, how did local CoC reacted to the emergence of socialist majorities in the legislative and executive branches in all three cities studied from the interwar period onwards? Did these new local political structures challenge existing power structures, or, on the contrary, did new cross-class alliances in favor of local *Standorte* emerge? Studying CoC as key mouthpieces for firms and business elites will enable us to investigate the way business elites advocated their case in changing political contexts. Furthermore, the creation of commercial arbitration courts (*Handelsgerichte*) around 1900 represented one of their least studied but very influential achievement (Schwander 2009; Brunner & Nobel 2016). Such arbitration courts played a decisive role in the daily functioning of local markets and in the development of local business regulation. Moreover, arbitration courts developed international activities and helped to position Switzerland as a key node for international private arbitration procedures. The extent of chambers’ activities went further: they supported local arts (S3), played a role in

the development of universities (S4), and shaped urban social and political life. Furthermore, in order to investigate competition and collaboration between and within CoC, we will closely work with S2. The question of active policy making aiming at integrating foreign multinational corporations will also be jointly investigated with S2.

The way different nested scales interact in the functioning of CoC is also very relevant. From their very inception, these local gatherings set their sights on national and transnational horizons. Local associations thus assembled within the 1870 Swiss Trade and Industry Federation (*Schweizerisches Handels und Industrieverein*, SHIV/Vorort) and the Swiss Chamber of Commerce (Eichenberger and Mach 2011). One interesting body to investigate will be the CoC directors' conferences, created in 1916, in which directors of the different Swiss CoC met regularly.

The international context was crucial, too. When free trade waned in the 1870s, it became crucial for local elites to gather forces in order to defend their commercial interests in trade negotiations between Switzerland and its trading partners. Already at the end of the 19th century, CoC met internationally and sent delegates to international gatherings and fairs. These early international gatherings were formalized after World War I, and from 1920 onwards, Swiss CoC participated to the setting up of the Paris based ICC. Furthermore, already a dozen foreign CoC operated in Switzerland in 1939, (Rohrbasser 1952; Meyer-Marsillius 1987) while half a dozen Swiss CoC were active in foreign countries (Landolt 1939: 564). These international connections continued to grow in the second half of 20th century, as foreign firms set up subsidiaries in Switzerland (Leimgruber 2015; Müller 2012). However, the international dimension of CoC activities remains vastly unknown, and as Herren (2013: 53) deplores, the ICC has a “surprisingly low presence in today’s research literature” despite it being “one of the most powerful international organizations”. Concerning international connections, as a case in point, during the 1920s, textile industrialist John Syz (1859-1939) was president of both the Zurich CoC and SHIV/Vorort. Furthermore, he also played an important international role as a delegate in the ICC as well as a president of the Manchester based international association of cotton industrialists.

2.1.2 Locally embedded and globalized corporate elite in three major economic sectors (S2)

This subproject will focus on the evolution of three leading sectors: banking, watchmaking and the chemical-pharmaceutical industries. In each of these sectors, large companies rooted in local structures of Basel, Geneva and Zurich have become “global players” and gained leading roles on world markets. These sectors with a high economic and symbolic value for the national economy are illustrative of the decentralized structure of the Swiss economy and are closely associated with the three cities: Basel is associated with the chemical and pharmaceutical industry since the 19th century (Chandler 2005; König 2016); the banking industry is largely concentrated in Zurich and Geneva, whose private and universal banks have attained world-status (Mazbouri et al. 2012; Cassis and Tanner 1992; Straumann 2006); finally, Geneva has also played a central role in the early development (18th C.) of the Swiss watchmaking industry – a “national” industry *par excellence* – and re-emerged in the late 20th C. as the capital for luxury watch industry (Donzé 2017). We do not include in this subproject the machines and electro-technical industry, which has been studied in depth by Ginalski (2015). Results from this pathbreaking monograph will serve as a contrasting foil for our research.

Analyzing the business elites of the leading companies of these sectors in a long-term perspective will allow us to tackle the articulation between their local rootedness and their transnational connections. While leading Swiss companies had already undergone international expansion at the end of the 19th century, their management largely remained in the hands of Swiss nationals until the 1990s (Mach et al. 2016). One of our main research objectives will

be to identify and understand the major changes in the corporate elite profiles from the end of the 19th century to the 21st century. The analysis of company case studies should provide us with a better understanding of the evolution of their top management, their role in local power structures and the evolution of top management profiles in specific contexts. This analysis will also highlight the way these choices may have impacted corporate and sector-wide strategies.

A particular emphasis will be given to the most recent period (since 1990). Such a choice is justified by the profound changes that have taken place among top managers and in the structuration of the three sectors, which led to the emergence of new business elite profiles with international career patterns (Bühlmann et al. 2014; Davoine et al. 2015). These transformations brought tensions and triggered new reconfigurations between local and global logics among business elites and in Swiss corporate governance (David et al. 2015).

In the pharmaceutical cluster of Basel, the globalization of the sector since the 1980s has also been accompanied by a rapid internationalization of top management (Zeller 2010 and 2011; König 2016). In the banking sector, the relationship between elite profile changes can also be linked with the internationalization of financial markets, the development of the two global players UBS and Credit Suisse and the establishment of new corporate governance practices (Baumann 2006; Ginalski et al. 2014; Araujo 2018). On the other hand, even if Swiss banks also tend to appoint some newcomer profiles (foreigners and women) in their boards (Mach & Araujo 2018), traditional Swiss patrician families remain in traditional Geneva private banks such as Pictet, Lombard Odier and Mirabaud. The strong local embeddedness of top managers from private banks has played a major role in local institutions, such as the Swiss Bankers Association. In the watchmaking industry, the progressive globalization of top management seems to take the shape of an increase of French nationals within top management (Davoine & Mettler 2018), which is linked with the new strategic reorientation of the watchmaking industry as a luxury industry, where French companies like LVMH or Kering play worldwide a leading role. We should also consider the role of Geneva – headquarters for Richemont and Rolex – as a global city embedded in a French speaking region, with a local transnational labor market for international headquarters' executives (Ravasi et al. 2015). We therefore aim to consider in our analysis not only the nationalities of top managers but also their former career path in the regional clusters.

In the three sectors considered, concentration dynamics and the development of bigger players have changed the rules of the game between local and global actors within sectoral business associations and chambers of commerce. The traditional mechanisms of regional district governance and power structures have been challenged by bigger (and multinational) companies (Zeitlin, 2008; Donzé 2014). For example, while the CEOs or presidents of the largest chemical and pharmaceutical companies used to also preside the *Basler Handelskammer* until the 1980s, this has changed since the 1990s (Kreis 2016: 59). The changing scale of action of these 'global players' implies a delegation of power to managers holding upper management positions (such as plant managers, CFOs, HR Directors), who have progressively been playing an active role in local business institutions. A new division of labor within these large companies seems to have emerged between top managers active on a global market scale and those more locally oriented. We will therefore include in our study new segments of the business elite for the last decades (Dörrenbächer & Geppert 2016) and extend our population to upper management positions.

Concerning the data collection, we will select the most important companies in the three sectors (about 10 to 20 companies in pharmaceutical industry in Basel, 20 to 30 banks located in Zurich, Geneva and Basel, and 10 to 20

brands/companies in the Geneva watchmaking industry⁴). Numbers may vary because of new company developments, bankruptcies, mergers and acquisitions throughout the period. For these companies, we will identify CEOs and board members for the seven benchmark years of the OBELIS database. Our analysis will focus on CEOs and board presidents.

We intend to use two different sets of data depending on the period considered. First, for the whole sample, we will gather biographical information (place and date of birth, gender, nationality, education, major career steps) in order to highlight changes in socialization profiles. The OBELIS database already contains many information on numerous individuals belonging to these business elites and will be completed for other companies. In addition to biographical information, a particular attention will also be given to how these business elites were (and still are) connected to local institutions such as sectoral business associations, chambers of commerce (S1), other local intermediate governance institutions (like foundations and committees of technical schools, scientific research institutes, universities [S4] or major fairs) or involvement in local politics or cultural institutions (S3).

Second, for the most recent period (1990-2020), we will first extend the database to executive committee members, by using official corporate data, social media profiles and biographical newspaper articles. Second, we plan to interview institutional actors and HR directors (between 10 to 20 in depth interviews per sector – interview partners in the watchmaking and banking sectors have already been identified and interviewed by the research team in former projects – in order to understand why and how companies recruit local/global profiles (and ensure “diversity” in terms of gender and/or national/ethnic origins) with specific social capital for top and upper management positions. We will also use our interviews with institutional actors and HR directors to understand why and how MNCs develop links to traditional institutions or establish new ones in order to influence market regulation and develop strategic resources.

2.1.3. Art societies and cultural institutions: from patronage to market (S3)

This subproject focuses on local elites’ cultural networks and explores the shifting nature of art societies’ social and economic functions. Our starting point will be the decentralized structure of these cultural network and activities. We will first investigate the role of wealthy families in the promotion of cultural institutions in the context of the late 19th century emergence of art societies and cultural sociability. Second, we will highlight the key role of private investors and cultural institutions in the reorientation of local elites’ interests towards the art market’s structures and activities, such as galleries, auction houses and private foundations. More broadly, the subproject will address the mutations of local elites’ cultural networks in the wider context of the expansion of the art market after the two World Wars.

