

The political careers of regional government members in a long-term perspective: evidence from Swiss cantons, 1890-2020

Michael A. Strebel¹ Rahel Freiburghaus² Andrea Pilotti² Grégoire Mottet² André Mach²

¹KPM Center for Public Management, University of Bern, ²Institute of Political Studies, University of Lausanne

Paper prepared for the conference „Eliten in verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Sektoren: Theoretische Zugänge, empirische Erkenntnisse und Entwicklungslinien“, 5-6 March 2026, University of Leipzig

Abstract

Research on political elites has mainly focused on the national level. Yet, political elites come from different regions and territories of a country and often start their careers there. These roots remain relevant for their actions at the national level – particularly in federal countries. This article takes on a positional approach to the identification of elites and focuses on regional government members in Switzerland in a long-term perspective. By studying their political careers leading up to government office, it assesses how integrated they are in their region (e.g., through previous mandates in local or regional parliament) as well as at the national level (through previous mandates in national parliament). Moreover, the article will shed light on how regional government members' regional and national integration varies over time and across regions. Empirically, it draws on extensive data from the Swiss Elite Observatory (OBELIS), which includes over 40'000 individuals from the academic, economic, political, and societal spheres. It focuses on the members of 10 Swiss cantonal governments in seven benchmark years from 1890 to 2020 (N=475) and employs sequence and regression analysis to identify the correlates of regional government members' career patterns. We find regional government members' careers to be less nationally integrated in recent benchmark years and we find different career patterns depending on a canton's language, religion, and size. These results, thus, uncover asymmetries in regional government members' vertical integration across regions. The long-term perspective since the late 19th century further informs our understanding of state-formation and -integration processes in federal states.

Keywords: Political careers, multilevel system, federalism, nationalization, center-periphery

Words: 11'158 (incl. notes, tables, and references, excl. appendix)

Acknowledgements: Research for this article has been conducted in the framework of the Swiss National Science Foundation project "Beyond the Core: Elites and Power in the Swiss Second-Tier City Regions (1890-2020)" (grant number: 10002839). Michael A. Strebel acknowledges funding by the Swiss National Science Foundation in the framework of its Ambizione program (grant number: 208972).

1. Introduction

The model of political careers in a multilevel system such as Switzerland has historically been characterized by the practice of holding multiple offices simultaneously. With regard to members of regional governments, it has been shown that many of them served concurrently in the Federal Parliament (Gruner 1970; Pilotti 2017). Over the past three decades, however, a new trend has emerged due to increasing workloads and various legal or statutory restrictions (Di Capua et al. 2022). This development does not necessarily imply a weakening of the connection between institutional levels; rather, it reflects a shift in the way this connection is maintained. Political careers—particularly those combining a mandate as a member of the national legislature and one in a regional executive—now tend to unfold successively rather than simultaneously. In this respect, an unprecedented trend has also been observed: an increasing number of members of the Swiss Parliament return to serve in regional governments.

Taking together, these developments underscore, within the model of political careers in Switzerland, the continuing importance of holding a mandate in a regional government—whether through the accumulation of offices or successively after an experience in the Federal Assembly. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that we still lack systematic information on the political careers of members of regional governments, particularly concerning how these careers vary over time and across territorial contexts. Addressing this gap constitutes the central aim of this contribution, which seeks to answer the following research question: *How do regional government members' political careers vary over time and across regions with respect to their national integration and their multilevel character?*

To answer this question, besides this short introduction and the conclusion, the article is organised into three main sections. First, we outline our theoretical framework, drawing in particular on the concepts of nationalisation and centralisation, as well as on the distinction between central and peripheral regions within the federal system. Second, we present our research design, including a discussion of the Swiss case, the data employed, the selected indicators, and the way in which we operationalised them. Finally, we discuss the main results of our analysis, which shed light on the profile and political career patterns of members of Swiss regional governments over the period from 1890 to 2020.

2. Theoretical argument: Who gets political office at the regional level?

While long a rather neglected field (but see Schlesinger 1966; Stolz 2003), research on political careers has gained considerable momentum over the past decade (e.g., Camerlo et al. 2025; Di Capua et al. 2022; Docherty 2011; Frech 2025; Mufti & Ali 2025; Semenova 2025; Semenova & Dowding 2025). A seminal contribution to the study of political careers in multi-level systems beyond the United States are the two special issues “Moving through the Labyrinth: Political Careers in Multi-Level Systems”, edited by Borchert and Stolz (2011), as well as “Career Patterns in Multi-Level Political Systems”, edited by Semenova and Dowding (2025). The contributions assembled in these special issues share two core premises: First, multi-level systems constitute distinct opportunity structures that shape political careers and career development. Second, understanding political careers in such systems requires a long-term perspective that accounts for broader structural developments, such as professionalization, regionalization, and the emergence and consolidation of supranational institutions.

Building on these premises, Borchert (2011) developed an influential typology of political careers and opportunity structures in multi-level systems. His analytical framework is organized around three guiding questions: how much movement occurs, in which direction careers unfold, and what type of linkage connects positions (office accumulation versus succession). Political careers in multi-level systems are thus conceptualized as inherently dynamic processes characterized by “movement *and* linkage” (Borchert 2011: 129; emphasis added).

Synthesizing this growing body of work, Semenova and Dowding (2025) provide a comprehensive review of research on political careers during the 2010s, covering 27 countries. Their analysis demonstrates that “[...] political, party, and electoral system features provide strong explanations for the development of career movement patterns across all multi-level systems”. For example, Semenova and Dowding (2025) find that in multi-level systems with proportional representation (PR), unidirectional and integrated career patterns tend to emerge, while plurality electoral systems seem to favor an alternative career movement pattern (see e.g., Mufti & Ali 2025 on Pakistan or Docherty 2011 on Canada for illustration).

Despite this rich and expanding scholarship, we identify two important gaps. First, while most studies focus on how political careers develop across levels of governance, the more fundamental (and arguably decisive) question of who gains access to political office in the first place in an inherently multi-level context remains comparatively underexplored (Tronconi 2018). Second, the literature still exhibits a tendency toward “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002). Most studies treat multi-level entities—whether in non-democratic contexts such as the Russian Federation (Semenova 2022) or democratic settings

such as Argentina (Camerlo et al. 2025), or Switzerland (Di Capua et al. 2022)—as internally homogeneous units (but see Rodríguez-Teruel 2025 on the differences between Spanish regions). This approach implicitly assumes that political careers across all regions within a given multi-level system are shaped by the same incentives, patterns, and logics.

In contrast, we explicitly theorize both (a) how nationalization processes shape political careers in a long-term perspective and (b) how political career patterns vary systematically across regions within a multi-level system. By shifting attention from career trajectories alone to patterns of entry into political office, and by taking regional variation seriously, our contribution extends existing research and offers a more fine-grained understanding of political representation in multi-level contexts.

2.1 Across time: The (changing) importance of regional versus national integration for initial access to regional office

While the effects of candidate-related characteristics on electoral success are generally well understood in the vast scholarship on electoral choice (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960; Laustsen & Bor 2017), existing research on political careers in multi-level systems largely treats these characteristics as given. By contrast, we theorize how the multi-level structure itself shapes candidates' political careers prior to gaining access to executive political office at the regional level. In doing so, we shift attention from individual traits alone to the structural origins of electoral advantage in multi-level systems.

Central to our argument is the distinction between regional integration and national integration. Regional integration refers to a candidate's embeddedness in regionally bounded networks and positions prior to their mandate in a regional executive. This includes elected office at the local (local parliament/government) and regional (regional parliament) level. National integration, by contrast, captures a candidate's embeddedness in nationally oriented networks and positions, captured by elected office in national parliament.

We conceptualize both forms of integration as resources that have thus far received limited attention in the literature (but see Mach et al. 2024 for the local level and Pilotti 2017 for parliamentary elites at the national level). By signaling competence, visibility, and access to organizational and financial support, these mandates can provide candidates with a comparative advantage over their competitors in regional elections. Importantly, however, we argue that the relative importance of regional versus national integration for gaining regional office is not static but varies systematically over time.

More precisely, we theorize about two key long-term developments affecting multi-level systems in particular: centralization and nationalization. Centralization shifts policymaking authority and resources upward, while nationalization increasingly aligns political competition, party organization, and electoral campaigning with the national level. Together, these processes generate a cumulative pull toward the federal level. This structural pull interacts with politicians' core motivations—policy seeking, vote seeking, and office seeking (Strøm 1990)—and incentivizes the cultivation of nationally oriented mandates and networks.

