



The golden layer Top wealth and the 1% in Switzerland

MA Seminar | Fall semester 2023 | Tuesdays 8.00-9.45 | room KO-2 F-155

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In recent decades, rankings of the richest individuals and families (e.g. the «300 richest Swiss» annual special issue of the business magazine *Bilanz*, published since 1990) have become a media ritual. Renewed research on income and wealth inequality (see, for example, the data on Switzerland in the World Inequality Database > <https://wid.world>) has also blossomed. Heated debates about social inequality and the role of wealth in our society are also on the political agenda (e.g. the left-wing «99% initiative» which was turned down in a popular vote in September 2021, or the upcoming «Make the rich pay for climate change» initiative launched by the youth wing of the Swiss Socialist party). But in a *longue durée* perspective, what do we really know about the nature and level of high incomes and wealth? This research seminar will examine the profile of top wealth using tax records and other 19th century and early 20th century unpublished sources. Who are the rich? Where do their assets come from? How did they accumulate their wealth? Does one become rich through inheritance or through work? What are the social, residential, occupational and familial structures of the top wealth strata? Participants of the seminar will explore these topics and contribute to answering these questions by working on original sources and thus contribute to a vibrant field of historical inquiry.

Requirements, grading and deadlines

- We expect **regular attendance, thorough preparation (i.e. reading) and active participation**. Please send us a short email in advance to announce your eventual absence.

Students who are not able to attend the first session on September 19 should imperatively contact us without delay.

Students who do not attend the first two sessions (September 19 and 26) will have to write a short report (2 A4 pages) on selected readings.

- Your **final grade** will be made of two parts (**portfolio formula, 12 ECTS**)

25% (fall semester 2023)

Writing and presenting **two (cumulative) preliminary research contributions**. These contributions will be posted on OLAT Forum and serve as foundations for your final research paper. Not handing in these contributions and/or not presenting them will result in a failed grade for the first 25% of the final grade

75% (spring semester 2024)

Preparation and writing of a **research paper**, based on secondary literature: app. 20-25 A4 pages, around 50'000-62'000 signs (spaces included), without bibliography and eventual appendices.

- Research proposals as well as your final paper can be written in either English, French or German. Please choose the language in which you are the most proficient.
- Please take note and strictly abide to the following **deadlines**

Friday 27.10.2022	Preliminary research ideas (1 A4)	
Friday 08.12.2022	Preliminary research dossier (3-5 A4)	= 25% of the final grade
Friday 03.05.2023	Final research paper (see above)	= 75% of the final grade

- Tips and how to's on scientific writing and citation systems can be found in the **UZH HS Kompass** <https://www.hist.uzh.ch/de/studium/geschichte-studieren-in-zuerich/studienrelevante-dokumente/kompass.html>

Seminar program

Unless otherwise indicated, readings will be made available on OLAT.