The first part of the subproject will investigate art societies as a distinctive interest group form (Jost 1986; Renner 1998). The analysis will focus on local art societies, namely the *Basler Kunstgesellschaft*, the *Société genevoise des Beaux-Arts* and the *Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft*, as well as their umbrella organization, the *Schweizerischer Kunstverein*. If the emergence of Swiss art societies dates back from the late 18th century, it was not before the second half of the 19th century that they gained widespread influence at the local and national levels (Marfurt-Elmiger 1988). Through traveling exhibitions (*Turnausstellungen*), these institutions contributed to making cultural activities available to the urban bourgeoisie (Jaccard 1986) and to developing artistic activities and sociability. Thanks to donations from wealthy families, art societies coordinated financial contributions to cultural institutions and activities. They mobilized

⁴ We will broaden the size of the sample to around 40 companies for the most recent period on the basis of previous research projects, that will allow to enrich the analysis with more regional and small and medium-sized companies (SMEs).

local patronage in order to support institutional art spaces and artistic activities, such as the *Kunsthallen* (Basel, Bern, Zürich), fine-art museums (*Kunsthaus* in Zürich, *Kunstmuseum* in Basel, *Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts* in Geneva) or Swiss participation to international exhibitions (Ruedin 2010; Debluë 2015).

Due to the weakness of state-led cultural public policy, art societies enabled wealthy economic elites to hold the power and the means of supporting artistic institutions and activities. Local patrician families and a new emerging bourgeoisie (composed of bankers, doctors, lawyers or manufacturers) gradually joined the ranks of art societies. These actors became increasingly involved in state institutional platforms, such as the Federal Commission of Fine Arts (1887), where they outlined “national art” in the wider context of state and national identity building (Jost 1989). By offering an alternative to state interventionism, art societies (soon joined by private collectors and patrons) extended the social function of patronage and actively participated in its institutionalization. In this view, they contributed to the social cohesion of local bourgeoisies (Moulin 1976; Sarasin 1998a). We will therefore carefully analyze the executive committees of the various *Kunstvereine* – composed of representatives of wealthy families, artists, art history professors, museums directors and local professionals –, and their ties to other local elites, in order to outline the multiple facets of cultural sociability.

We will investigate the structures and composition of local elites’ cultural networks and outline the specific features of private and local interests in the broader context of state art policy. Who became involved in local art societies and for what purpose? Did members of the chambers of commerce (S1), corporate elite – notably from the luxury industry – (S2) and academic elites (S4) seat in their executive committee? How did the influence of wealthy families evolve over the 20th century? Did women participate in these cultural institutions, and how did this participation evolve across time? In order to answer these questions, we will investigate the social profile of the members of these art societies, as well as their multiple institutional positions. Moreover, we will explore to what extent the decentralized structure of local elites’ cultural networks and activities stimulated new forms of “art’s sake” and patronage (sponsorship). Taking into account that patronage is a “social practice of power” (Sarasin 1998b), we will question its potential benefits, both symbolic or material.

Drawing upon the collection of data on art societies, the second part of the subproject will investigate the broader networks and activities in which art societies became embedded over the course of the 20th century, namely art collection and dealing. It will examine the different spaces of sociability of local elites, not only in the institutional context of art societies and museums, but also in the broader context of art sales, auction houses, foundations, galleries and art fairs. In doing so, it will investigate the multi-layered dimensions and scales of cultural sociability.

Based on the assumption that “the pattern of international growth of commercial art firms follows the pathways carved out by the development of international finance” (Helmreich 2011), this second part will focus on the impact of the internationalization of the art market on art societies’ development. It assumes, therefore, that the changing structure of local elites’ cultural networks is closely related to the rise of a “new order” (Tisa Francini 2002) within the Swiss art market that included the consolidation of international European and Atlantic connections developed by Swiss art merchants, galleries and auction houses from the interwar period onwards and especially after World War II. The expansion of the Swiss art market largely relied on previous forms of internationalization, such as those provided, on the one hand, by foreign collectors – mostly coming from Germany and France – who had settled in Switzerland from the 1910s onwards (Tisa Francini 2002). On the other hand, foreign art gallery subsidiaries and salesmen situated

in Basel, Zurich, Geneva or Bern also played a significant role in the internationalization of locally embedded art merchants' and dealers' activities. In this view, we will closely examine the arrival of international auction houses such as Christie's, Sotheby's or Philips. We will show that, in addition to the already existing art societies, local elites' networks benefitted from the growing number of private structures and actors which emerged in the art trade field in the wake of World War I, a phenomenon that is itself linked to the consolidation of the role of the Swiss financial place in international wealth management (Farquet 2018).

Worldwide renowned art collectors and collections, such as Emil G. Bührle and Oskar Reinhart in Zurich, gained by 1945 widespread influence within the art market and launched their own private foundations. As Derix (2014) has demonstrated, these private foundations played a key role in the preservation of family property and wealth since the end of the 19th century. Moreover, they provided wealthy collectors with the opportunity to hold a wide range of public institutional positions, to play increasingly significant roles in public institutions and, therefore, to promote their public visibility and reputation. Art collector Oskar Reinhart, for instance, joined the Federal Commission of Fine Arts in the 1930s, and was granted the degree of *Doctor honoris causa* from both the Universities of Basel and Zurich. In the 1950s, industrialist Emil G. Bührle distinguished himself as one of the main sponsors of the *Kunsthaus* in Zurich. In the 1970s, the concentration process within the art market negatively impacted art dealers and galleries (Guex and Vallotton 2002). Some of them, such as Ernst Beyeler, Trudi Bruckner and Balz Hilt in Basel, took advantage of the situation and initiated the "Art Basel" fair, which soon greatly leveraged the international influence of the Swiss art market (Schultheis 2015).

In order to investigate further the above-mentioned research paths, this subproject aims at making an inventory of existing auction houses and private galleries in the three cities under consideration (for a first list, see: www.arthistoricum.net). We will investigate the proportion of foreigners among these institutions, in order to highlight transnational connections among local elite involved in cultural activities. Second, we will develop more qualitative analysis for key private institutions whose archives are available, such as Fondation Beyeler in Basel, Galerie Moos in Geneva and the Bührle Stiftung in Zurich.

In short, our long-term analysis of elites' cultural networks and activities will not only highlight the shifting nature of cultural actors, but also confront the contemporary "myth of globalization" within the art market (Velthuis 2003) with the importance of locally embedded spaces of sociability for the development of national and transnational elites' cultural and commercial networks.

2.1.4. Universities and academic elites between local rootedness and transnational connections (S4)

This subproject will focus on universities and their professors. Numerous European universities are very old institutions and closely associated to their city (Gingras 2003; Ruegg 2004 and 2010), where they contribute to education, culture and intellectual life, as well as urban economic development (Laferté 2004). In their long-term history, from the "ivory tower" of the middle-ages to the "bright satanic mills" of the current knowledge economy (Scott & Harding 2007: 3), the role and function of universities as well as the form of their embeddedness in local societies have undergone profound changes.

Academic elites represent a category of local elites which plays a crucial role in urban and regional development. Besides education, intellectual life and economic development, academic elites may also be involved in urban politics

and cultural life, with close connections to other local elites. However, contrary to political and administrative elites, academic professors do not formally need to be Swiss nationals and therefore scientific and academic institutions have been based on early international exchange and mobility. How this articulation between local embeddedness and global connections has evolved during the 20th century will be at the center of our attention. We will develop two research axes. The first axis will focus on the local rootedness and transnational connections of university professors (in terms of education, career, professional activities and extra-academic networks or activities).⁵ The second one will analyze the collaboration of various local elites (political, economic, cultural and academic) in the governance and management of their cantonal university.

Concerning the first axis, around 1900, professors at the main Swiss universities belonged to two main categories (Horvath 1996): a) Offspring from local patrician families⁶; b) Foreign professors, who represented more than 25% of the teaching staff (Busino et al. 1991). The lack of local or national candidates implied that universities recruited early on renowned foreign professors from neighboring countries (mainly Germany and France), with the aim of promoting the education of local elites. This overrepresentation of foreign professors was criticized during World War I and led to the creation of the *Association of Swiss University Teachers* in order to support Swiss academic careers. From the 1920s onwards, the proportion of foreign professors declined, and started to increase again only after 1970. The proportion of foreign professors thus followed a “U curve” during the 20th century, reaching in 2000 by far the highest proportion in Europe, and giving rise to renewed controversies against foreign professors, especially German ones (see Rossier et al. 2015).