Centralization and the importance for politicians to be where actual decisions are made

Centralization, the first major development relevant for our argument, refers to the gradual empowerment of the federal level at the expense of regional governments (Dardanelli et al. 2019a; see Watts 2008). As authority migrates upward, subnational autonomy diminishes. Crucially, autonomy comprises three dimensions: the authority to adopt public policies (legislative autonomy), to implement and administer them (administrative autonomy), and to fund them (fiscal autonomy; see Dardanelli et al. 2019a).

While centralization is an universal trend, comparative research shows that centralization most strongly erodes legislative autonomy (Dardanelli et al. 2019b; Mueller & Fenna 2022). Increasingly, policy design and adoption occur at the federal level, even in domains once considered the core prerogatives of subnational governments such as health or education. The regional level can no longer meaningfully shape public policies, but is left with the (rather unpleasant) task of administering, implementing, and financing them (ibid.; see Freiburghaus & Mueller 2024).¹

For individual members of regional governments, centralization profoundly alters the level of state that is decisive. Policy-seeking politicians, motivated by policy goals, observe that decisions carrying real weight are now made nationally, beyond the reach of regional executives. If they aim to shape policy substantively, they must operate at the level where the decisive choices are taken. Legislative centralization thus creates a structural incentive for ambitious, policy-oriented regional politicians to orient their early careers toward the national level. By accumulating political, economic, and/or societal mandates at that level, they can subsequently leverage these nationally acquired resources as a competitive advantage when contesting regional elections.

¹ Canada represents a partial exception. As compared to other long-standing federations, Canada has moved “the least, which given how much all others have centralized has turned it into the most decentralized federation today” (Mueller & Fenna 2022, p. 540).

Nationalization and the importance for politicians to be where they are actually seen

Nationalization, the second key development, is a multifaceted and long-term transformation. Caramani (2004) characterizes it as a “major long-term political phenomenon” spanning nearly two centuries and capturing the “broad historical evolution” through which “peripheral and regional specificities disappear”. These fading specificities can take numerous forms, such as distinct regional electoral patterns, party strongholds, and political discourses (see Carson et al. 2023).

The concentration of media ownership has been a central engine of nationalization, particularly in (federal) multi-level systems (Freiburghaus 2024; see Baker 2012; Doyle 2002; Noam 2016). As local news ecosystems erode and entire territories become “news holes” (Hayes & Lawless 2021)—places without local outlets or journalists—coverage of politics increasingly originates from large media consortiums with a predominantly national perspective. With few exceptions, political developments are framed through national stakes: even when regional events receive attention, they are often interpreted through their implications for federal politics (“what does the situation in region X mean for the national government?”; see Burke 2021).

Nationalization therefore alters the sources of electoral advantage in regional contests. As media attention, party competition, and political discourse increasingly concentrate at the national level, candidates’ visibility among regional electorates is more likely to stem from nationally salient activities. Vote-seeking candidates therefore benefit from previous national integration, as nationally acquired recognition and credibility can be leveraged to outperform less integrated competitors in regional elections.

Hypothesis 1. Over time, national integration becomes increasingly prevalent in regional government members’ political careers leading up to executive political office at the regional level.

2.2 Across regions: Competing expectations on how (non-)peripherality matters for prior national integration

We further argue that, while the overall trend toward higher levels of national integration prior to election to regional political office is observable across all regions (hypothesis 1), the *degree* of national integration varies systematically between regions (hypotheses 2a and 2b). To capture this variation, we build on the conceptual distinction between “core regions” and “peripheral regions”.

Our understanding of peripherality is multidimensional here. Depending on the national context, regions can belong to the core or the periphery depending on their linguistic or cultural characteristics, on their geographical position, or on their economic strength or their size, among others. For instance, in a multilingual country such as Switzerland, cantons with a different official language than German might be perceived (and perceive themselves) as more peripheral, to the point of feeling neglected, than German-speaking cantons. Moreover, different aspects of centrality and peripherality might also intersect and, thus, attenuate or reinforce one another.

Although centralization generally incentivizes candidates to first accumulate mandates at the national level in order to enhance their competitiveness in regional elections, two contrasting arguments can be made regarding regional government members' degree of national integration. First, there are reasons to believe that the structural “pull” to the national level is particularly pronounced for candidates who are eventually elected in peripheral regions. The reasons are twofold: First, “peripheral regions” often face a combination of structural disadvantages. As Mueller and Mazzoleni (2016: 49) observe, “[p]eripheral malaise” is multidimensional, with topographical distance, cultural distinctiveness, and economic dependence mutually reinforcing each other (ibid.: 52; see Rokkan & Urwin 1983). For example, members from mountainous regions confront difficult terrains and economic challenges, such as population decline or climate-threatened tourism. At the same time, these regions’ inhabitants often conceive of themselves as endangered “alpine people” with a “rural consciousness” (Claassen et al. 2025), emphasizing traditionalist values and a distinction from cosmopolitan urban cores. This combination of objective economic and geographic difficulties with subjective feelings of marginalization in “deprived” (Cremaschi et al. 2025) or “left-behind regions” (Cramer 2016; Stroppe 2023) can motivate policy-seeking politicians to pursue national office first, where they can shape centralized policy-making to benefit their home region (often in the form of pork barrel politics; see Freiburghaus et al. 2021).

Second, observing the grievances of their constituents and anticipating difficult futures, these politicians may also pursue national integration first as a way to alleviate financial pressures of their “peripheral region” back home. In highly centralized systems, moving responsibilities and funding to the national level—a well-documented “funding upshifting” mechanism (Arnold 2018; Mueller et al. 2017)—allows peripheral regions to secure resources that would otherwise (additionally) strain regional and local budgets.

If, in general, the concentration of media ownership has been a central driver of political nationalization, its pull toward accumulating mandates at the national level prior to contesting regional elections should be particularly strong for politicians from peripheral regions. Core regions have, at least to some extent, retained local media infrastructures: their large populations still constitute viable “micro media systems” (Ravn-Højgaard 2024), and urban contexts often generate new “localized social media spaces” (Aubin Le Quéré & Kairam 2025) that offer localized coverage of city life. Even where core regions no longer maintain distinct local or regional outlets, they often still host regional bureaus or broadcasting bases of the national public broadcaster so that politicians in core regions remain geographically close to journalists who routinely produce nationally circulated content (see Freiburghaus 2024).

Peripheral regions stand in stark contrast. In many of them, local journalism has withered to the point where virtually no dedicated reporters remain (Hayes & Lawless 2021). Simply hoping to reach voters through local or regional outlets is no longer viable when such outlets ceased exist. To become visible to their constituents, vote-seeking politicians must instead first seek coverage where it is still produced: at the national level.

As a result of the long-term developments of centralization and nationalization, politicians from peripheral regions who aspire to political office at the regional level face particularly strong incentives to first accumulate mandates at the federal level (national integration):

Hypothesis 2a. National career spells prior to their executive mandate are more prevalent in political careers of regional government members from peripheral than from core regions.

However, an alternative line of reasoning suggests that prior national integration could be more important for candidates from core regions than peripheral ones. Core regions typically occupy a privileged position within multi-level systems: they are often economically stronger, more populous, and politically central, and they tend to host key political institutions, party headquarters, and major media outlets. As a result, access to national-level mandates is more readily available to politicians originating from core regions.

This advantage is reinforced by political institutions at the national level, such as by the electoral system. In many multi-level systems, electoral constituencies are territorially defined, such that each region elects its own representatives to the federal parliament (Fernandes et al. 2024; Gallagher & Mitchell 2018; Shugart & Taagepera 2017). In bicameral systems—which exist in almost half of all countries worldwide (43 percent; see Mueller 2024)—this territorial logic often applies to both chambers. While upper chambers may allocate seats symmetrically across regions, lower chambers are typically organized according to population size.

Consequently, more populous core regions are entitled to elect a larger number of representatives, increasing the opportunities for politicians from these regions to accumulate political mandates at the federal level. These nationally held offices can subsequently be leveraged as a competitive advantage when seeking regional political office.

