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## Introduction

After the train meanders through the forest, crossing bridges and busy roads, all passengers turn to the right with an ecstatic 'Wow' at the dramatic sight of the *Dreigestirn* mountains. Hands grab at phones and cameras to capture the view that so many have painted, written and sung about since the Romantic origins of tourism in the late eighteenth century. A giant wall of ice and rock seems to have erupted overnight from the green pastures, as if the mighty mountains had awoken and suddenly sat up, taking the whole valley by surprise. Twice an hour, crowds comprising mostly tourists reach the train station of this Alpine village and tourist resort, approximately 9'00 meters above sea level, located in the Jungfrau Region in the Bernese Swiss Alps.

From Summer 2017 until Spring 2023, I often belonged to that crowd too, taking the train from my familiar and urban Swiss lowlands (*Unterland*) where I had lived and studied for most of my life to reach the not-so-distant but oh-so-different highlands (*Oberland*) where my field site was located.[1] Together with hundreds of people from hundreds of places, speaking hundreds of languages, I would undertake a journey crossing what often felt like an invisible border between the ordinary and the extraordinary, between the insignificant Swiss flatlands and the exceptional mountains. State-of-the-art transporting infrastructure supported our smooth arrival into, as well as movement in an out of the valley. Multilingual advertisement scattered through the village centre promised us unforgettable mountain experiences and assured that we had chosen to come to the right place. Signs in German, English, French, Arabic or Korean hanging on the façades of restaurants, hotels, in front of sports and souvenir shops, of boutiques selling luxury clothing and furniture all competed for our attention as guests, inviting us to come in, to spend time and money – hopefully both, for as long and as much as

possible.

And it seemed to work: each day of my stay, thousands of people moved up and down the main village street, the *Hauptstrasse*, primarily along the one-kilometre stretch between the train station and the church—a small yet bustling corridor within the vast, nearly 200-square-kilometer expanse of the valley. Pedestrians along the sidewalks paused to capture photos of the wilder surroundings, beyond the urban centre, where a panorama, made of mountain peaks, pastures, huts and grazing cows promised an Alpine experience of escape. Beside them, more people navigated this elongated centre in cars, buses, coaches, vans, bicycles and motorcycles, often with the intent to go higher, further, to enjoy the views and outdoor activities like hiking, skydiving, sledging, skiing depending on the weather and the season. Many visited the many village's shops, hotels, dined in restaurants, browsed tourist information desks and boarded gondolas in facilities conveniently lined up along both sides of the street. The multilingual murmur of the crowd, the hum of tires, the screech of brakes, honking horns and announcements of train arrivals and departures from the country's lowlands—all seemed to account for the valley's success as an international tourist destination, a place where the so-called 'business of foreigners' or *Fremdenverkehr*, a German synonym for tourism, dominated everything.

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After days spent around the busy *Hauptstrasse*, I became increasingly interested in one of the many hotels bordering it. I had noticed how the paint peeled off its Victorian façade and traces of damp mapped out strange motifs on its walls. The light garland framing the main entrance to the lobby flickered eerily and the red flowers decorating its windows hung down their pots. What could have been negligence was accompanied by a disturbing quietness in the middle of one of Switzerland's most touristic villages. After quick online research, I had read that the hotel had been empty for years, waiting for an investor that had not (yet) come. My father, who visited me, insisted: I should 'find out' what had happened to it, as it was 'terrible

for the image' of the resort.

As I questioned some of the four thousand locals living in the valley, on the state of the hotel, they highlighted its 'dramatic' fate – 'a jewel', 'a five star' that had become a 'ruin' and was awaiting an investor that many doubted would ever come. But they also worryingly told me about other 'ruins', all bordering the *Dorfstrasse.* Farther up, another empty hotel had caused for concerns as it was left half-destroyed. What should have been fully renovated was left unfinished. With only one façade demolished and the majority of the interior destroyed, the money was already gone. The village's tourism association paid to cover the ruins and debris with a mural reproducing the original appearance of the building, to make it look 'less frightening', I was told. Locals also mentioned a giant orange crane that stood in a squared, concrete hole in the centre of the village. What should have been a luxurious hotel turned into a never-ending construction site. The crane moved from time to time, but many suspected that this was just to give passers-by the feeling that things were going according to plan. Locals remembered that there was a time in the recent past when seven hotel projects awaited the helping hand of investors.