Over the 20th century, the sociological profile of professors, as well as their nomination procedures have considerably changed. Among the main selection criteria, we can distinguish between, on the one hand, scientific excellence and international reputation and, on the other hand, locally valued resources, such as belonging to regional and local networks (Wagner 2010; on economics and management professors see Rossier et al. 2017). Such resources were differently valued during the 20th century. For example, Bourdieu (1984) has shown that the French academic field of the 1960s was structured by a division between a “scientific pole” (with a high scientific capital in terms of international reputation, publications, scientific prizes or PhD supervisions) that was dominant in the natural sciences, and an “institutional pole” (with high institutional capital, such as Dean and President duties, committees of academic associations, as well as extra-academic local activities), composed of law and medicine faculties with much closer links to political, administrative and economic power. Humanities and social sciences occupied an intermediary position. We will analyze the distribution of these resources among professors, across time, and between faculties or disciplines. Furthermore, we will study the involvement of these different categories of professors in local city life.

If international career patterns have now become dominant, and scientific excellence is clearly the main criteria of appointment, we will examine if we can identify specific patterns of local involvement, as well as similarities and differences between the three cities studied.

While we will rely on previous research and data on Swiss academic elites, our analysis, based on a representative sample of professors from the three universities and the Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ) (see 2.5.3), will focus

⁵ We will partly rely on data and results from a previous research project on Swiss academic elites (see 2.5.3).

⁶ See Horvath (1996: 149-50), who explicitly mentions the examples of Basel and Geneva, as well as Zurich. He underscores that between 1850 and 1950 numerous Geneva professors came from patrician families, and that academic dynasties were frequent (for Basel: Bonjour 1960; Staehelin 1960; for Zurich: Stadler 1983).

specifically on the local vs. international involvement of academic elites. On the basis of biographical indicators (such as place of birth, gender, nationality, place of education, professional career, insertion in local networks, positions occupied in the academic and local extra-academic spheres), we will establish a typology of academic elites according to their connections either to their local environment (strong rootedness) or to their international mobility, and how their composition has evolved in a long-term perspective.

The second axis of investigation will address governance and political debates about the three cantonal universities. In his classical model, Clark (1983) puts the coordination between state, market and the “academic oligarchy” at the center of his “triangle of authority” in universities. Since their creation, universities, as distinct social institutions, and academic elites have struggled to gain more autonomy (from the church and then from the state), even though their financing (at least in the Swiss case) largely depends on state resources and political decisions. Since the 19th century, promoting universities has become an important tool for local politicians and entrepreneurs, in collaboration with academic elites, to support regional development. This is particularly true in the Swiss context, where higher education largely remains a prerogative of cantonal authorities.

In light of this context, we aim to analyze whether and how cantonal political authorities and private elites have supported their university. Besides general indicators, such as the evolution of cantonal university expenditures, students enrolment, as well as faculty size, we will focus on political debates and organizational reforms of the three universities. As a starting point, we will analyze key university law reforms (see Bonjour 1960; Kreis 1986; König 2010; Borgeaud & Martin 1959; Marcacci 1987 and Stadler 1983; on recent reforms, Clark 1998; Braun and Merrien 1999). This will allow us to highlight how local politicians, economic actors (S1 and S2), and professors, debated the role of their university, what connections existed with local actors, and how the organization of power has evolved. Particular attention will be devoted to the main power structures in this domain (cantonal ministers of education, executive board/rectorate of universities, and university boards, which bring together political, business, cultural and academic representatives⁷ and local academic societies). We will analyze who occupied these positions and the competencies of these different instances.

2.2. Interdisciplinarity

Cousin et al. (2018) have recently claimed that elite study needs to build upon, but also to expand beyond the classical Bourdieusian framework of analysis (see also Krosnes et al. 2018). According to the authors, a “truly interdisciplinary approach” combining notably sociology, management studies, history and political science is necessary to address this major challenge. Our project is shaped in order to meet these expectations and relies on the articulation between these four disciplines at the theoretical, empirical and methodological levels. Our project will thus allow to address key research questions in each of these scholarly fields.

First, on a **theoretical level**, our project resorts to sociological concepts stemming from Bourdieusian theory in order to analyze the relation between elite and power. We articulate this sociological approach with a diachronic perspective, which will allow us to probe the changes over more than one century. In other words, the sociological approach will help us to conceptualize the relation between elites and power, while the historical perspective will highlight the long-term evolution and reconfiguration of this relation over time. Political science will underscore

⁷ Today, all three universities have such a board. Since 2008, the University of Geneva has a *Conseil d'orientation stratégique*, which replaced the previous *Conseil de l'Université*.

formal and informal local power and governance structures in which elites interact. Finally, the perspective of management studies contributes to understand the relationship between elite profile changes and the shifts in corporate and sectorial strategies.

Second, we will also resort to **sources and materials** specific to the different disciplines, combining archives for the historical period, published sources as well as interviews for the current period. Archival analysis will allow us to access to unique and original information about the local elites and institutions taken into account. However, the project intends to go beyond the limit inherent to archival sources, whose access is usually limited to documents a generation older than the present (i.e. as of 2018, documents up to 1983-1988 are accessible). Combining historical and contemporary sources is essential to investigate the long-term transformation of local power structures.

Third, the **methodological approach** is also strongly interdisciplinary. This project relies on archive analysis and prosopography methods stemming from history, social network analysis (SNA) and multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) developed by social sciences, as well as case study approaches specific to management studies. This mixed methods approach is built to investigate our two main axes of research. For instance, prosopography is a useful tool to show the changing profile of elites across time, while SNA enables to highlight and visualize their connections. Moreover, our project integrates methodological tools stemming from the emerging field of Digital Humanities. In particular, it aims at developing innovative tools for modeling, managing, evaluating, and visualizing historical data.

In short, our interdisciplinary approach will allow us to build upon and go beyond the classic perspectives in the study of elites and enable a better analysis of the (re)configuration of their power and logics of action across time. In order to meet these challenges, our project brings together a multidisciplinary group of scholars.

2.2.1. Applicants and associated partners

The four main applicants stem from distinct academic fields. Each of them will be in charge of a subproject in collaboration with associate partners (see Table 1 below). Most of them have already collaborated on previous research projects. On all these occasions, complementarity in terms of methods, domains of specialization and conceptual approach has proved very successful. These collaborations have notably led to the creation of a unique database on Swiss elites and to a synthetic book on Swiss business elites (Mach et al. 2016). They have also led to the foundation in 2015 of the interdisciplinary OBELIS, hosted at the University of Lausanne (UNIL), which has become *the* competence center on elite research with regular appearances in local and national media.⁸ OBELIS will serve as the leading house of the project.

This Sinergia project will offer an opportunity to further consolidate and formalize existing collaborations, as well as to develop new ones. It brings together scholars affiliated to French and German speaking Swiss Universities, as well as from the three cities considered in the project. It also integrates two colleagues from Sciences Po Paris and the University of Osaka. Moreover, we intend to develop collaborations with existing SNSF research projects involved in elite research, as well as Digital Humanities researchers at University of Lausanne and EPFL in order to develop cutting edge method in data mining.

⁸ In 2017, the OBELIS blog and database have received an average of around 2500 unique monthly consultations.

Table 1. Synthetic overview of the applicants and associated partners

Name	Discipline	Role(s) in the project and sub-projects
Main applicant		
Prof. André Mach (UNIL)	Political science	(S4) Universities and academic elites <i>Supervision of data collection on political elites</i>
Co-applicants		
Prof. Eric Davoine (UNIFR)	Management	(S2) Leading companies
Dr. Stéphanie Ginalska (UNIL)	Sociology and economic history	(S3) Art societies and cultural institutions <i>Social network analysis</i>
Prof. Matthieu Leimgruber (UZH)	Economic history	(S1) Chambers of commerce
Associated partners (alphabetic order)		
Prof. Felix Bühlmann (UNIL)	Sociology	(S3) Art societies and cultural institutions <i>Multi correspondence analysis</i>
Prof. Thomas David (UNIL)	Economic history	(S4) Universities and academic elites <i>Transversal collaboration on the city of Geneva</i>
Dr. Claire-Lise Deblue (UNIL)	Cultural history	(S3) Art societies and cultural institutions
Prof. Pierre-Yves Donzé (U Osaka)	Economic history	(S2) Leading companies (S1) Chambers of commerce
Dr. Pierre Eichenberger (UZH)	Economic history	(S2) Leading companies <i>Transversal collaboration on the city of Zurich</i>
Dr. Romain Felli (UNIL and UNIGE)	Geography, Political science	<i>Transversal collaboration on multi scales issues and the city of Geneva</i>
Martin Grandjean (UNIL)	History, Digital Humanities	<i>Transversal collaboration on DH aspects, notably data visualization</i>
Prof. Claire Lemercier (Sciences Po, Paris)	Sociology and History	(S1) Chambers of commerce
Prof. Martin Lengwiler (UNIBAS)	Historian	<i>Transversal collaboration on the city of Basel</i>
Dr. Andrea Pilotti (UNIL)	Political science	<i>Transversal collaboration on political elites</i>
Prof. Michael Piotrowski (UNIL)	Digital Humanities	<i>Transversal collaboration on data collection</i>
Dr. Thierry Rossier (U Copenhagen)	Political science	(S4) Universities and academic elites <i>Social network analysis</i>

Prof. André Mach is a political scientist and economic sociologist at UNIL. He has extensively published on Swiss industrial relations and corporate governance (David et al. 2015), interest groups (Mach 2015) and elites (Mach et al. 2016). He has a strong experience in leading research projects, most recently on academic elites, urban elites and interest groups. He is the main applicant of the Sinergia project and will be in charge of the subproject on academic elites (**S4**) with the collaboration of Prof. Thomas David (UNIL, OBELIS) and Dr. Thierry Rossier (SNSF post-doc fellow, OBELIS and Copenhagen Business School).