Moreover, because core regions are more tightly embedded in national political and media systems, engagement in nationally salient political activities is more likely to translate into electoral recognition at the regional level. National visibility may therefore convert more directly into regional electoral support in core regions than in peripheral ones, where national-level exposure may resonate less strongly with regional electorates. Taken together, this alternative perspective suggests the following competing expectation:

Hypothesis 2b. National career spells prior to their executive mandate are more prevalent in the political careers of regional government members from core than from peripheral regions.

3. Research design

3.1 The Swiss context

The competences and autonomy enjoyed by the Swiss cantons have few equivalents among federal states. According to Vatter (2024: 235), the autonomy and equality of the cantons, their participation in the federal decision-making process, as well as their duty to cooperate with the federal government and administration constitute key pillars of the Swiss Confederation. Faced with a process of centralisation—albeit a non-linear one—that has characterised the 20th century, the Swiss cantons have indeed seen their room for manoeuvre reduced. However, it is important to emphasise that, in international comparison, Switzerland remains a highly decentralised country in terms of public revenues and expenditures, allowing the cantons to retain significant decision-making capacity in several areas (education, culture, health, justice, and policing) (Vatter 2024: 236).

In recent decades, cantons have faced several major challenges. Vatter (2024: 246–247) identifies at least three. First, the increasing mobility of the population means that many people no longer necessarily live and work in the same region. This creates a divergence between the sphere of political action and functional spaces, leading to forms of horizontal inter-cantonal cooperation that involve, in particular, the executive branches—thus shifting power balances within the cantons to the detriment of parliaments. Second, the very significant inter-cantonal differences in population size result, on the one hand, in difficulties for the administrations of small cantons to implement federal decrees, and on the other hand, in growing inequalities in the economic and fiscal strength of the cantons. Finally, Swiss cantons have virtually no institutionalised access points to the federal decision-making process (see also Vatter 2005). Unlike in Germany, cantonal governments are not directly represented in the Federal Assembly, which effectively prevents them from vetoing legislative proposals that further advance centralisation. This situation therefore poses challenges for the cantons—especially the smaller ones—in making their voices heard at the federal level.

The cantonal government represents the highest executive and administrative authority of the canton, as it directs and supervises the cantonal administration, appoints civil servants, and represents the canton externally (Vatter 2024: 238). Unlike the federal government, whose members are elected by the Federal Assembly, members of cantonal governments are elected through direct popular elections, which strengthens their legitimacy and their independence vis-à-vis the legislature. Their election is conducted under a majoritarian system (in the canton

of Glarus during a popular assembly, the *Landsgemeinde*), with the sole exception of the canton of Ticino, which elects its cantonal executive using proportional representation.

Each cantonal government consists of 5 to 7 members, each heading a department. The elected office became professionalised mainly during the first half of the 20th century. The functioning of each cantonal executive is based on the principle of collegiality, according to which executive members are equal in rights and carry out their tasks without any one member imposing their will on the others. Members of the government are also required to publicly defend decisions taken according to the majority principle. Consequently, cantonal governments in Switzerland are based on coalition executives, whose development has been facilitated by the instruments of direct democracy (Vatter 2024: 239).

The partisan composition of cantonal governments remained very stable for a very long time, although it has evolved somewhat since the 1990s in several cantons. However, these changes have not altered the overall balance of power between centre-right and centre-left parties, with the former still holding a majority (with a few rare exceptions).

Among the three models of political careers identified by Borchert (2011)—the unidirectional model, the alternative model, and the integrated model—Switzerland has traditionally been associated with the first model, which is based on a clear hierarchical progression across institutional levels. More specifically, the unidirectional model is characterised, on the one hand, by a high rate of elected officials moving from the local and/or regional level to the national level (centripetal ratio), and, on the other hand, by a low rate of elected officials moving from the national level back to the regional and local levels (centrifugal ratio). More recently, however, Di Capua et al. (2022) have nuanced this view by defining Switzerland as an example of the integrated model of political careers. This latter model refers in particular to the absence of hierarchy between institutional levels and to career paths that develop according to the costs and benefits elected officials associate with holding specific elected offices.

According to Di Capua et al. (2022), however, the integrated model of political careers has evolved over the course of the 2000s. More specifically, until the 1990s, the accumulation of mandates was the dominant logic ensuring the integration of the different levels of political careers in Switzerland.² Since the 2000s, however, a new integrated model has emerged, characterised by the successive holding of elected offices. Unlike in the past, the position of federal parliamentarian is no longer necessarily the culmination point of a political career. There

² However, Freiburghaus et al. (2021) have shown that holding multiple mandates does not necessarily provide a systematic guarantee of subnational interest representation. It is one tool among others, whose effectiveness depends on the context.

is now a growing importance of returning to the regional or local level, due to the increasing attractiveness of elected positions in cantonal and municipal executives.

3.2 Data

We have gathered data on the political careers of cantonal government members of 10 Swiss cantons (BS, BE, FR, GE, LU, NE, SG, TI, VD, ZH) and for seven benchmark years (1890, 1910, 1937, 1957, 1980, 2000, 2020). The ten cantons represent a diverse selection of Swiss cantons and vary with regard to linguistic, cultural, geographical, economic, and demographic characteristics. These ten cantons are, thus, representative of Swiss cantons more generally in that they represent the full variation of Swiss cantons with regards to these characteristics (see Gerring 2008: 650-652 for a discussion of diverse case selection and Table A.2 for an overview of different indicators across the 26 cantons and the next subsection for a discussion of them).

For each of the seven benchmark years, we have identified the persons holding executive political office at the cantonal level and collected information regarding their political careers. In total, our sample consists of 475 individuals. For the purpose of this article, we focus on the political career steps of these politicians that lead up to their regional government mandate. We have collected systematic information on all political career steps of these individuals, i.e., the elected offices they held. This, thus, includes mandates in local parliaments and governments, in cantonal parliaments, as well as in the federal parliament (both the national council, the lower chamber, and the council of states, the upper chamber). Overall, these 475 individuals held a total of 834 different elected offices in the careers leading up to their regional government mandates.

3.3 Indicators and operationalization

The goal of this article is to gain a better understanding of regional government members' political careers and whether and how they vary across time and space. In particular, we are interested in regional government members' integration in national politics prior to their regional government mandate. A straightforward and simple way to operationalize this is to distinguish individuals based on whether or not their political career leading up to regional government included a spell at the national level, i.e., in the federal parliament (national council or council of states).

In addition to this binary indicator, we also examine the multilevel character of regional government members' political careers. To do this, we transform the information from the

individual mandates into distinct career steps regarding the level in the multilevel structure of the state, i.e., local, regional, or national. A mandate in local government or local parliament will thus be coded as a "local" career step, a mandate in cantonal parliament as a "cantonal" one, etc. In addition to holding elected office at the local, cantonal, or national level, individuals can also simultaneously hold mandates at several levels of government ("multiple-mandate holding" or *cumul des mandats*). Accordingly, there are three additional career steps to be considered: combining a local with a cantonal, a cantonal with a national, or even a local, with a cantonal and a national mandate. Finally, we also need a category for those individuals that did not hold any elected political office prior to their regional government mandate, this concerns 93 out of 475 individuals in our analysis.³ To make sense of these distinct political career patterns and to identify different career types, we rely on sequence analysis and clustering (see section 4.3 for more details).

In the theory section, we have argued that regional government members' political careers become increasingly "nationalized" over time, i.e., include career spells in the federal parliament, and that their careers vary depending on whether the canton they come from belongs to the core or the periphery regarding multiple dimensions. While the diachronic analysis is straightforward – it suffices to compare the careers of government members of different benchmark years – the cantonal variation regarding their core or periphery status with respect to linguistic, cultural, geographical, economic, and structural characteristics warrants some discussion. We distinguish cantons based on five indicators: language, historically dominant religious denomination, the distance of their capital city to Bern, as well as their average rank in terms of GDP/capita and population compared to all other Swiss cantons across the seven benchmark years. We discuss each of these indicators in turn (see also Table A.2 for the classification of cantons with regard to these indicators).

Switzerland is well-known for its linguistic diversity. Four languages are spoken on its territory, German, French, Italian, and Romansh, with German being the most widely spoken language across cantons. A canton that has a different official language than German might thus be considered peripheral from a linguistic perspective. Indeed, the so-called "Röstigraben", a term used to describe the political difference between (more progressive) Latin and (more conservative) German language cantons at the occasion of federal popular votes, has been an important factor throughout the political history of modern Switzerland.