19.9	Wealth at the top: a short introduction
1 st session	Henri Hartig & Pierre Demont: Nos riches, Télévision suisse romande (TV documentary «Temps Présent»), 30.1.1975, 51 minutes) https://www.rts.ch/archives/tv/information/temps-present/11065998-nos-riches.html . Background on Carl. M. Holliger, Die Reichen und die Superreichen in der Schweiz (Hamburg: 1974). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advertisements: NZZ 29.9.1974, Walliser Bote 30.8.1974, <i>Journal de Genève</i>, 30.1.1975.• Reviews: Andreas Freund: Swiss tycoons. The secret rich, in: <i>New York Times</i>, 3.11.1974; Claire Masnata-Rubattel, A propos d'un livre important. Les riches et les super riches: l'élite?, in: <i>Peuple valaisan</i>, 5.3.1976; Hans-Ulrich Jost: [book review], in: <i>Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte</i>, 64/3 (1977). <i>This first session will also be devoted to a presentation of the seminar program and requirements.</i>
26.9	Wealth, elites, and power structures
2 nd session	Charles W. Mills , The power elite. Oxford/New York: 1956 > Chapter 5: The very rich, 94-117, 374-82. Edward Pessen , Riches, class, and power before the Civil War, Lexington: 1973 > Chapter TBD.
3.10	Inheritance and the transmission of wealth
3 rd session	Jonas Gassman and Laura Schmid , two MA students who have followed this seminar in the fall of 2022, will present the results of their research based on probate inventories of the Zurich wealthy.
10.10	Ongoing research on Zurich top wealth
4 th session	Geoffroy Legentilhomme & Matthieu Leimgruber , The golden layer. A sociography of the Zurich wealth elite, 1890-1952 (work in progress, under peer review at the <i>Economic History Review</i>). Geoffroy Legentilhomme & Matthieu Leimgruber , Richesse et pouvoir: les grandes fortunes zurichoises entre 1890 et 1952 (chapter in the upcoming book <i>Elites et pouvoirs dans les grandes villes suisses</i>). Yves Demuth , Geld-Eliten. Wer viel hat, hats von den Eltern, in: <i>Beobachter</i> , 17.8.2023.
17.10	Wealthy locations and millionaires' streets: a Zurich walk
5 th session	<i>This guided «millionaires' walk» will begin at 10:15 in front of the Zentralbibliothek (Zähringerplatz). It will take us around the neighborhood, and, finally, back to the UZH building.</i>
24.10	HELPDESK
6 th session	<i>This session will be devoted to collective/individual tutoring, to help you prepare your first proposal.</i>
Friday	DEADLINE for handing in your preliminary research proposal
27.10, 4 PM	Upload on OLAT Forum around 1 A4, including a provisory title, please <u>do not use PDF</u> format
31.10	Brainstorming session about your research proposals
7 th session	<i>Feedback and discussion about your research ideas. We will also encourage participants to work in pairs and/or in thematic clusters to encourage exchange of ideas and collective research dynamics.</i>
7.11	Structuring data, using sources and materials: do's and dont's
8 th session	<i>Feedback and discussion about your research</i>
14.11	Top wealth research (I) (feedback: TBD)
9 th session	Erik Bengtsson & Jakob Molinder: What happened to the incomes of the rich during the Great Levelling? Evidence from Swedish individual-level data, 1909–1950 (Lund Papers in Economic History 2021:230). Peter Scott , The anatomy of Britain's interwar super-rich: reconstructing the 1928/9 'millionaire' population, in: <i>Economic History Review</i> , 74/3 (2021), 639-665.
21.11	Top wealth research (II) (feedback: TBD)
10 th session	Eva Maria Gajek: Sichtbarmachung von Reichtum. Das Jahrbuch des Vermögens und Einkommens der Millionäre in Preußen, in: <i>Archiv für Sozialgeschichte</i> 54 (2014), S. 79-108. <i>Bilanz</i> , various «Reichsten Listen» since 1989. Enea Baselgia & Isabel Z. Martínez: Tracking and taxing the Super-Rich: Insights from Swiss rich lists, CESifo working paper, Munich, 2022.
28.11	HELPDESK
11 th session	<i>This session will be devoted to collective/individual tutoring, to help you prepare your research dossier.</i>
5.12	Top wealth research (III)
12 th session	<i>Each participant to the seminar will have to prepare two of the four articles below (more instructions will follow)</i>

Martin Lutz & David Warren Sabean: Kinship, conflict and transnational coordination: the Siemens family's globalisation strategies in the nineteenth century, in: *Social History*, 47:2 (2022), 141-168.

Simone Derix: Grenzloses Vermögen. Räumliche Mobilität und die Infrastrukturen des Reichtums als Zugänge zur historischen Erforschung des "eines Prozents", in: Gajek et.al. (Hg.): *Reichtum in Deutschland*, Göttingen 2019, 164-81.

Vivien Ballenegger, Emergence and expansion of the Swiss tax haven. The tax privileges for rich foreigners in the Canton of Vaud, 1840–1959, in: Sébastien Guex & Hadrien Buclin (eds.), *Tax evasion and tax havens since the nineteenth century*, Cham: 2023, 55-72.

Jens Beckert: Durable Wealth: Institutions, mechanisms, and practices of wealth perpetuation, in: *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2022, 233-55.

Friday 8.12, 2PM	DEADLINE for handing in your research dossier Upload on OLAT Forum around 3-5 A4. Format and content will be discussed during the semester.
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12 + 19.12 **END OF SEMESTER WORKSHOPS**

*Each participant will (briefly, e.g. 5 minutes max.) present his/her research dossier. We will also designate **discussants** who will be responsible to open the Q&A session. Please do take the time to read your colleagues' proposals as they may give you ideas for your own research papers.*

Tue 12.12	Line up TBD	Discussants TBD
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Tue 19.12	Line up TBD	Discussants TBD
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KEY DATES

26.3.2024	FOLLOW UP SESSION (elective) (RAE/FSW 015, Rämistrasse 64, 16h00-17h30)
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3.5.2024	PAPER DEADLINE (to be sent as a PDF file to <u>both</u> instructors)
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June 2024	FINAL WORKSHOP (elective) discussion of your research papers and final debriefing
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