Prof. Eric Davoine is a professor for management at the University of Fribourg. His research has mainly focused on the influence of national institutions on corporate management practices and on manager profiles (Davoine & Ravasi 2013; Stokes et al. 2014; Davoine et al. 2015). He has recently directed several projects exploring the tension between global standardization versus local institutional effects on Human Resource Management practices within the Swiss subsidiaries of multinational companies and in the watchmaking industry. Recent research also includes a project on cognitive governance, board member profiles and company HR policies. He will collaborate on **S2** with Pierre-Yves Donzé (University of Osaka) and Dr. Pierre Eichenberger (UNIZH).

Dr. Stéphanie Ginalska is a business historian and elite sociologist at UNIL. Her field of expertise is business elites, and she has produced key contributions on family capitalism (Ginalska 2013 and 2015) and the role of women among Swiss corporate elites (Ginalska 2016). She is also a network analysis expert (see e.g. Ginalska et al. 2014; Eichenberger & Ginalska 2017) and a cofounder OBELIS. She will be in charge of the subproject on culture and local art societies (**S3**) in collaboration with Prof. Felix Bühlmann (UNIL, OBELIS) and Dr. Claire-Lise Deblue (SNSF senior researcher, UNIL).

Prof. Matthieu Leimgruber teaches and coordinates research on social and economic history at the University of Zurich. He has worked extensively on the history of social policy development and on the role of socio-economic expertise within international organizations. He is currently working on international fiscal policy (Farquet & Leimgruber 2015) and Switzerland as a platform for multinational corporations (Leimgruber 2015). He is also leading a research project on industrialist and art collector Emil Georg Bührle (Haller & Leimgruber 2018). He will lead the subproject on the Chambers of commerce with the collaboration of Prof. Claire Lemerrier (Sciences Po Paris) and Dr. Pierre Eichenberger (UNIZH).

2.2.2. Additional research collaborations

In addition to the above-mentioned associated partners (signaled in **bold** type in the following section), our project will collaborate with several ongoing research projects and institutions.

First, we will closely work with the project “Urban transformations and local political elites: A comparative study among four Swiss cities” (SNSF 100017_165955), headed by Prof. Oscar Mazzoleni, Dr. **Andrea Pilotti**, and Prof. **André Mach**. This project investigates municipal political elites during the second half of the 20th century in Lausanne, Lugano, Luzern and Zurich. For this reason, the Sinergia project does not envision a specific subproject on political elites. We will thus rely on existing data collected on Zurich, while additional data for Geneva and Basel will be collected (see 2.5.3).

Second, we intend to collaborate with the ongoing project “Stadt.Geschichte.Basel” (<https://stadtgeschichtebasel.ch>) co-directed by Prof. **Martin Lengwiler**. This project, initiated in 2017 and running until 2024, will compile and edit a global history of the city of Basel. This collaboration will allow us to access newly digitized archives on Basel, exchange information on ongoing research, and offer us a platform to disseminate our research output.

Third, we will also collaborate with the Sinergia Project “Impresso – Media Monitoring of the Past” (<https://impresso-project.ch>). This project develops digital text mining of Swiss newspaper collections. Contact has already been established with Maud Ehrmann (EPFL-DHLAB), research scientist in this project. This collaboration will allow us to access major digitalized Swiss newspapers, which are crucial sources of biographical information on local elites. Moreover, our own project will serve as a historical use case for the Impresso project, in order to prompt methodological reflections of how newspapers can be a valuable source for elite study.

In addition, three ongoing research projects dealing with elites at an international level will also give us opportunity for scientific exchanges: **a)** “Rockefeller fellows as heralds of globalization: the circulation of elites, knowledge and practices of modernization (1920s-1970s)” (SNSF N° 100011_172673) directed by Profs. D. Rodogno (UNIGE), L. Tournès (UNIGE) and **Thomas David** (UNIL); **b)** “The rise of the financial elite: access, integration and spread of power” (SNSF N°100018_178817), directed by Prof. **Felix Bühlmann** (UNIL), which will be in particular relevant for **(S2)**; **c)** the project directed by Profs. A. G. Larsen, C. Ellersgaard and L. Henriksen (Copenhagen Business School) on Danish elites (see <https://github.com/antongrau>), using similar methods than this Sinergia project (notably social network analysis and multiple correspondence analysis). Dr. **Thierry Rossier** will be in close contact with this team.

Finally, close collaborations have already been established with the main Swiss archives in the domain of economic history, namely the *Archiv für Zeitgeschichte* in Zurich (Dr. Daniel Nerlich), and the *Schweizerische Wirtschaftsarchiv*, (Dr. Martin Lüpold). This partnership involves the digitalization of specific archival fonds relevant for our project. Moreover, access to the archives of the *Chambre de commerce et d’industrie de Genève* (Archives d’Etat de Genève),

as well as those of the *Chambre suisse de l'horlogerie* (Musée international de l'horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds) has been secured.

2.3 Relevance and impact

2.3.1. Scientific relevance

The project will fill major gaps in our understanding of local Swiss elites during the 20th century, their spheres of action, and provide a better understanding of the role of elites and institutions in the development of diversified *Standorte* from the 1890s onwards. In particular, the role of chambers of commerce, art societies and cantonal universities have never been studied in such a systematic manner, despite their key importance for economic, cultural and scientific development. The multi-level framing of the project will bring to light the nested scales at work in the history of local *Standorte*, underscoring the connections between local actors and institutions to global trends.

At a more general and theoretical level, looking at how local elites were active and present not only in their city, but at the national and transnational levels in a long-term perspective, will provide innovative interdisciplinary results. Such a perspective has so far not been adopted by the international literature. By doing so, the project will contribute to the renewal of studies on elites and provide new analytical dimensions to the transformation of their scales of action. In addition, because of the importance of local governance structures as well as the early internationalization of Swiss society, looking at local elites in the Swiss context is of particular relevance when analyzing the different scales of action of local elites. This should clearly stimulate international interest on the Swiss case.

The interdisciplinary character of the research team will also allow cross-fertilization of usually disconnected approaches and methods and go beyond disciplines and specialization. For each discipline involved, we expect a **mutual enrichment** from such an interdisciplinary collaborative project. For example, historians will benefit from conceptual framings developed in political science and sociology. On the other hand, political scientists and sociologists will gain in relevance by integrating a long-term diachronic perspective in their empirical analysis. Thanks to a focus on actor's representations and practices, management studies will provide a better understanding of organizational and recruitment logics. Inversely, taking into account broader historical and sociological contexts will help management studies to better contextualize its analyzes.

The project has also an important cumulative character as it furthers research and data collection efforts developed by OBELIS. The focus on local elites will bring new perspectives on previous research focused on national elites. The project will thus provide historical and comparative perspectives on the three cities, that will allow us to go beyond monographic studies focused only on one canton or a city or a short period of time.

In terms of publications, we plan to publish in leading journals in history, sociology, political science and management studies. Each subproject will publish at least three peer-reviewed articles. "Transversal" articles involving different subprojects on the comparison between elites and their interrelations are also planned. A particular attention will be devoted to scientific journals with an explicit interdisciplinary perspective, such as *Socio-economic review*, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, *Economy and Society*, *Global Networks*, *Genèses*, *Urban history*, *Journal of Interdisciplinary history*, *Enterprise and Society*, *Organization Studies*.

The Sinergia team will attend international and national conferences in their respective disciplines. We will pay particular attention to interdisciplinary fora, such as the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE),

European Business History Association (EBHA) and the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS). A panel on “Wealthy cities and local economic elites” has already been proposed for the 2019 *Journées suisses d’histoire* taking place in Zurich. At the end of the project, the team plans to write a synthetic reference book on Swiss elites and their transformations during the 20th century (for a similar contribution on national economic elites, see Mach et al. 2016).

In terms of public access and valorization, we plan to publish the data and information gathered on the OBELIS database. This will broaden the scope of this online database and consolidate its national and international reputation. We will also consolidate our collaboration with www.metagrid.ch. This cross-reference tool for connecting historical databases – such as OBELIS; the Swiss Diplomatic Documents (www.dodis.ch), and the Swiss Historical Dictionary (www.hls-dhs-dss.ch), as well as foreign databases – will enable our research results to be directly accessible across a growing number of online Swiss and foreign portals and databases.