³ Many of these individuals have held executive positions in business associations, trade unions, or large companies. Since data collection on these positions in other sectors is currently ongoing, we have not included them in the present analysis but plan to do so in a next step.

Religious denomination has played a dominant role in the history of modern Switzerland as well, particularly in the 19th century. The religious cleavage between Protestants and Catholics has divided cantons into different groups, with catholic cantons being in the minority. While religion itself is not a key structuring factor of modern-day Swiss politics anymore, its legacy is still important: confessional borders map on rural-urban borders, hence pitting different ideological worldviews against each other. Coming from a catholic canton might, thus, be a second indicator for coming from a more peripheral canton.

The three remaining indicators are more readily quantifiable. First, the air distance between a canton's capital to Bern, where the federal authorities are sited, can indicate the geographical peripherality of a canton. Second, to capture their economic status, we distinguish them based on their GDP/capita. To do so, we rank order all cantons depending on their per capita GDP in each benchmark year and then generate an overall indicator for a canton's economic position by taking the average rank over time. If a canton belonged to the third of cantons with the lowest GDP/capita in most benchmark years, it is, thus, assigned to the group "Low GDP/capita", whereas if it predominantly was ranking among the third of cantons with the highest GDP/capita, it is assigned to the group "High GDP/capita". Finally, we do the same operation with regards to a canton's population size and also group cantons into three groups. More populous cantons have more weight in the federal state, whereas small cantons might be considered more peripheral.

As can be seen from Table A.2, the ten cantons included in our analysis represent the diversity of all Swiss cantons with regard to four out of five indicators, meaning that all possible categories are represented. Only with respect to population size, we lack a very small canton in our selection.

In our analyses, we use all of these indicators separately to operationalize the "core" or "peripheral" status of a canton. This allows for a fine-grained understanding of which dimensions of peripherality might be more or less relevant correlates of regional government members' political career patterns. Yet, there are also two caveats regarding the characterization of cantons as core or peripheral based on these indicators. First, the classification we use does not take into account the historical evolution of these cantons. For instance, a canton might have been among the poorer ones in the end of the 19th century, but then gradually move to the group of rich cantons over the course of the 20th century. This would, for instance, be the case for some central Swiss cantons, such as Zug, which was not among the wealthiest cantons at the end of the 19th century, but then adopted a strategy of low taxes to attract wealthy taxpayers in

the middle of the 20th century and now is by far the wealthiest Swiss cantons. Our average ranking over 130 years cannot capture this trajectory. Yet, for our analysis, we cannot incorporate this temporal dimension due to data limitations. Second, a possible flipside of the separate treatment of these indicators is that it might overlook their intersection and reinforcement, but also possible attenuation. For instance, a canton might be both catholic, and hence more peripheral on a cultural dimension, and have a low GDP/capita, and thus be economically weak at the same time. At the same time, a demographically small canton, might offset its peripherality in this regard with a strong regional economy. In a next iteration of the article, we will examine in more detail whether we can create meaningful types of cantons based on these indicators through the use of Multiple Correspondence Analysis.

4. Results

Our analysis proceeds in three steps. We first present descriptive results regarding the presence of national mandates in government members' political careers across benchmark years and across cantons. In a second step, we examine the factors that are associated with a government member having a political career spell at the national level. We do this through the use of logistic regression models where the dependent variable is having a national-level career spell or not. In addition to the benchmark years and the indicators measuring a canton's core or periphery status, we also include the age at which a person entered regional government, their gender, their education, and their political party in the analysis. In a third step, we assess regional government members' political careers in more detail. We use sequence analysis and clustering to build a typology of political careers followed by a multinomial regression analysis to examine the factors associated with a higher/lower probability of belonging to a particular career type.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

We start the empirical analysis with a descriptive overview of regional government members' national integration during their political careers leading up to regional government. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of regional government members that held political office at the national level (i.e., mandate in the national council or the council of states) in their political career across benchmark years.

Table 1. National integration of cantonal government members across cohorts

N cantonal government members			
Benchmark years	Total	with mandate in national parliament in entire career	with mandate in national parliament prior to cantonal government
1890	76	41 (53.9%)	16 (21.1%)
1910	72	43 (59.7%)	12 (16.7%)
1937	68	33 (48.4%)	12 (17.6%)
1957	70	39 (55.7%)	17 (24.3%)
1980	71	31 (43.1%)	9 (12.7%)
2000	69	18 (26.1%)	10 (14.5%)
2020	66	14 (21.2%)	13 (19.7%)
Total	492	219 (44.4%)	83 (16.9%)

Note. Since some government members' mandates include multiple benchmark years, the total number of observations amounts to 492, even though our sample includes 475 unique individuals only.

In addition to the percentage of regional government members that held a mandate in federal parliament prior to entering regional government, we also show the number and percentage of regional government members that held federal political office during their entire career (see column 3). We do so to show that regional government members were strongly integrated at the national level, but not necessarily so prior to entering regional government, but during or after.

Indeed, column 3 shows a clear decline in the number and percentage of regional government members with a mandate in the national parliament since 1980. While until 1957, more than 50% of cantonal executives also held a mandate in the national parliament, this proportion has clearly declined afterwards, and especially after 1980, with a little more than 20% in 2000 and 2020. This clearly highlights the strong imbrication of the different levels (cantonal and federal) during most of the 20th century. Until the 1990s – marked by the growing professionalization of the Swiss parliament and the introduction of bans on combining regional government with national parliament positions in some cantons – the imbrication between the different levels of the state has switched from a logic of multiple-mandate holding (between cantonal executive and the national parliament) to a logic of successive occupation of mandates (for more details, Di Capua et al. 2022).

By contrast, holding national political office prior to entering regional government is less prevalent across all benchmark years and there is no clear temporal pattern to be detected (see column 4). Given that we do not find an increase in cantonal government members' national integration over time, hypothesis 1 does not seem to be confirmed.

Table 2 does the same exercise across cantons instead of time. There is substantive variation across cantons regarding the national integration of government members in their pre-regional government careers. While in the canton of Basel, less than 5 percent of government members have held a national-level political office prior to their regional government mandate, more than 30 percent have done so in the canton of Vaud. This suggests that there are indeed strong cantonal differences regarding the political careers of cantonal government members. In the next section, we assess whether these differences are linked to a canton's core or periphery status.

Table 2. National integration of cantonal government members across cantons

Cantons	N cantonal government members		
	Total	with mandate in national parliament in entire career	with mandate in national parliament prior to cantonal executive
BE	63	35 (55.6%)	13 (21.3%)
BS	52	16 (30.8%)	2 (4.2%)
FR	49	20 (40.8%)	3 (6.5%)
GE	51	25 (49.0%)	11 (22%)
LU	47	15 (31.9%)	3 (6.5%)
NE	36	19 (52.8%)	8 (22.2%)
SG	54	20 (37.0%)	5 (9.8%)
TI	42	21 (50.0%)	9 (22.0%)
VD	51	27 (51.9%)	16 (32.7%)
ZH	49	21 (42.9%)	11 (23.4%)
Total	492	219 (44.5%)	83 (17.5%)

Note. Since some government members' mandates include multiple benchmark years, the total number of observations amounts to 492, even though our sample includes 475 unique individuals only.