These abandoned or unfinished projects, particularly stood out because they did not match with my expectations of what I would find in this area of the Alps. Before coming to the village to conduct fieldwork in September 2017, I had read the overwhelmingly enthusiastic statements of tourism experts from the regional, national and international media on how the valley was blessed with rugged views that boosted an exceptionally successful tourism economy. Thanks to the ongoing attraction of the valley's mountains and the relentless work of tourism lobbyists in attracting new markets and extending the tourist high season, the local tourism economy was praised for its robustness and expansion. Such narratives surely matched with what Salazar and Graburn have termed 'tourism imaginaries': an assemblage of preconceived notions made of 'seductive images and discourses about peoples and places'

(Salazar and Graburn 2014: 1) – in this case, of the Alpine and peaceful village. But they were also based on impressive figures. In the year I arrived, the numbers of visitors had boomed, with approximately 20,000 day trippers and 1,200,000 annual overnight stays, breaking all records in the lengthy local history of tourism. And in terms of visitor numbers, the next two years, 2018 and 2019, would surpass the previous one, before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the village in 2020. Only two years later, in 2022, the resort had grown once again and done better than ever.

Trying to 'find out' what had happened to these hotels, I found myself trying to understand how to reconcile the obvious successes of a tourism economy that had contributed to the expansion and development of the valley over centuries with its blatant failures and uncertainties. Talking to tourists proved rather inconclusive in this respect: many of those I spoke with had not noticed the ruins or simply did not care. The strategies employed by local tourism actors, such as using a mural or light garlands to deflect attention, appeared to have been effective. But evoking the ruins with those who lived off tourism in the valley – *all* four thousand inhabitants, more or less directly, as I was told – opened up larger, often deeply existential, conversations on tourism's ambiguity and their position as dependents of this industry.

My encounter with Adrian,[2] a local in his fifties who worked in one of the 'ruins', was particularly memorable in this respect. In charge of keeping one of the empty hotels in a condition that would be likely to attract new investment, he was, to the best of his knowledge, the only villager of local native origin (*Einhemische*) who had spent most of his life in the hotel business. His former colleagues were nearly all migrants from Southern or Eastern Europe who carried out outsourced activities typically avoided by local natives and Swiss people. Adrian, however, explained that he used to feel at home in the hotel, among guests and workers from all over the world and his openness and skills as an electrician made him a particularly valuable

worker. Now, he was the only one left in what many called the ‘ghost hotel’.

On the day I met him, Adrian was dismantling the heating system and interrupted his work to give me a tour of the ruined hotel. Pointing out the old-fashioned décor in some of the remaining rooms, he spoke of the damage inflicted by the passage of time, along with the need for maintenance as well as the necessity to reinvent oneself in the business of tourism. The rubble before our eyes was the result of opportunities that his former boss had missed, failing to adapt to a fast-changing market. Tourism was based on people coming from the other side of the world. Nowadays, tourists, especially the ‘mass tourists’ from Asia, had less time and money to spend in the village, Adrian said as we walked around the half-destroyed rooms of the so-called returning guests (*Stammgäste*), who used to stay for weeks, sometimes months, and for whose needs and taste the rooms were tailored. The competition between various destinations and hotels had also intensified with the advent of online reviews and numerous booking options.

