

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Territorialities at Play in the Internationalisation of Higher Education Fields

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework: Cosmopolitan Field Analysis

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

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

### 1.3 The Case-study: Swiss Hospitality Management Schools

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

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

## 2 Mixed Methods to Investigate an Educational Field

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

### 2.1 Interviews with Staff

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.2 Multiple Correspondence Analysis

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

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

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

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

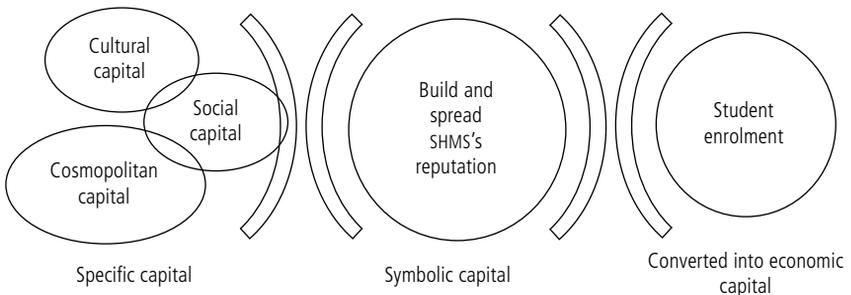
Due to the private nature of SHMSs and the absence of publicly available data about them, I constructed a comprehensive database by screening their respective websites through digital ethnography (Pink et al. 2016). This database facilitated a comparative analysis, encompassing variables such as year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

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

### 3 Operationalization of Institutional Capitals

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

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



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

#### 3.1 Institutional Cultural Capital

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

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

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

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

### 3.2 Institutional Social Capital

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

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

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

### 3.3 Institutional Cosmopolitan Capital

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

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

#### 4 The field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools

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

Table 1 Eigenvalues and Modified Rates of Axes 1–5

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

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

Table 2 Contributions of Active Variables and Modalities in the MCA

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

*Continuation of Table 2 on the next page.*

*Continuation of Table 2.*

| Variable                                  | Modalities                                    | Axis 1      | Axis 2      | N  | %    |
|---|---|-------------|-------------|----|------|
| <b>Institutional Social Capital</b>       |   |             |             |    |      |
| Proportion of local students              | More than 50%                                 | <i>9.3</i>  | 1.3         | 6  | 30.0 |
|   | 50% to 20%                                    | 1.0         | <i>7.4</i>  | 2  | 10.0 |
|   | Less than 20%                                 | 3.0         | <i>3.7</i>  | 12 | 60.0 |
|   | Total   | <b>13.3</b> | <b>12.4</b> | -- | --   |
| Alumni Count                              | Fewer than 10 000 (or unknown)                | 0.5         | 3.0         | 16 | 80.0 |
|   | More than 10 000                              | 2.1         | <i>12.0</i> | 4  | 20.0 |
|   | Total   | 2.6         | <b>15.0</b> | -- | --   |
| Annual Student Enrolment                  | Fewer than 300                                | <i>4.9</i>  | 0.7         | 9  | 45.0 |
|   | 301 to 1000                                   | 0.5         | 0.6         | 4  | 20.0 |
|   | 1001 to 2 000                                 | 1.8         | 0.0         | 5  | 25.0 |
|   | More than 2 000                               | 2.6         | <i>8.7</i>  | 2  | 10.0 |
|   | Total   | <b>9.8</b>  | <b>10.1</b> | -- | --   |
| <b>Total</b>                              |   | 25.7        | <b>37.5</b> |    |      |
| <b>Institutional Cosmopolitan Capital</b> |   |             |             |    |      |
| Teaching Language(s)                      | English                                       | 1.9         | <i>3.3</i>  | 13 | 65.0 |
|   | National Language (French, German or Italian) | <i>8.8</i>  | 0.3         | 4  | 20.0 |
|   | English + National Language                   | 0.3         | <i>10.4</i> | 3  | 15.0 |
|   | Total   | <b>11.0</b> | <b>14.0</b> |    |      |
| Educational Network Territoriality        | Single-owned school in Switzerland            | <i>5.3</i>  | 0.1         | 8  | 40.0 |
|   | Educational group – Switzerland               | 1.5         | 1.5         | 9  | 45.0 |
|   | Educational Group – International             | 2.7         | 3.0         | 3  | 15.0 |
|   | Total   | <b>9.5</b>  | 4.5         |    |      |
| Number of Nationalities Represented       | Fewer than 50                                 | <i>6.8</i>  | 0.3         | 8  | 40.0 |
|   | 51 to 80                                      | 1.8         | 5.2         | 9  | 45.0 |
|   | More than 80                                  | <i>3.9</i>  | <i>9.0</i>  | 3  | 15.0 |
|   | Total   | <b>12.5</b> | <b>14.5</b> |    |      |
| Academic Accreditation Territoriality     | Swiss   | <i>9.3</i>  | 1.3         | 6  | 30.0 |
|   | Foreign                                       | <i>3.7</i>  | 1.7         | 11 | 55.0 |
|   | Swiss + Foreign                               | 0.4         | 0.7         | 3  | 15.0 |
|   | Total   | <b>13.5</b> | 3.7         |    |      |
| <b>Total</b>                              |   | 46.5        | 36.7        |    |      |