4.2 The correlates of government members' national integration

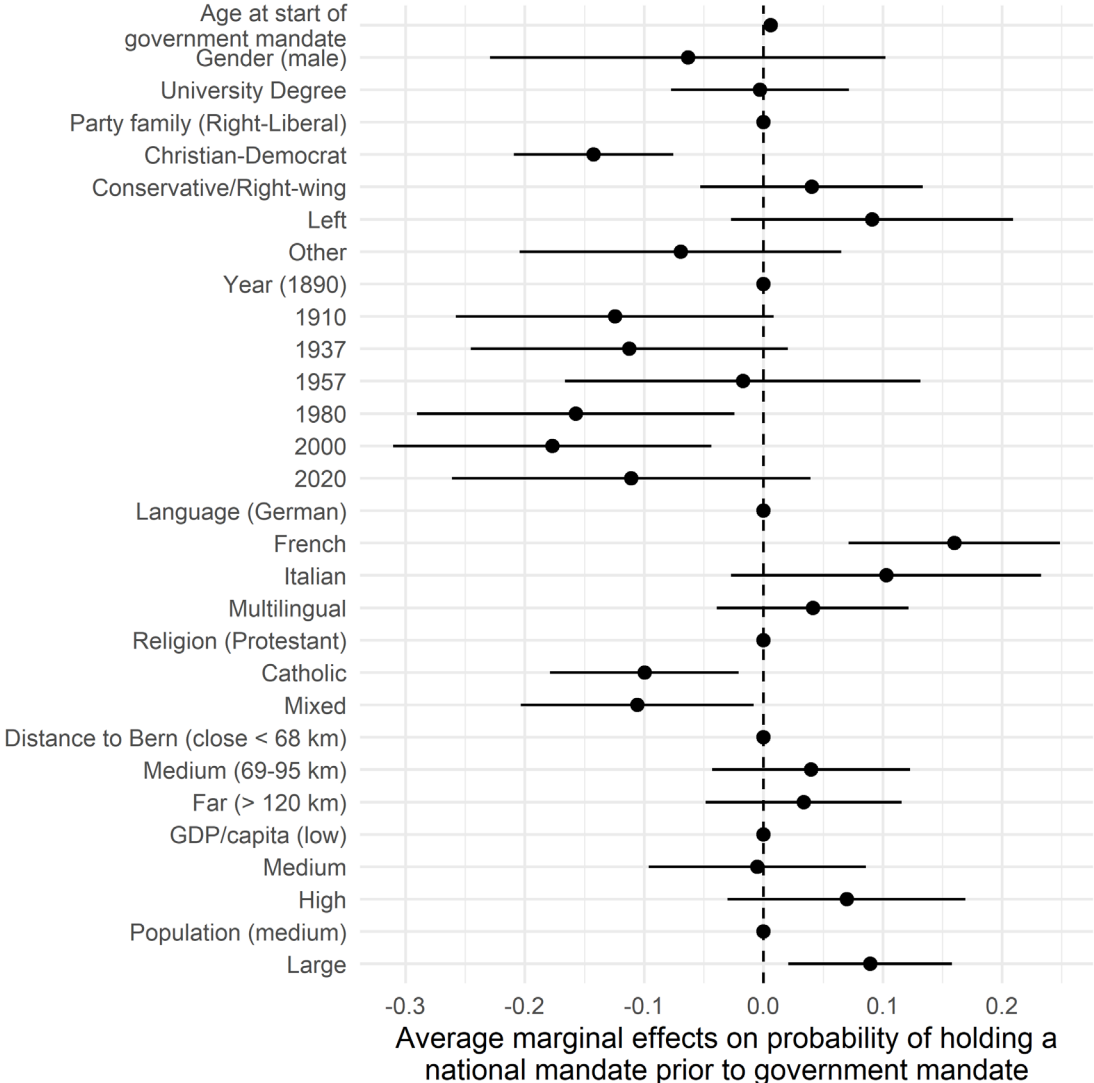
Figure 1 shows the results of logistic regression analyses on the probability to have held national elected office prior to entering regional government. It contains information from six different regression models, one baseline model with individual characteristics (age when entering government, gender, and education) and benchmark years, and five models which each include one of the indicators for a canton's core or periphery status separately.⁴

Regarding individual-level characteristics, entering regional government at a higher age is linked to a higher probability of having had a career spell in federal parliament, which makes sense given that older individuals had longer political careers prior to entering government and thus more chances to hold a mandate at the national level. By contrast, gender (being a man as opposed to a woman) and university education do not seem to matter. However, partisan affiliation does seem to matter. Representatives of Christian-Democratic parties have a 15 percentage points lower probability to have held a national mandate in their career leading up to regional government than members of right-liberal parties, which here essentially captures members of the Swiss liberal party (FDP/PLR). This makes sense against the backdrop that the liberal party is historically the party advocating national integration, whereas the Christian-Democrats were proponents of strong, autonomous, regions. There are no statistically

⁴ Since we only have ten cantons, we cannot include all canton-level variables in the model at the same time, which limits the assessment of the relative importance of these different indicators of peripherality.

significant differences between members of the liberal party and members of other party families.

Figure 1. The correlates of the probability to hold a national mandate



Note. This coefficient plot shows results from six different models. A baseline model, which only includes biographical information as well as the cohort a government member belongs to and five different models that each include another canton-level indicator (=language, religion, distance to Bern, average rank of GDP/capita between 1890 and 2020 compared to other cantons and average rank of population size between 1890 and 2020 compared to other cantons). Displayed estimates are average marginal effects. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Baseline categories for categorical variables represented by dots without confidence intervals.

Reading example: the probability that government members held a national mandate is approximately 10 percentage points higher when they come from a large as opposed to a medium-sized canton.

Regarding the variation over time, the cohorts of 1980 and 2000 are significantly less likely to have held a national mandate than the baseline cohort of 1890, whereas there are no statistically

significant differences between the baseline of 1890 and the other cohorts. There is, thus, again no evidence for hypothesis 1, which stated that regional government members' national integration would increase over time.

Regarding cantonal differences, the analysis yields several interesting results. Some of them corroborate hypothesis 2.1, which states that regional government members from peripheral cantons are more nationally integrated. Others, however, corroborate the contrasting hypothesis 2.2, which states that government members from core cantons are more nationally integrated. Support for hypothesis 2.1 comes from the analyses including a canton's language. Government members from French-speaking cantons are more likely to have held a national mandate prior to entering regional government. One possible explanation for this is that voters in these cantons reward knowledge and experience in national politics, presumably because this is considered an asset for defending the interests of the canton within the framework of the federal state.

Second, however, we also find evidence for hypothesis 2.2. Government members from protestant and large cantons are more likely to have held a national mandate in their political career leading up to regional government office than those from catholic or religiously mixed and medium-sized cantons. It is possible that regional political integration is considered more important in these religiously peripheral cantons than integration in national political networks. Finally, while a higher probability of holding a national mandate in large cantons might merely be a function of the higher number of mandates that large cantons have in the national council, it might also have a more substantive interpretation and reflect an expectation of voters in these cantons that regional government members need to have experience and a network in national politics as well to be considered qualified for governing the canton.

Overall, these tendencies can explain some of the variation we found in Table 2. French-speaking, protestant, cantons (GE, NE, VD) figure among those with the highest percentage of government members with national career spells prior to entering regional government, as do cantons with a large population (BE, TI, VD, ZH), whereas catholic cantons (FR, LU) are among the less integrated.

4.3 Four distinct types of regional government members' political career patterns

The third step in our analysis is dedicated to a more in-depth analysis of regional government members' multilevel career patterns. Here, we use the information on their whole political career and not only on career spells at the national level. One increasingly common way to analyze political careers is sequence analysis (see e.g., Ohmura et al. 2018). In sequence

analysis, the career of each individual is separated into career spells, that is particular career steps. Given that we are interested in the level at which government members held positions, local, regional, or national, we classify their mandates accordingly.⁵ A challenge for the analysis is that a person might hold multiple mandates at the same time. While some scholars decide to rank mandates according to their importance and prioritize mandates that can be considered more important (e.g., national parliament > local parliament) (Ohmura et al. 2018), we are substantively interested in such multiple mandate-holding as well. Therefore, we create additional categories for career spells in which government members held multiple mandates. The resulting dataset then contains a sequence of one or several career spells for each individual. Three aspects are noteworthy in this regard. First, each change in the (composition of) the mandates that an individual holds introduces a new career spell. If, for instance, an individual enters local parliament, then also enters cantonal parliament while keeping the mandate in local parliament, and then drops out of local parliament, the recorded career sequence would be "local"- "local + cantonal"- "cantonal". This means that the same elected office can be part of multiple career spells, in case it was combined with other mandates at the same time. Second, however, since we only consider the level at which a mandate is held and not the branch of government, several mandates can also be assigned to the same career spell. If, for instance, a career goes from local parliament to local government to national council and then state council, it would be represented as "local"- "national", since the two first and the two last mandates are held at the same level, albeit in different institutions. Finally, we do not take the duration of these mandates into account. The reason for this is that we do not have the exact start and end years for each mandate, but sometimes only know that a person held a mandate in a certain year, from a certain year onwards, or up to a certain year. Therefore, each spell in our analysis has a duration of 1. We can, thus, strictly make statements about the career trajectories of government members, but not on their duration or the time spent in different elected positions. To make sense of government members' political careers, we identify career sequence types using cluster analysis. In a nutshell, the goal of cluster analysis is to group together sequences that are very similar to one another and very different from the sequences of the other clusters. Cluster analysis will not yield a specific number of clusters as a result, but rather measures of how well a certain partition of clusters fits the data. Oftentimes, there is a trade-off between the number of clusters and the fit of the clusters to capture the variation in the data (see Studer

⁵ We have also conducted analysis where we separate legislative from executive mandates in addition. The results remain substantively the same but become more difficult to interpret due to the multiplication of possible mandate combinations which is why we opted to present the simpler analysis here.