2.3.2. Digital Humanities (DH) dimension

This project will implement DH methods and tools throughout its duration. First, we intend to develop new tools for data collection, notably through collaboration with the Department of Language and Information Sciences at UNIL and the EPFL DHLAB, as well as the joint UNIL–EPFL Center for Digital Humanities. This project aims at using the database not only as a “storage space”, but also as a way to create “smart data”. This innovative approach may have a significant impact for linking and mining historical data. Second, the data collected will be integrated in the OBELIS database, and thus accessible not only to scholars, but also to journalists and other interested persons. This project will thus contribute to the public dissemination of scholarly knowledge. Finally, we intend to use different digital methods and tools in order to analyze the data collected, such as social network analysis, multiple correspondence analysis and geographic information systems. In this domain, we will collaborate with **Martin Grandjean** (UNIL, www.martingrandjean.ch), an expert in data visualization, in order to develop innovative ways of representing local power structures and their evolution across time. Specific attention will be given to the visualization of research results, in order to enhance our research output both in the academic and public spheres.

2.3.3. Education and teaching

Each co-applicant will organize specific BA/MA seminars related to the general topic of the project and its different subprojects. Including ongoing research in such courses has always been very appreciated by students, has produced excellent MA theses and thus contributed to overall scholarly output. At the University of Lausanne, the annual MA seminar on “Elites and Power” taught by Dr. **Stéphanie Ginalska** and Prof. **André Mach**, will be closely linked to the Sinergia project. At the University of Zurich, Prof. **Matthieu Leimgruber** will also organize in Spring 2019 a research seminar on 20th century Zurich elites. Prof. **Eric Davoine** will organize a research seminar on “Top management careers” in Autumn 2019. In the course of the research, we aim to organize joint sessions between faculty and students from the participating universities, with the aim of improving knowledge transfer. We will also have the opportunity to hire MA students as student-assistants for short-term data collection and analysis tasks, a solution which has proved very efficient in previous research projects.

2.3.4. Broader relevance and public dissemination

The three cities studied in this project can be considered as “success stories” which have managed to combine long-term economic development with high quality of life. To better understand how these three cities and their local

elites have succeeded in promoting their local *Standorte* in economic, cultural and academic terms can clearly contribute to foster better local governance mechanisms. Such an understanding will be of interest for local politicians and entrepreneurs as well as for the large public and the media. For this purpose, we plan to organize various *public outreach events* with libraries, archives and art museums. These events will consist in public conferences and concise publications on the historical development of local institutions, such as chambers of commerce or art societies. We will also propose workshops for teachers in order to enhance the heritage of their city. Inspired by experiences in Neuchâtel (<http://www.cooperaxion.org/?lang=en>) or in Lausanne (<https://balade.wordpress.com/les-balades-accompagnees/>), we will organize historical guided tours on the traces of elites in the three cities. These tours will be prepared with students and in collaboration with associations which already organize such guided tours in Geneva, Basel and Zurich.

We will also publish and make accessible ongoing research results and output on the OBELIS website and blog, as well as prepare regular contributions in the media.

2.4 State of the art relevant to the project

We will present here literature relevant to all four subprojects: for specific references on each subproject please refer to section 2.1. Besides a state of the art on elite research (for an overview, see Mach & David 2007 and Bühlmann et al. 2011), two research fields have been particularly relevant for our project: the renewal of elite research and studies on local governance and urban transformations.

A first strand of literature, mainly from comparative political economy, economic sociology and business management, has underscored the transformations of elites in the context of economic globalization and financialization. Recent publications addressing this issue have underlined the increasing transnationalization of business elites and growing importance of financial markets for large companies (Savage & Williams 2008; Carroll 2010; Zald & Lounsbury 2010; Morgan et al. 2015; Davis & Williams 2017; Cousin et al. 2018). Such studies point out to the gradual disaggregation of national elite networks during the recent period (Mizruchi 2013; Useem 2015; Dudouet & Gremont 2010; Heemskerk 2010 and 2013; on Swiss elites: Mach et al. 2011; David et al. 2015; Davoine et al. 2015; Mach et al. 2016). Furthermore, recent research about the role of multinational companies (MNCs) show that MNCs impact local ecosystems and institutions more and more at a local level, leading to new forms of economic governance at supra-national and sub-national levels (Almond et al. 2014, Clegg et al. 2018). Dörrenbächer & Geppert (2016) have also shown that it is necessary to differentiate between different categories of MNC elites and of local elites to identify new hybrid profiles.

However, the declining national rootedness of business elites has also been nuanced. For example, Hartmann (2011 and 2016) has underlined the persistence of the national character (in terms of education and career) of business elites, while Wagner (2010 and 2011) has stressed that the cosmopolitan way of life of the upper middle class has old roots, and that economic elites in the current globalization also strive to maintain some local legitimacy and rootedness (see also Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot 2003, see Schär 2015 for Swiss examples). In a similar perspective, Saunier (2006) has stressed the 19th century transnational connections of local actors in European cities.

The second strand of relevant literature refers to the study of local governance mechanisms. In economic history and sociology, as well as in comparative political economy, scholars have analyzed the central role of local actors for the economic development of regions and the “local construction of economic performance” based on the collaboration

between local business representatives (i.e. chamber of commerce) and political authorities. For example, studies by Zeitlin (2008) on regional industrial districts and by Crouch et al. (2001 and 2004) on local social systems, have underscored the decisive role of cooperation between economic actors at the local level for achieving successful economic development.

Recent studies in urban sociology and political science, such as Le Galès (2002 and 2011), have explored the historical development and recent reaffirmation of European cities and pointed out the key role of collaboration between economic, political and cultural urban actors for the development of cities (see also Isaacs & Prak 1996). Le Galès has convincingly demonstrated that, despite economic globalization and Europeanization, local urban structures as well as local economic actors, such as chambers of commerce, and local political authorities have continued to sustain local governance mechanisms to promote regional development. In the continuation of these studies, Andreotti et al. (2013 and 2015) have directly addressed the tensions between transnational mobility and local rootedness of urban upper middle-class representatives in the recent period. Adopting a micro-level perspective on the basis of interviews and questionnaires, Andreotti and his co-authors distinguish between different degrees of international mobility and rootedness. They enunciate the hypothesis of a “partial exit” strategy of these upper middle-class representatives. Such a perspective, even though not specifically focused on elites, raises particularly relevant questions concerning the logic of action of elites in terms of local rootedness and international mobility.

In addition to this literature, specific studies on Switzerland have been particularly influential and relevant for our project. We have first to mention here several historical studies on local power structures and patrician families during the 19th century, which serve as a starting point for our project (Tanner 1990 and 1995; Sarasin 1998a; Perroux 2003; Rieder 2008). Recent studies on Swiss urban sociology and politics have also provided relevant insights for our project (for an overview, Kaufmann 2012; on the historical dimension, Walter 1994). Urban changes, such as gentrification and metropolization, have impacted social cleavages in cities and the relevant scale of governance (Hitz et al. 1995; Bassand 2004; Kübler & Scheuss 2005; Kübler & Schwab 2007; Kübler et al. 2013). Gentrification has favored the emergence of new categories of urban elites in the recent period, and, because of political institutional stability, the gap between economic evolution and political life has also impacted the interactions between political and economic elites.

Finally, studies on Swiss elites, published in large part by scholars participating in this Sinergia project have until then focused on national elites and attempted to answer two main questions: who are the Swiss elites, and how do they collaborate? These studies have highlighted, among other results, the strong social cohesion among elites until the 1990s, the increasing presence of foreigners among business and academic elites since then, as well as the gradual (and modest) entry of women among power circles. These studies have shown that the composition of national elites has much changed in the recent decades, and that social homogeneity (in terms of education, military grade, career) as well as interrelations between elites, notably through interfirm networks or multi-positionality in different social spheres, have clearly declined since the 1990s. Such observations are however limited to national elites and have not been addressed for local ones (see among others, Parma 2007; Ginalski 2015; Daum et al. 2014; Mäder 2015; Bühlmann et al. 2015; Pilotti 2017).

2.5. Research approach

2.5.1. Theoretical approach and general hypotheses

Usual theoretical research approaches on elites have until then largely focused on fundamental – but not sufficient – issues of inequality and social reproduction (Cousin et al. 2018: 230). Studies by Wright Mills and Pierre Bourdieu constitute paradigmatic cases of such approaches. For example, seminal work by Mills (1956) has critically investigated the accumulation of power between actors stemming from different fields of power, and proposed the concept of “power elite” to designate the persons who transcend different institutional orders (politics, economy, military), are in constant exchange, share a similar lifestyle and are able to ensure their power in the long term. In doing so, Mills has however left out both the issue of diversity within the elites, and the question of the reconfiguration of power across time (Denord et al. 2018). Bourdieu has initiated rich and fundamental thinking in the field of elite research, notably with the concepts of “field of power” and his multi-faceted notion of “capital” (Bourdieu and De Saint Martin 1979; Bourdieu 1998). Studying various (economic, political, religious) fields, Bourdieu has analyzed the specific power resources in each of those fields and sought to determine the relationships between them and an overarching field of power (see Hjellbrekke et al. 2007; Denord et al. 2011). At the same time, however, he has neglected for a very long time, until a late work (Bourdieu 2002), gender issues (Cousin et al. 2018: 228) as well as the transnational dimension (Bühlmann et al. 2013).