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

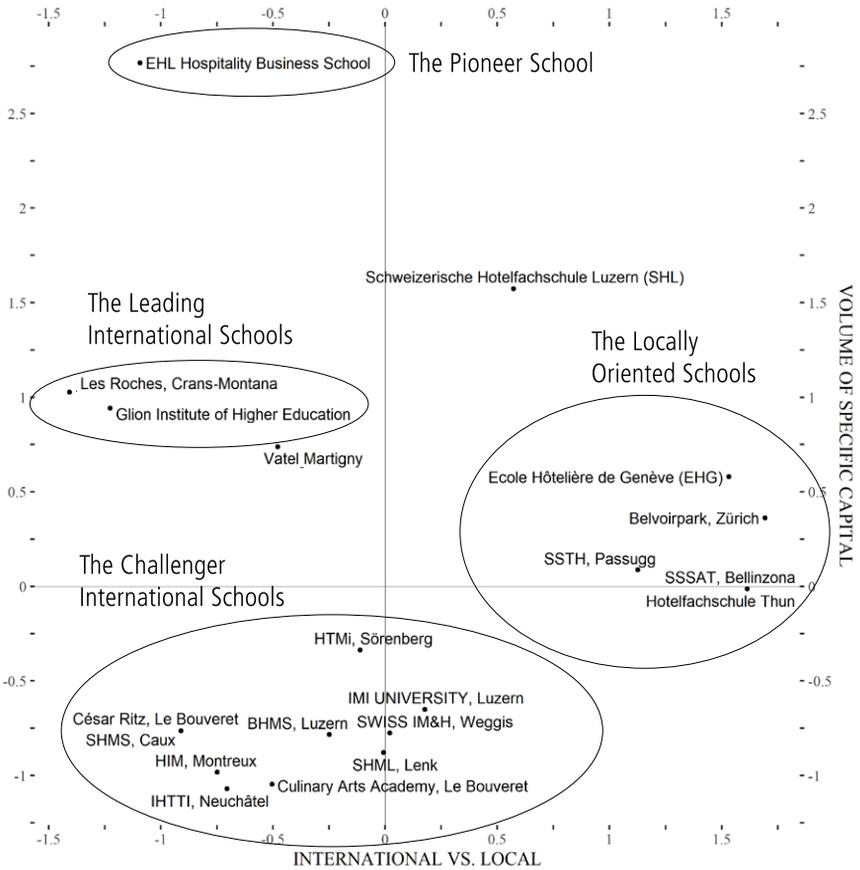
Figure 2 MCA Field of Swiss Hospitality Management Schools – Clouds of Categories



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

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

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



#### 4.1 Pioneer School – Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL)

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

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

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

## 4.2 Leading International Schools

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

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

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

### 4.3 Challenger International Schools

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

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

### 4.4 Locally Oriented Schools

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

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

#### 4.5 Conclusion

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

## 5 Institutional Strategies to Attract Wealthy Students

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

### 5.1 Seeking Academic Recognition Through Various Accreditations

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

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

### 5.2 Leveraging Alumni Networks

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

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

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

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

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

### 5.3 Playing With the Symbolic Attributes of Territories

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 6 Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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