2013). A larger number of clusters usually fits the data better, but makes it difficult to give substantive meaning to the clusters, which is at least as important.

Figure A.2 shows measures that indicate the fit of different number of clusters to partition the sequences and Figure A.3 shows the cluster dendrogram along the individual career sequences to illustrate what the different career clusters look like. Based on these Figures and trading off an interpretable cluster partition and goodness-of-fit, we opted for a four-cluster partition. Based on Figure A.2, four clusters are a significantly better fit to the data than three or fewer clusters, whereas they are not a much worse fit than five, six, or seven clusters, but much more meaningful to interpret.

Figure 2 shows the career sequences of government members grouped by the four clusters. We have labelled them according to the career sequences they display. The first type and the largest group, labelled "cantonal specialists" mainly consists of regional government members that held only one type of mandate prior to entering cantonal government, namely a mandate in cantonal parliament. The second type, labelled "lateral entrants", consists exclusively of those regional government members that did not hold elected political office prior to their regional government mandate but often held leading positions in other sectors.

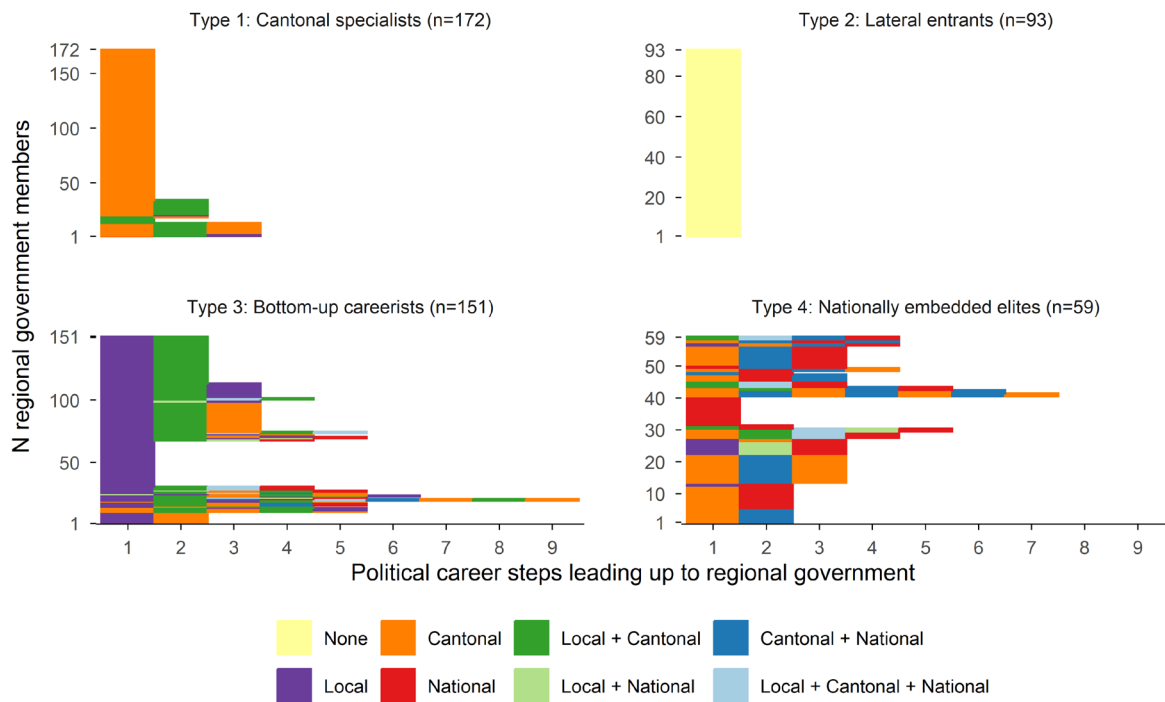
The third type and second largest group, labelled "bottom-up careerists", is dominated by regional government members that started out with elected office at the local level, i.e., in local parliament and/or government, and then climbed up the ladder to the cantonal, and less frequently the national, level, combining mandates at multiple levels. Their careers, thus, followed the classical "Ochsentour"⁶, which characterizes the centripetal logic of many careers in federal systems. Finally, the fourth and smallest group, labelled "nationally embedded elites" consist of government members whose career typically started in cantonal parliament, followed by a combination of cantonal and national legislative mandates. Government members in this cluster share that they all had career spells at the national level prior to entering regional government.

The final step in our analysis consists of trying to understand what characterizes the government members that belong to these different types. To do so, we conduct multinomial regression analyses with the four types as dependent variables and the same variables as in subsection 4.2. Like in subsection 4.2, we estimate six different models, a baseline model with individual

⁶ Literally, the "Ox tour", which is a term to describe the, often slow and tedious, political ascent from elected office at lower to those at higher levels of government.

characteristics and benchmark years, as well as five models which each include one indicator for a canton's core or peripheral position.

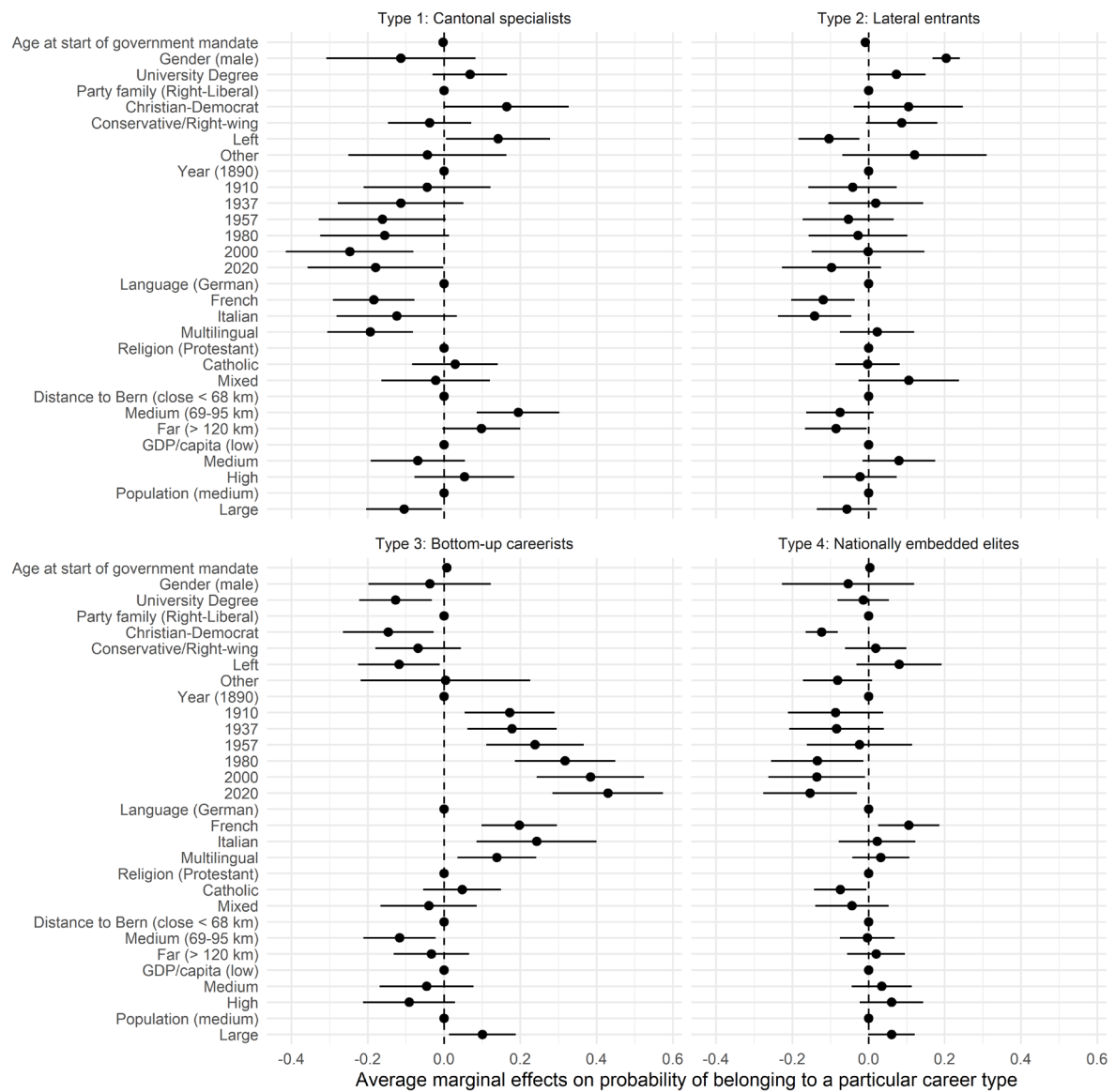
Figure 2. Four types of political careers among regional government members



Note. The x-axis indicates the number of distinct career steps, whereas the y-axis shows the individual regional government members' career sequences. Local=Local parliament or local government, Cantonal=Cantonal parliament, National=National council or Council of states.