Adrian regretted that his former boss did not have it in him to foresee trends or to inject hundreds of thousands of Swiss francs into securing the hotel’s future. This lack of innovation, this lack of focus in an accelerating economy, had led the place to bankruptcy, which left its employees in shock. Everyone had to leave, except for Adrian. His colleagues, nearly all migrants, had left the village or Switzerland altogether after the bankruptcy, sometimes returning to where they had come from. Some found a job in one of the fifty hotels spread throughout the valley. Adrian had heard from one or two but the rest had vanished into thin air, it seemed, joining the hundreds, probably thousands, of migrant employees who had contributed to the hotel’s history since its construction at the end of the nineteenth century and then disappeared.

Influenced by his proximity to ruins that he understood to be in direct correlation with his former boss’ failure to innovate, Adrian positioned himself in favour of innovation as the

only possible way forward in an Alpine touristic valley. He, like many locals, for instance enthusiastically supported the new cable-car project that was aimed to secure the valley's future, even if this meant accepting that the more stable and 'good times' of tourism with the presence of the *Stammgäste* were over. But Adrian also knew that many of his acquaintances, friends and family members openly struggled with the consequences of the endless need for growth imposed on them by a global tourism economy.

In my discussions with various villagers, they indeed referred to the empty hotels – places they sometimes never had set foot in – but not to call for actions or opportunities to invest further. Instead, they evoked them as symbols of the valley's misguided tourism trajectory, lamenting what had been lost in the pursuit of touristic expansion: Alpine traditions, landscapes, a sense of community and stability, but also a part of the local touristic history, with the disappearance of once-prestigious hotels like the one Adrian worked in. They complained about the ever-extending tourist season, as the previously quieter months of April and May or September to November were now busy too. Relying on day trippers from far away, was deeply bothersome, tiring and upsetting, they said. The newest forms of tourism – shorter, from farther away and dominated by big tourism players – took over all aspects of local life and exposed the region to more global instability. At the same time, many felt like fewer and fewer 'native locals' (*Einheimische*) 'profited from tourism' as rents were increasing, local shops had disappeared in favour of sports shops, and holiday rentals and big malls had been built in an increasingly urbanized Alpine valley.

If the resort's inhabitants had disagreements on the direction of tourism, they nonetheless unanimously agreed that the valley relied entirely, more or less directly, on the 'business of foreigners' to exist. For the past two centuries, modern tourism had put the valley, the Jungfrau Region, the Bernese Highlands and the Alps on the global map. Farmers, lift operators, construction workers and service providers all now counted on the presence of guests

from all over the world to make a living. The 'business of foreigners' had made history, enabling locals to work and to stay in the village when other Alpine dwellers had to emigrate to the urban lowlands to make a living. It also brought workers from abroad to the valley, who were able to escape poverty and instability to work in the Alps, building tourist infrastructure and serving guests.

The more I learnt about ruined, abandoned, or 'ghost' hotels, the less they seemed at odds with the resort's thriving economy. They instead illuminated what became this book's topic: the ambiguities of tourism for those who rely on it to make a living. The history of these buildings reflected the broader history of the valley, one that tourism dependents often described as a testament to tourism's remarkable ability to create and transform durably. This was especially evident in an Alpine valley that had once grappled with poverty and outmigration before the advent of tourism two centuries ago. At the same time, the hotels' more recent fates highlighted the general pressure exerted by the tourism industry on locals, dramatically underscoring their need to keep pace with the international market. If tourism shaped all aspects of life, present and past, it also threw the valley and its inhabitants into a problematic, uncertain future that could undo everything. What did it mean, then, to live off something that seemed as essential as uncertain, as promising as threatening?