Our project proposes a new research agenda on elites, in order to understand “the various power of various elites” (Cousin et al. 2018: 229), and how these elites have managed – or failed – to maintain dominant positions over time. This agenda builds upon, but also goes beyond, the classical approach as suggested by Cousin et al. (2018), and is articulated around the following main “theoretical pathways”.

First, we will build on the legacy of Mills and Bourdieu. As a starting point, we will draw upon Mills’ definition of elite, which includes the people who occupy “pivotal positions” in the society, which allow them to “make decisions having major consequences” (Mills 2000: 4). Moreover, we will resort to above-mentioned Bourdieusian sociological concepts of “field of power” and “capital”, in order to analyze the relation between elite and power.

Secondly, most studies on elites remain largely synchronic. A major strength of our project relies on its long term historical perspective in order to probe the changes over time. By covering more than 100 years of Swiss local elites, our project will highlight the transformations of local elites and power structures, as well as their multi-level activities. Indeed, the relation between elite and power is a dynamic process, subject to historical contingencies. Economic growth and downturn, globalization and national withdrawal, urban transformations, changing scales of economic and political life, among other examples, have an impact on this process.

Thirdly, our project aims at going beyond the “methodological nationalism”, which considers the nation-state as the relevant frame of analysis, and has been more and more called into question by the process of increasing globalization (see Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002; Beck 2007; Saunier 2013). We will thus take into account not only *national*, but also *local* and *transnational* scales in order to assess the multi-level activities of local elites. For instance, this will allow us to expand beyond the different forms of capitals (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) identified by Bourdieu, by integrating and developing the concept of cosmopolitan capital, which refers to elites’ degree of internationalization (Wagner 2007; Bühlmann et al. 2013).

Fourthly, we aim at developing the gender issue, as it has been largely neglected by elite research until now, notably because of the long underrepresentation of women in elite position. In order to reintegrate women in the analysis, we will follow the historical evolution of their role “from spouses to leader” (Rabier 2013: 205-207). Indeed, although women have been largely excluded from elite positions until the end of the 20th century, they played an invisible – but nevertheless crucial – role, notably in weaving alliances among prominent families through marriage, in order to both preserve social cohesion and family wealth, as well as to maintain the social capital of the family through the organization of receptions and galas (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot 2003; Rabier 2013; for the Swiss case: Sarasin 1998a). Taking into account the family resources of elites will thus allow us to shed light on the invisible role played by women in the three cities. Moreover, as our project encompasses also the most recent period, it will enable to seize and analyze a major transformation in the relationship between elite, power and gender, as women began to access elite positions at the turn of the 21st century (on the Swiss case, see Ginalski 2016).

Building upon the two research axes presented in the introduction and the general theoretical framework sketched above, we can formulate two main hypotheses that are transversal for the whole project.

- Elites constantly run the risk of losing their privileged position. Patrician families, which still enjoyed a dominant position around 1900, have in all likelihood lost some of their influence during the 20th century. Our research will explore to what extent the influence of these families has decreased over time, and who were the new elite groups that succeeded in reaching leading positions in the institutions we intend to study. In this perspective, specific attention will be paid to the emergence of newcomers, such as women and foreigners. Echoing what we have already observed for *national* elites (Mach et al. 2016), we expect that the accumulation of power positions among local elites has declined over time, thus heralding a profound transformation of local power structures.
- Our second hypothesis is related to the interconnections between the local and the transnational level through which local business, cultural, political and academic elites have entertained during the last century, and how these multiple scales of action have changed. Shifting the focus from the national to the local level should allow us to observe how local elites have faced the changing scale of economic, cultural and political life. We expect to identify different typologies of local elites: between those mainly active at the local level, without national and transnational activities, and those developing far reaching activities beyond their local rootedness. Second, in a diachronic perspective, we assume that local elites have for a long time succeeded in accumulating positions at the national and international levels, but that the former has declined during the more recent period in favor of the latter. In addition, we can expect in the recent period the emergence of increasingly disconnected and diversified categories of elites, characterized by different sociological background in terms of education or career patterns, because of role specialization and differentiation.

2.5.2. Comparing local trajectories over time

These general hypotheses will be tested and compared in three urban contexts: Zurich, Basel and Geneva. This comparative approach will allow us to observe if the presence or absence of factors – in socio-economic or political terms – impact differently the profile of local elites and the power structure of each city. To do this we have identified factors that make our cities both similar and dissimilar. In this way, the similar characteristics of these cities are considered “controlled or neutralized”, while the characteristics that differentiate them can become explanatory variables of the variation across local elites.

Since the end of the 19th century, all three cities underwent profound changes in demographic, economic and political terms (for a synthetic history of Basel, Bauer 1981; on Geneva, Perroux 2014; on Zurich, Flüeler and Flüeler-Grauwiller 1994). Historical comparisons in terms of local GDP and demographic evolution suggest that Basel,

Geneva and Zurich developed in different but relatively parallel ways: none was able to gain a truly dominant position and none completely lost ground compared to the others. All three were in the end relatively successful, as shown by the recent ranking of cities according to their quality of living. This is also illustrative of the persistence of the polycentric character of Switzerland. All three remained during the whole 20th century among the richest regions of the country (Hiestand et al. 2012).

Zurich, Basel and Geneva have remained the three largest Swiss cities in terms of population, have always been the most internationalized in economic and cultural terms, and have all developed an international airport. In demographic terms, the three cities have also followed a similar path: after constant increase until the 1960s, they underwent a relative decline until a new upward trend in the 1990s. At the political level, the three cities have experienced quite similar changes. During the first half of the 20th century, and especially during the 1930s, the electoral success of the social-democratic party led to center-left political majority in all three cities. This situation repeated itself at the end of the 1980s, when center-left majorities again came to dominate city politics. The process of metropolization (Bassand 2004), not only gave rise to new forms of metropolitan governance (Kübler et al. 2013) affecting power structures of the cities, but also contributed to transform urban demographic structures (notably through gentrification processes, Rérat & Lees 2011) through the development of a new urban middle class, more inclined to vote for center-left parties.

Concerning the major variations, that can become explanatory factors for differences in local elite organization and activities, three major dimensions should be mentioned: 1) employment structure; 2) political-institutional insertion in their respective canton; and 3) their relations to neighboring foreign countries.

First, whereas Basel and Zurich have had an important industrial sector during a large part of the 20th century (respectively chemical and pharmaceutical industry in Basel and machines industry in Zurich), the Geneva industrial sector already lost its predominance at the beginning of the 20th century. The degree of international orientation of these dominant economic sectors might also differ between the cities. Such socio-economic differences might affect the categories of the dominant local economic elites in each city as well as their respective transnational connections. Second, the three cities differ in their geographical and institutional-political insertion. While the city-canton of Basel is characterized by the quasi absence of communal authorities (except a few small municipalities) because of the “secession” of Basel-Land canton during the 19th century, Geneva and Zurich both have a significant cantonal hinterland. Both cities clearly dwarf other municipalities in terms of population (in 2015, Geneva represented 40% and Zurich around 30% of their overall cantonal population). This implies that both Geneva and Zurich have to deal with the insertion of their city representatives at the cantonal level, as well as how cantonal authorities can support their “capital”. In other words, while in Basel the city/canton divide follows cantonal borders, the interdependency and overlapping between the urban and the cantonal elites must be taken into account in Geneva and Zurich in order to understand city development. Third, the distinctive geographical position of Basel and Geneva make them border cities, which may have favored very early on the transnational relations of the local elite, especially with France and Germany.

These factors underscore the unity in diversity of our case studies; these configurations make them comparable over time and allows us to identify diverging factors that could hypothetically differentiate spatially and temporally the

local elites that are at the center of our project, as well as their specific power structures and their transnational connections.

2.5.3. Data collection

A major objective of this project will be to gather systematic data on local elites (see Table 2 below). The data collected will be integrated in the OBELIS database. This database contains biographical information on more than 35'000 individuals holding a power position at the national level for the political, economic, administrative and academic spheres in Switzerland from 1910 to 2015. In order to ensure data compatibility, we will adopt the same benchmark years that were used in the OBELIS database (1910, 1937, 1957, 1980, 2000). Moreover, we will add two extra benchmarks (1890 and 2020) in order to integrate the late 19th century as well as the most contemporary period. Following the procedures of the OBELIS database, we will collect key biographical information on local elites for each subproject: date of birth (and death when relevant), sex, nationality, social origin and close family links (parents and spouses), education, and main career steps. We also aim to collect personal addresses, in order to visualize the geographical location of elites.

This way of making has three major advantages. First, using such a centralized database will facilitate the coordination among subprojects. Second, it will allow to build upon and cross-check the data collected during previous research projects on Swiss *national* elites. This will for example allow us to see if local elites in Basel, Zurich and Geneva were also active at the national level. Third, it will enrich the OBELIS database, which is widely used by scholars, but also the wider public.