Figure 3 shows the results of these analyses. We start the interpretation with the fourth type, the "nationally embedded elites". These are largely the same government members as those that held a national mandate prior to their regional government mandate which we analysed in subsection 4.2. It is, therefore, not surprising that it is largely the same factors associated with a higher probability of belonging to this group. First, Christian-Democrats have a more than 10 percentage points lower probability to belong to this type than representatives of Right-Liberal parties. Second, later cohorts (from 1980 onwards) are less likely to belong to this group than government members from the 1890 benchmark year. A member of the 2020 cohort has a 15 percentage points lower probability to belong to this career type than a member of the 1890 cohort. Finally, regarding cantonal differences, those from French-speaking and larger cantons are more, and those from Catholic cantons less, likely to belong to this type. Again, this is evidence against hypothesis 1, later cohorts are rather less than more nationally integrated prior to entering regional government, and partial evidence for both hypotheses 2.1 and 2.2.

Figure 3. The correlates of belonging to a particular career type



Note. See Figure 1 for details and interpretation.

Regarding the other three types, we also find some interesting variation across individuals, time, and space. For the "cantonal specialists", the first and most widespread type, we see that they are more likely to belong to a Christian-Democrat or a Left party than to a Right-Liberal one. Second, we also see noteworthy variation over time. Later cohorts have a lower probability to belong to this type than earlier ones. For instance, members of the 2020 cohort have an almost 20 percentage points lower probability to belong to this type than those of the 1890 cohort. A possible interpretation for this development is that only holding a mandate in cantonal parliament is considered less and less sufficient to qualify for a regional government position and more experience, possibly also at other levels, is required. Finally, regarding cantonal

differences this career-type is more prevalent among German-speaking and medium-sized cantons.

Regarding the "lateral entrants", those that did not hold an elected political office prior to their regional government mandate, male and university-educated individuals are more likely to belong to this group, whereas representatives of Left parties are less likely to do so compared to those of Right-Liberal ones. Indeed, male government members have a 20 percentage points higher chance to belong to this group than females and Left ones a 10 percentage points lower one. This suggests that these lateral entrants often come from the business sector, which has been characterized by a strong interlocking between political and economic elites and where the military and the Liberal-Democratic Party played a key structuring role (see Rossier et al. 2022). With respect to cantonal differences, language is again relevant: government members from German-speaking cantons have a more than 10 percentage points higher probability to belong to this group than those from French- or Italian-speaking cantons. This might be an indication that previous political experience is considered somewhat less important in German-speaking Switzerland.

Finally, "bottom-up careerists", who start their career at the local level and then move up to the cantonal, and sometimes the national, level, and thus follow a classical political career trajectory in federal systems, are less likely to be University-educated and less likely to be members of a Christian-Democrat or Left party than of a Right-Liberal one. This might suggest that lacking higher education can partly be (or has to) be compensated by more political experience prior to entering regional government. Regarding the development over time, we see that more recent cohorts are much more likely to belong to this type, than the cohort of 1890. Indeed, a member of the cohort of 2000 has a 40 percentage points higher probability to belong to this career type than a member of the 1890 cohort. This might be an indication that the expectations regarding experience in elected office prior to entering cantonal government has grown over time. Regarding cantonal differences, government members from German-speaking cantons are less likely to belong to this type, whereas those from large cantons are more likely to do so.

The key take-aways of these findings regarding regional government members' national integration and multilevel career patterns can be summarized as follows. First, partisanship seems to matter. Right-liberal party members are more likely to have had career spells at the national level than Christian-Democrats, which resonates with the Liberal Democratic Party's dominant role in national politics for much of the timeframe analysed here. Second, regarding temporal differences, we do not find evidence that national integration and embeddedness

becomes more prevalent in regional government members' political careers leading up to their executive mandate, which does not support our first hypothesis. However, their political careers seem to become more differentiated and multilevel over time, indicated by the decline in the group of "cantonal specialists", which only held mandates in cantonal parliament prior to cantonal government, and the spectacular increase in the prevalence of "bottom-up careerists" over time. Finally, cantonal differences exist mainly in terms of the language spoken in a canton as well as its size. Indeed, it seems that in minority-language cantons, national embeddedness and/or multilevel experience is deemed more important than in German-speaking cantons. In the latter, it suffices to hold a mandate in cantonal parliament or to have leadership experience in another sector (mainly the economic one) prior to entering cantonal government. Prior political experience, thus, seems more important in linguistically peripheral cantons, which corroborates hypothesis 2.1. This might be the case, because voters in linguistically peripheral cantons consider a strong political network – be it national or multilevel – important because it might be seen as an asset when representing their canton's interest. Yet, we also find that government members from large cantons are more likely to belong to the groups of nationally embedded and bottom-up careerists, whereas cantonal specialists have more difficulties here. A possible interpretation of this finding is that in large cantons competition for a government mandate is more severe and hence (multilevel) political experience becomes a more important asset.

Finally, one aspect that is worth mentioning is a cantonal characteristic that does not seem to play role in government members' career patterns: a canton's economic strength. It is not the case that government members from poorer or richer regions are more or less nationally integrated or have otherwise distinct career patterns. This is somewhat surprising given that peripherality in economic terms figures so prominently in existing research.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this article is to study how regional government members' political careers vary over time and across space. It contributes to research on political careers in multilevel systems on three dimensions. First, by focusing on regional government members, we shed light on the careers of those who managed to be elected to the highest political office at the regional level and can, thus, be considered a highly select political elite. Second, by studying regional government members' career patterns over a period of 130 years, since the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 21st century, we shed light on (the absence of) long-term transformations in their political careers and link them to research on nationalization and centralization. Finally, by studying ten different Swiss cantons, which are representative of Swiss cantons more generally on a number of relevant characteristics, we explore regional variation in government members' political careers and link them to the central or peripheral status of a region within the federal system.

Regarding temporal variation, our analysis of 475 political careers does not indicate an increasing nationalization, operationalized as having a career spell in national parliament prior to entering regional government, of political careers. Rather, regional government members seem to become somewhat less nationally embedded in their careers leading up to regional government over time. However, their careers also seem to become more complex over time. Indeed, the classical career, starting at the local level and then ascending to political office at higher levels, also by holding multiple mandates at different levels, becomes more prevalent among more recent cohorts, whereas it seems to be increasingly less sufficient to only have held elected office in cantonal parliament prior to entering regional government. This finding is particularly noteworthy with regards to existing research that has found a decline of the classical bottom-up career trajectory among political elites in more recent decades. In the case of (Swiss) regional government members, this decline is not visible.

Regarding cantonal differences, we find some quite striking variation across cantons regarding the national integration of their regional government members prior to entering regional government (see Table 2). A big part of this variation stems from the language spoken in a canton. In cantons with a minority language (particularly French), regional government members are more nationally integrated, which is in line with the idea that representatives from (linguistically) peripheral regions are rewarded for a strong national political network, be it due to higher visibility or due to an expectation that they can bring home "pork" better than less integrated politicians. At the same time, government members from large cantons are also more likely to be integrated nationally and to have more complex, multilevel, careers, a finding which

might partly be explained by the higher electoral competition in these cantons and hence a need for more discerning careers.