Based on eighteen months of fieldwork conducted in the valley between 2017 and 2023 for my doctoral and postdoctoral research, this book addresses these questions by examining the paradoxes of tourism—considering it not only as an industry and infrastructure but also as a social and existential phenomenon. It explores how tourism provides direction, meaning, and dignity to human life while simultaneously fostering confusion, disorientation, and anxiety for those who depend on it for their livelihood. Told from a region that appears to exemplify tourism's robustness, the story told in the following chapters uncovers the profound instability of tourism as a capitalist endeavour in a globalized world. It seeks to illuminate the complex

experiences of tourism dependency for the inhabitants of a valley with no viable alternative to tourism, as well as the strategies they employ to navigate the promises and threats that tourism entails. To do so, I examine the perspectives of various actors within the valley's tourism industry, focusing on the stratified and hierarchized categories of belonging they occupy: those like Adrian, who identify as 'natives' or 'original locals' (*Einheimische* or *Ureinheimische*, literally meaning those 'at home' in the village), alongside other Swiss locals, migrants—primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe—working in the hospitality sector, and tourism actors and/or lobbyists who actively shape the industry. Together, these positions reveal how being dependent on tourism involves unevenly navigating between a long history of touristification and an uncertain future, oscillating between success and ruin.

## 'Nothing Without Tourism'

Living off tourism in the Bernese Alps means being deeply connected to a long-standing and changing history of tourism development, with this industry playing a central role in shaping the region's environmental, economic and social landscape. Locals I met during my field research repeatedly told me that they would not exist had the tourism industry not conquered their valley and that they were 'nothing without tourism'.[3] What was once a valley shaped by scattered settlements (*Streusiedlung*), composed of isolated farmhouses with little interaction between inhabitants from different sides and flanks, had transformed into a galaxy revolving around the *Hauptstrasse*, pulsating with life. The gaps between the centre and the rest of the *Streusiedlung* had gradually, yet swiftly, been filled with new constructions, particularly holiday homes, each seeking a piece of the tranquillity and pure Alpine experience the village offered. The face of the valley had undoubtedly changed.

At the same time, in a region where the history of tourism could be traced back to the origins of modern tourism itself, with the Romantics, or, for instance, the first Thomas Cook

tours visiting the valley (Barton 2008), tourism was also a story economic transformation. Books, exhibitions and theatre plays described how the village's present was the undeniable result of a development *from* mountain farming *to* tourism (see chapter 1 and 3). Tourism had progressively replaced mountain farming, as a precarious activity undertaken in a harsh climate here like in many other Alpine valleys (Stotten, Schermer, and Wilson 2021). So harsh that many left the valley for other regions, countries and continents (Lerch 1909).[4] While 60–70 per cent of local inhabitants engaged in farming activities in the village in 1900, this figure dropped to fewer than five per cent five years before the beginning of fieldwork, a reality for various valleys of the Bernese Highlands (Berwert and de Bary 2005; Haisch, Jakob, and Mayer 2014; Tiefenbach 2013). Many locals thus gave up on farming to become more or less directly involved in the tourism business (Wiesmann and Liechti 2004). They found employment with transport companies that emerged in the valley from the turn of the twentieth century —most notably the private regional operator, Jungfrau Railway (JR). Others also built houses designed to welcome tourists in rental flats. Those who remained farmers in the valley managed to do so because of the cheese and meat they sold to hotels, their employment as mountain guides or on ski lifts during the quieter winter months and their reliance on state subsidies.[5]

The 'business of foreigners' grew to dictate the valley's time, its space and the relationships between inhabitants and the world as the Alpine village transformed into a 'resort' — a destination offering a curated blend of material, cultural, and economic resources, thoughtfully designed to meet the needs and fulfil the desires of tourists (Clivaz et al. 2014). This was the result of a long process, made of decades investments of private and public actors and institutions, often from the urbanized Swiss lowlands, to boost the creation of the Alpine village as place dedicated to leisure (Tissot 2004).[6] These pushed all-inclusive group tourism from Europe at the end of the nineteenth century or ski tourism from the 1930s (Denning 2014). In the 1960s, Swiss ski tourists from urban areas such as Basel, Zurich or Bern often bought