Table 2. Estimated size of prosopography sample for each subproject

Subproject/institutions	Total sample size	Comments
(S1) Chambers of commerce:	500	Executive committees: between 15 and 35 members for the three institutions
(S2) Leading companies	770	CEOs and presidents of the board of directors of 10-20 chemical, 20-30 banking and 10-20 watchmaking sector. For 2000 and 2020, we will include information on executive committees (i.e. about 200 individuals)
(S3) Art societies	400	Executive committee: around 15 members for the 4 institutions (including <i>Schweizerisches Kunstverein</i>)
(S4) Universities	550	Out of a total of 3300 professors, selected on the basis of institutional position and scientific reputation*
Political elites**	245 (already collected)	Executive: Basel = 7 (7 city + 0 canton for each benchmark); Zurich: 9; ZH: 7; Geneva: 5; GE: 7
	3500 (partially collected)	Parliaments: Basel: 100; Zurich: 125; ZH: 100; Geneva: 80; GE: 100

* See David et al. 2018: 13

** **Political elites** are not the object of a specific subproject. We will however gather data on the composition of the municipal parliaments of the three cities, of the parliament of the cantons of Zurich (ZH) and Geneva (GE), and of the executive branch of the two cantons (ZH and GE) and three cities. The members of the municipal parliament of Zurich since 1945 have already been integrated in the OBELIS database. Such lists of local politicians with basic biographical information are easily accessible in cantonal or municipal archives. Dr. **Andrea Pilotti** (senior researcher, UNIL, OVPR and OBELIS), Prof. **André Mach** and the post-doc coordinator will be responsible for this data collection.

We have already identified archival institutions that contain information on the individuals mentioned in the above table as well as relevant biographical information. Moreover, we have developed collaboration with their staff.

- **(S1)** Archives of the Basel, Geneva, Zurich **chambers of commerce**, as well as the *Chambre Suisse de l'horlogerie* are available in public institutions (respectively at the *Schweizerische Wirtschaftsarchiv* in Basel, the *Archives d'État de Genève*, the *Archiv für Zeitgeschichte* in Zurich, and the the *Musée international*

d'horlogerie in La Chaux-de-Fonds). Furthermore, each chamber of commerce has published extensive reports, documents newspapers, as well as members' lists, which are available in libraries. The *Archiv für Zeitgeschichte* as well as the *Schweizerisches Wirtschaftsarchiv* have already started to digitalize relevant archives for our research upon request.

- **(S2)** Data on the directors of major companies **from the banking, chemical-pharmaceutical and watchmaking sectors** in the three cities can be gathered from published and available company reports. These documents are available at the *Schweizerische Wirtschaftsarchiv*. Trade associations of the three sectors also publish reports and newsletters that provide information on specific activities and members. Contacts have been established with key archival centers for the banking (*Schweizerische Bankiervereinigung*), watchmaking (*Musée International d'horlogerie*) and chemical-pharmaceutical sector (Novartis corporate archives) that provide excellent access to historical documents.
- **(S3)** We will first investigate the archives of each **Kunstvereine** in order to identify members of their executive committees. These archives are located in the *Staatsarchiv-Basel-Stadt* (*Basler Kunstverein* and *Basler Kunstmuseum*), the *Archives de la Ville de Genève* (*Société genevoise des Beaux-Arts* and *Musée d'art et d'histoire*) and in the *Kunsthaus Zürich* (*Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft* and *Kunsthaus Zurich*). We will also investigate the archives of the *Schweizerisches Kunstverein* in Zurich. Second, we will investigate private organizations, notably the Beyeler Foundation and Art Basel fonds (*Staatsarchiv-Basel-Stadt*), the Moos Art gallery and auction house in Geneva (*Bibliothèque d'Art et d'archéologie du Musée d'art et d'histoire*) and the Fondation Collection E.G. Bührle in Zürich. This will notably allow us to highlight the transnational connections of these cultural actors and institutions. In addition, we will use the different publications produced by these institutions, such as *Kunstvereine* annual reports and auction houses catalogues.
- **(S4)** The data collection on **university professors** relies on a previous SNSF research project "Academic elites in Switzerland (1910-2000): between autonomy and power" (SNSF#. 100017_143202). All professors for five benchmark years have already been integrated in the OBELIS database. We will have to complete the list for 1890 and 2020. Further information will be gathered concerning the local involvement of university professors or the composition of University boards. Institutional positions by professors (Dean or President) have already been collected. We will also rely on documentary analysis concerning the university law reforms in the three cantons. Relevant documents are accessible in university archives.

While we can rely on experience accumulated during previous research project on Swiss elites, we also aim at developing innovative research methods combining text mining and network mining approaches. For example, since historical information is always to some extent uncertain and in need of interpretation, an overarching requirement of historical research is that all statements should be linked to provenance information in order to document *who* derived *which* insights from *what* document. These requirements are however difficult to meet in a traditional database. During a one-year test-phase, we will evaluate, in collaboration with **Michael Piotrowski** (UNIL), the relevance of *nanopublications* (Groth et al. 2010) as a way to overcome such limitations. This approach developed in biomedical research aims to uniformly represent references and scholars' insights with respect to these references as small, self-contained entities on the Semantic Web. Nanopublications have been developed as a common framework for describing scientific statements together with their context (e.g., original publication, authors, organisms involved) in a machine-readable fashion, so that scientific results can be accessed more easily, referenced unambiguously, connected to their authors, and automatically aggregated and analyzed. To date, nanopublications – or similar approaches – are not yet been widely used in the humanities and social sciences, but their potential has already been demonstrated (Golden & Shaw 2015; Hessbrüggen-Walter 2013; Piotrowski 2015).

2.5.4. Combined methodological approaches

In order to address our hypotheses and analyze our data, we will combine different methods and tools stemming from history, sociology, management research and digital humanities. The following table sums up the methods used in order to answer our research's goals.

Table 3. Methods and expected outputs

Methods	(S1)	(S2)	(S3)	(S4)	Main outputs
Documentary analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓	Identification of local elites Collection of biographical information Qualitative analysis of elites' logic of action
Prosopography	✓	✓	✓	✓	Tracing the evolution of elites' social profile and their multiple power positions across time
Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA)	✓		✓	✓	Elaborating a typology of diversified elite groups
Social network analysis (SNA)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Visualizing kinship ties and affiliation to organizations at the local, national and transnational levels
Geographic Information System (GIS)	✓		✓	✓	Investigate spatial homogeneity/heterogeneity of elites and institutions
Company case study		✓			Studying the interplays between elite changes, corporate strategic organizational practices and evolutions of local institutional environments
Content analysis (interviews)		✓			Identifying corporate and actor's logics and rationales in career practices and corporate strategies

Documentary analysis

Content analysis of archival (such as the minutes of executive committees) and published sources (such as newspapers and annual reports) will allow us to identify individuals occupying elite positions in the institutions taken into account in the different subprojects and locate information relevant for the prosopography. Moreover, content analysis of first-hand material such as archival sources will enable a qualitative analysis of the logic of action of elites. For example, it will contribute to understand how chambers of commerce reacted to the emergence of center-left majorities in the three cities in consideration from the interwar period onwards; in the case of *Kunstvereine*, this approach will give insight concerning support to institutional art spaces, artistic activities and international exhibitions.

Prosopography

We will use prosopography in order to analyze the social profile of local elites and its evolution across time. This method consists in analyzing a group of actors sharing common distinctive features. It allows to overcome the limitation of single individual biographic approaches, and thus to include them in larger groups, institutions or networks (Lemerrier & Picard 2011: 605; see also Becker 1986; Bourdieu 1986). This approach has been widely used by historical research on elites (e.g. Charle et al. 1980; Joly 2000), as well as by Bourdieusian sociology (Broady 2002). Prosopography will allow us to investigate empirically our first hypothesis concerning the decline of patrician families among local elites, and the arrival of "new elites" such as women and foreigners. Prosopography will also bring a better understanding of the institutions taken into account, as it allows to investigate how institutions are structured by individual careers, and vice versa (Lemerrier & Picard 2011: 619).

Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA)

MCA is a multivariate method that integrates and condenses information contained in a large number of variables. It allows researchers to represent this information in a relational graph, which represents a cloud of categories and a cloud of individuals (Le Roux & Rouanet 2010). MCA has been increasingly used to study elites in recent years

(Hjellbrekke et al. 2007; Bühlmann et al. 2012; Denord et al. 2018; Ellersgaard and Larsen 2018). A major input of the method consists in establishing typologies of elites based on various biographical variables. For instance, it will allow us to measure and relate cultural capital (education), social capital (networks) or cosmopolitan experience with other variables, such as gender or family origin. Moreover, combining MCA with SNA can bring promising cross-fertilization (Cousin et al. 2018: 238; for an example of the Swiss case, see Bühlmann et al. 2013).