A noteworthy finding, probably specific to the Swiss context, is the high number of lateral entrants, i.e., regional government members who did not hold elected political office prior to entering regional government. One fifth of regional government members belongs to this category. This reflects the comparatively low professionalization in the Swiss political system and the strong interlocking between the political and other sectors.

Since this article is work in progress, we list here a number of possible further steps we aim to undertake in revising this article:

1. Explore possible interactions between time and space: some regional characteristics might be more relevant for political careers in earlier/later benchmark years. For instance, the religious denomination of a canton probably mainly matters at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, but less thereafter.
2. Generate a more integrated measure of a canton's peripherality: an important limitation of the present analysis is that it treats the indicators that capture a cantons' core or peripheral status independently. However, intersections between these characteristics might reinforce or attenuate a cantons' status as a more core or a more peripheral canton. Therefore, in a next step, we attempt to generate a measure that combines the different indicators, possibly using Multiple Correspondence Analysis or another technique to study underlying dimensions.
3. Adapt the theoretical argument to multilevel careers: currently, our theoretical argument regarding the role of temporal and regional differences mainly focuses on regional government members' national integration. In a future iteration, we also attempt to include arguments regarding their multilevel careers more generally.
4. Extend the analysis beyond political careers and integrate career steps in other sectors: due to data limitations, we restricted our analysis to the political part of regional government members' careers. However, accumulating positions in different sectors or switching from one sector to another has been very common among the Swiss elite during a large part of the 20th century. Therefore, integrating regional government members' positions in other sectors (company boards, business interest associations, academia, etc.) might allow for a better understanding of their career and the pathway to regional government.

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Appendix

Appendix A.1 – Additional Tables

Table A.1 Number of cantonal government members by cohort and canton

Cohort	Canton										Total
	BE	BS	FR	GE	LU	NE	SG	TI	VD	ZH	
1890	11	7	7	8	7	5	7	10	7	7	76
1910	10	9	7	7	7	5	7	6	7	7	72
1937	9	7	7	7	7	5	7	5	7	7	68
1957	9	7	7	8	7	5	8	5	7	7	70
1980	10	8	7	7	7	6	7	5	7	7	71
2000	7	7	7	7	7	5	9	6	7	7	69
2020	7	7	7	7	5	5	9	5	7	7	66
Total	63	52	49	51	47	36	54	42	49	49	492

Note. The number of government members in a given cohort and canton can be higher than the total number of seats in case of the start of a new legislature in the cohort year. The total number of individuals amounts to 475. Individuals that were present in multiple cohorts are counted multiple times in the row totals.

Table A.2 The Swiss cantons characterized by five indicators (cantons in sample in bold)

	Language	Religion	Distance cantonal capital to national capital	Average GDP/capita (1890-2020)	Average Population (1890-2020)
AG	German	Mixed	Close (< 68 km)	Medium	Large
AI	German	Catholic	Far (> 120 km)	Low	Small
AR	German	Protestant	Far (> 120 km)	Medium	Small
BE	Multi-lingual	Protestant	Close (< 68 km)	Medium	Large
BL	German	Mixed	Close (< 68 km)	Medium	Medium
BS	German	Protestant	Medium (69-95 km)	High	Medium
FR	Multi-lingual	Catholic	Close (< 68 km)	Low	Medium
GE	French	Protestant	Far (> 120 km)	High	Large
GL	German	Protestant	Far (> 120 km)	High	Small
GR	Multi-lingual	Mixed	Far (> 120 km)	Medium	Medium
JU	French	Catholic	Close (< 68 km)	Low	Small
LU	German	Catholic	Close (< 68 km)	Medium	Large
NE	French	Protestant	Close (< 68 km)	High	Medium
NW	German	Catholic	Medium (69-95 km)	Medium	Small
OW	German	Catholic	Close (< 68 km)	Low	Small
SG	German	Mixed	Far (> 120 km)	Medium	Large
SH	German	Protestant	Far (> 120 km)	High	Small
SO	German	Mixed	Close (< 68 km)	Medium	Medium
SZ	German	Catholic	Medium (69-95 km)	Low	Medium
TG	German	Mixed	Far (> 120 km)	Medium	Medium
TI	Italian	Catholic	Far (> 120 km)	Low	Large
UR	German	Catholic	Medium (69-95 km)	Low	Small
VD	French	Protestant	Medium (69-95 km)	High	Large
VS	Multi-lingual	Catholic	Medium (69-95 km)	Low	Medium
ZG	German	Catholic	Medium (69-95 km)	High	Small
ZH	German	Protestant	Medium (69-95 km)	High	Large

Appendix A.2 – Additional Figures

Figure A.1 Number of mandates prior to regional government mandate

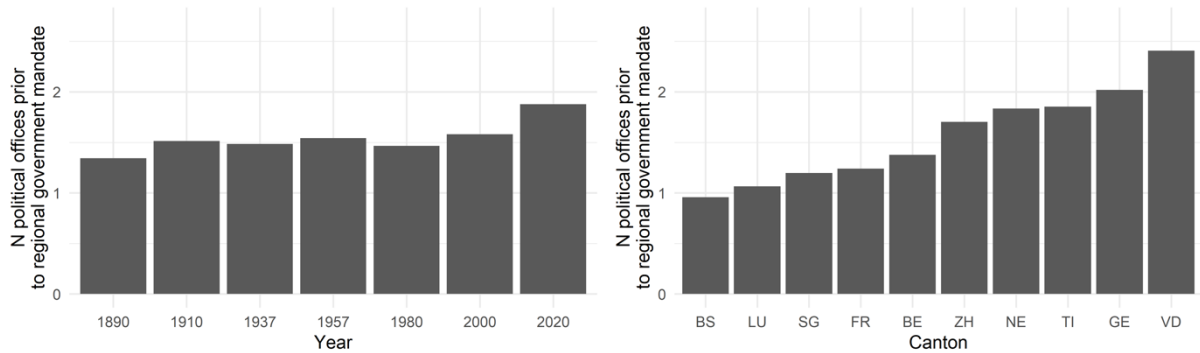
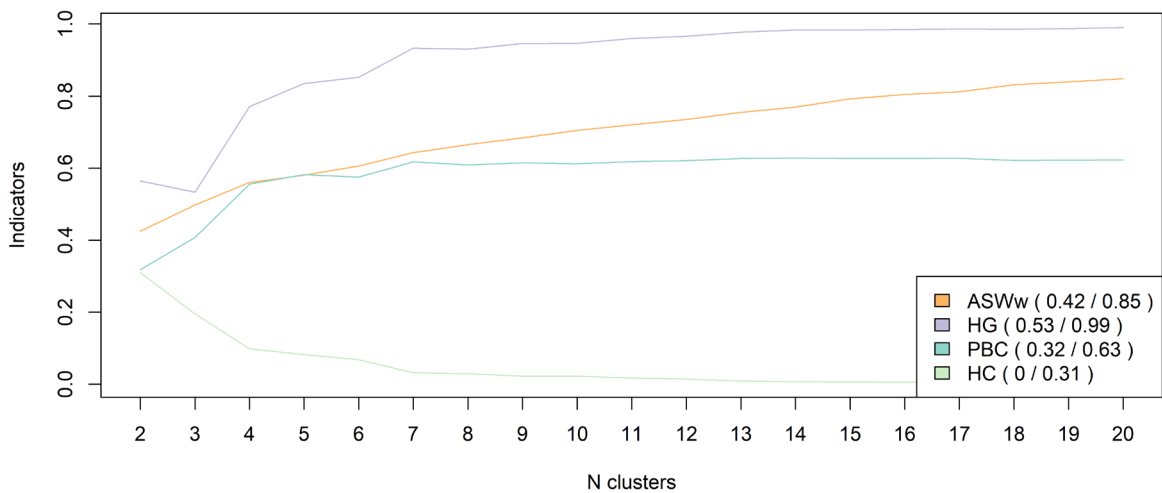


Figure A.2 Selected measures for the fit of a certain cluster partition to the sequence data



Note. ASWw=Average Silhouette Width (weighted), HG=Hubert's Gamma, PBC=Point Biserial Correlation, HC=Hubert's C. A well-fitting cluster partition has higher values on ASWw, HG, and PBC, and lower values on HC. From a goodness-of-fit perspective, the optimal number of clusters for this data would be 20.

Figure A.3 Cluster dendrogram and career sequences