holiday homes in the region. From the end of the 1980s, the village increasingly welcomed guests from the USA, then Japan and more recently China, Korea, India, often travelling in organized groups on tours throughout Europe and Switzerland (Gyimóthy 2018). Highly popular on social media, the valley had also become the centre of multiple tourism buzzes, attracting users and influencers from all over the world.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, tourism's significance also manifested in its lack of clarity. Locals and even tourism officials I met during fieldwork explained that figures and facts, while providing important indications, could not truly capture the all-pervasive importance of tourism.[7] The resort had to be able to withstand four to five times the size of the municipality's population during the ever-extending high season. Yet, the exact numbers of tourists coming into the valley and what they were doing and seeking exactly remained unknown because of the complexity of this crowd, made up of day trippers, holiday home owners and returning guests, coming in by train, bus, car, bike or even helicopter. Official statistics dividing the occupation percentages into sectors (75 per cent in the third sector, 15 per cent in the second, and nine per cent in the first, as of 2020[8]) did little to paint a more precise picture. Farming and construction, as providers of infrastructure and products, were indivisible parts of the tourism industry.

An acknowledgement of tourism's influence in the past and in the present, the sentence 'We are nothing without tourism' also highlighted this industry's power to make people and places into *someone* or *something* in an Alpine region that would otherwise be nothing. During my field research in the valley, locals explained that their village was one of the few municipalities in the Bernese Highlands and the Alps *not* to draw on a negative demographic growth – an empirical reality that they believed to be owed to tourism's successes.[9] They expressed living in a touristic enclave located in a mountain region marked by a remoteness and a lack of opportunities and political power, as opposed to the urban centres in the country's

lowlands. In this context, tourism provided villagers with possibilities to make a living in the valley, when many of their neighbours struggled. They highlighted the unevenness of the Alpine development, with some places literally bursting with tourists while others were bypassed and disregarded, left out of important economic and socio-cultural networks (Bätzing 2015; Stacul 2003a). As such, tourism enabled continuity in maintaining otherwise disappearing rural structures and populations – a well-known fact in the Alps and beyond (Wanner, Pröbstl-Haider, and Feilhammer 2021).

Yet, with tourism as their sole viable option in an otherwise marginalized mountainous region, many villagers expressed a sense of indebtedness to tourism that also carried pessimistic undertones. Already precarious in the 1980s, most of my local interlocutors explained that the situation had worsened since the turn of the twenty-first century as they felt that the tourism industry had become increasingly alienated from the needs of the village community. In a world of increasing interconnection and uncertainty, their village had entered a new reality, competing with rival destinations and trying to attract unpredictable guests from further away, notably Asia and the Middle East, instead of the European *Stammgäste*. The processes of globalization and digitalization amplified local concerns, as they were accompanied by the growing and visible dominance of transnational corporations—such as tour operators, hotel chains, and cruise companies. Of considerable size and influence, villagers complained these companies set the valley under strong pressure as they pursued their own profit, for instance by offering group discounts to attract more guests.

These developments were not entirely dictated by outsiders. The private railway company JR owned trains but also restaurants, ski lifts, gondolas, sightseeing spots, shops, car parks and so on.[10] Variously, JR was described as the architect of the region's success, a 'lighthouse' (*Leuchtturm*), a 'milk cow' (*Milchkuh*) for the whole region and the country, as one of Switzerland's oldest and most thriving railway companies from its foundation at the end

of the nineteenth century. This company figured as *the* most important agent of tourism development: it had pulled the village out of Alpine farming and poverty and brought it into modernity. Yet, over the last forty years, JR had bought up multiple, publicly owned touristic installations and become the main employer of local workforce in the region, as well as an important player in the national economy of tourism. Amid feelings of loyalty and scepticism, locals felt more or less compelled to speak against or for the monopoly of this historical company over the region and its recent transformations, especially regarding the future of growth and of the more intense and rapid global connections that the company promoted.

The notion of being 'nothing without tourism' encapsulates the historical, social, and economic significance of tourism while also highlighting its threats as a dominating industry in the Alps. However, as I will demonstrate in this book, tourism is far from a predetermined or static phenomenon, even in a valley with such a long history of touristification. Tourism's dominance must be continuously re-made, re-affirmed, and actualized—performed and shaped by a diverse array of actors, each driven by unique goals and interests.