Social network analysis (SNA)

SNA has been long used by sociologists and can be also very rewarding for historical analysis (see notably Lemerrier 2005; Scott & Carrington 2011; Saunier 2013: 126-130). SNA allows the study of ties between connected units. Most of the time, these units are persons or organizations (Scott & Carrington 2011:11; for an application on local elites, Hillmann 2008). Applying SNA to historical longitudinal data can thus bring to light changes across time in the overall structure of social ties among both actors and institutions. In this sense, our project aims to address the new challenges that have come up with the “growing interest in questions of space and time in network analysis” (Lemerrier 2015: 2). In this research, we will draw the social networks of local elites and institutions, and mostly focus on two types of ties, namely kinship ties and affiliation of individuals to institutions (for an example of SNA integrating both types, see Lemerrier 2006). This will notably enable us to uncover the “invisible” role played by women through kinship ties.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

Based on the residence of the individuals and addresses of institutions (already available for academic and political elites), we will use spatial analysis techniques in order to shed light on the geographical structure of power in the three cities. Although still marginal in the elite study, this method has shown promising and innovative results (e.g. Cunningham et al. 2015 on the UK; Ellersgaard 2016: 311 on Denmark; David & Heiniger 2018 on Geneva). It will allow us to see if elite individuals and institutions tend to cluster in certain areas, and how these clusters evolve across time according to the socio-economic and urban development of the city. Moreover, the aim is to measure the impact of spatial homogeneity/heterogeneity on elite cohesion. This micro-geography approach offers thus an opportunity to examine how spatiality may contribute to explain how elites preserve or develop their own sub-culture, power and privileges.

Company case study research

Case study research is a major research approach in the field of qualitative management research by producing contextualized thick descriptions of phenomena (Piekkari & Welch 2011). This is a traditional approach to study institutional interplays as well as power relations between MNCs and local environments (Becker-Ritterspach et al. 2016; Almond et al. 2017; Clegg et al. 2018). We have already developed contacts and collected data during a previous project on the watchmaking industry (Davoine & Mettler 2018). We will conduct case study analysis on the basis of interviews and documents for the major companies of the three sectors considered in order to understand power and agency of top managers. Case studies will help us to understand the coalescence of three phenomena: internationalization of top management and of corporate strategies, and changes in governance mechanisms.

Content analysis of interviews

Combined with case study research, we will interview around 10 to 20 managers from the different companies with a representative sample of local and foreign managers and HR Directors to understand the corporate actors' logics behind corporate strategies and career practices. We will also conduct complementary interviews with institutional

actors to identify perceived representations of the institutional interplays between corporate actors' strategies and local environment. By using content analysis software (nvivo or MaxQDA), we will conduct a thematic analysis (King & Horrocks 2010) with thematic categories on power capabilities a) of top management in and around multinational corporations (Clegg et al. 2018), and b) of the cognitive frames of local vs. foreign top managers (Davoine et al. 2015)

2.6. Implementation

The four subprojects (**S3** and **S4** at the UNIL, **S1** at UZH and **S2** at UNIFR) will be implemented in close cooperation with OBELIS acting as "leading house". Prof. **André Mach** and Dr. **Stéphanie Ginalski** will act as the main coordinators, with the collaboration of one postdoc coordinator (100%, 50% for coordination purpose and 50% for scientific purpose) and one IT specialist (50%). Based on a decade-long experience on research on Swiss elites, the OBELIS team offers the best possible environment for coordinating such a project. Thanks to excellent computer and server infrastructures as well as digitalization know-how, a pathbreaking database has already been developed. All co-applicants and several associated partners have already worked together, mostly in former research and publication projects. Such experience will facilitate team collaboration. In order to develop a good synergy and structured integration of the whole project, we will organize coordination meetings with all project members to discuss methodological, technological and theoretical issues, as well as coordinate public and digital diffusion of results (see Table 4 for the schedule).

After the organization of a two-day kick-off meeting, coordination activities during the **first year** will focus on identifying and collecting relevant data, completing literature reviews for all four subprojects and sharing key sources as well as data on local elite, and last but not least training PhD students on research methods and theoretical frames (e.g. by attending summer schools). During the **second year**, we will use triannual meetings to discuss cross-cutting issues, including methodological ones, as well as emerging results and new theoretical debates. We will also stimulate cooperation and exchange between subprojects. Moreover, we will organize a common doctoral seminar (open to other researchers) and/or integrate doctoral presentations during triannual meetings. We will focus during the **third year** on emerging cross-cutting theoretical and methodological contributions and publication strategies by organizing regular presentations of results during triannual meetings as well as a doctoral seminar with international experts. During the **fourth and last year**, coordination activities will focus on the diffusion of results by the means of journal articles and book chapters as well as dissemination to a broader audience by the means of student research seminars, media articles, public lectures as well as publication of results in new digital/online formats.

2.7 Risk management

For such a project, two major risks could be identified. First, the accessibility of data and archives could be proven to be difficult. However, contacts and collaboration with most of the relevant archives have been already taken, and access to the archives has been secured. Second, a good IT support to ensure centralized data collection will be key for the coordination and collaboration between the universities involved. Data gathering will be centralized in the OBELIS database, hosted on the University of Lausanne server. The IT center of the UNIL will ensure access to the database for external collaborators, a procedure that has already been very profitable during previous collaboration with colleagues from the Universities of Fribourg and Geneva. The IT specialist in this project will be fully integrated in the joint UNIL-EPFL DH Center and thus benefit from a stimulating collective work environment.

Table 4. Schedule and Implementation

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick off workshop • Triannual meetings (AM, SG, Postdoc) • Common platform for sharing files and data (AM, SG, Postdoc, IT) • Update of OBELIS database and website (AM, SG, Postdoc, IT) • Data collection on political elites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination meetings and doctoral seminar with international experts (AM, SG, Postdoc) • Experimental data collection methods with M. Piotrowski (nanopublications) • Completing data collection (ML, PE, PhD1) • Preparing first conference papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination meetings and doctoral seminar with international experts (AM, SG, Postdoc) • Book preparation (AM, SG, Postdoc, SR) • Dissemination activities (AM, SG, Postdoc, IT, SR) • Digital diffusion strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination meetings and doctoral seminar with international experts (AM, SG, Postdoc) • Book preparation (AM, SG, Postdoc, SR) • Dissemination activities (AM, SG, Postdoc, IT, SR) • Digital diffusion strategy
S1 Chambers of commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection in archives (ML, PE, PhD1) • Literature review and PhD design (ML, PE, CL, PhD1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing data collection (ML, PE, PhD1) • Preparing first conference papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis/papers/presentations (ML, PE, CL, PhD1) • Conference papers and articles • Presentations to field actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference papers and articles (ML, PE, CL, PhD1) • Dissemination: public lectures and media • Completion of PhD thesis (PhD1)
S2 Leading companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection to establish the database of top management profiles (PhD2 under supervision of PE, PYD and ED) • Literature review and PhD design • First contacts/explorative interviews with field actors (ED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing data collection (PhD 2 under supervision of PE, PYD and ED) • Interviews of managers and institutional actors (ED, PhD2) • Preparing first conference papers (PhD2, PYD, PE, ED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis/papers/presentations (ED, PE, PYD, PhD2) • Preparing conference papers / Chapters and articles • Presentations to field actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing conference papers and articles (PYD, PE ED and PhD2) • Dissemination: public lectures and media • Completion of PhD thesis (PhD2)
S3 Art societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection in archives (SG, CLD, FB, PhD3) • Literature review and PhD design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing data collection (SG, CLD, FB, PhD3) • Preparing first conference papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis/writing papers (SG, CLD, FB, PhD3) • Conference papers and articles • Presentations to field actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papers and articles (SG, CLD, FB, PhD3) • Dissemination: public lectures and media • Completion of PhD thesis (PhD3)
S4 Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection in archives (AM, TD, TR, PhD4) • Literature review and PhD design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing data collection + archives (AM, TD, TR, PhD4) • Preparing first conference papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis/writing papers (AM, TD, TR, PhD4) • Conference papers and articles • Presentations to field actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference papers and articles (AM, TD, TR, PhD4) • Dissemination: public lectures and media • Completion of PhD thesis (PhD4)
Individual contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and diffusion: André Mach (AM), Stéphanie Ginalski (SG), Post-doc coordinator (Postdoc), IT specialist (IT) and Senior Researcher (SR). • S1 Chamber of commerce: Matthieu Leimgruber (ML), Pierre Eichenberger (PE), Claire Lemerrier (CL) and a PhD student (PhD1) • S2 Leading companies: Eric Davoine (ED), Pierre-Yves Donzé (PYD), Pierre Eichenberger (PE) and a PhD student (PhD2). • S3 Art societies: Stéphanie Ginalski (SG), Felix Bühlmann (FB), Claire-Lise Deblüe (CLD) and a PhD student (PhD3) • S4 Universities: André Mach (AM), Thomas David (TD), Thierry Rossier (TR) and a PhD student (PhD4) 			

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