## The Toured Ones

Each year, more travellers engage in tourism, be it in search of new emotional experiences (Picard and Robinson 2012), to find love (Frohlick 2012) or to connect to their roots (de Santana Pinho 2008), while an increasing number of people rely on tourism to make a living.[11] Together, they participate in the creation of what anthropologist Edward Bruner (Bruner 1996) has described as 'borderzone': 'a creative space' (159) and a 'zone of interaction between natives, tourists, and ethnographers' (177) in which people, create meaning across cultural difference (Bruner 2005; Leite, Castañeda, and Adams 2019; Simoni 2019).

It could be argued that tourists and myself as an ethnographer equally depended on tourism in the village's borderzone, either to take a break away from the cold, the heat, to rest

or to work. Yet, it is a more straightforward and acute form of tourism dependency that interests me here—one informed by individuals' particular awareness of their heavy reliance on the industry for survival, growth, development, and meaningful lives.[12] This focus is informed by what the great majority of my interlocutors in the village described of the clear role they occupied in the tourism industry: theirs as the 'travelled' or 'toured ones' (*die Bereisten*), in contrast to those of the 'travelling ones' (*die Reisenden*) who visited the valley. The latter temporarily left their everyday lives to discover the valley, paying for services, food and accommodation while away from home, and the former relied on the latter's presence in their village to make a living. Some – usually the most precarious, migrant workers – even expressed that they lived not just *off* tourism but also *for* it, stressing their complete dedication to responding to the tourists' needs in order to make ends meet.

As an ethnographer of tourism, who stayed in the village for a whole year, I was identified by many as (and felt like) belonging somewhere in between the toured and the travelling ones. I was no regular tourist who would leave after staying in a hotel and enjoying a break from work because I was here *for* work, but my capacity to make a living did not directly depend on the tourism industry. From this intermediary position—shaped by practical constraints of access I will develop below and guided by my interests in tourism's paradoxes—I chose to tell the stories of those who rely on tourism as a means of *re-creating* (rather than merely *recreating*) their everyday lives. Doing so, I focus on a particular role and research object within the heterogeneous tourism economy: the so-called 'hosts', as opposed to the 'guests'.

Anthropologist of tourism Valene Smith's famously defined the tourist as 'a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change' (Smith 1989: 1). Smith, like other analysts of tourism, reasserted the boundary between the visiting tourist and the local or 'native', as a permanently rooted and working

inhabitant of a place that they did not necessarily choose to live in (see also Bruner 2005: 15; 1996). In the last decades, the host and guest dichotomy, as well as the fixed typologies of tourism's participants,[13] have been critiqued at great length in academia for their inadequacy in the face of a fluctuating and more complex reality, where one might for instance be tourist *and* worker (e.g. Sherlock 2001). This also rings true for my field site, where tourists sometimes settled permanently or where locals enjoyed their leisure time in the valley in the same way as tourists would do. Yet, I here take the separation between hosts and guests as a point of departure that is anchored in the people's perception of their dependency on tourism as an industry commodifying the extraordinary to make the everyday and a living for those inhabiting the resort. I am in this sense committed to addressing what Jenny Chio has termed the 'labour' put behind someone's 'pleasure' in tourism (Chio 2014: vii). The labour opportunities provided by tourism enable the inhabitants of resorts to make a living, and tourism can be maintained only thanks to their continuous involvement in it. In the village, as in many touristic resorts, the commodification of extraordinary time for guests represents the dominant vehicle of social reproduction.

The way I approach it here, the 'borderzone' is no exceptional space of 'staged relations' and removed from the everyday, as is originally implied in Bruner's definition. For him, after the encounter in the borderzone, 'tourists return to their hotels and the locals to their homes and families, each to their own spaces' (Bruner 2005: 251). Instead, and inspired by Valerio Simoni's re-reading of the concept (2019), I see such borderzone not solely as a 'site of work and cash income' (Bruner 2005: 267) but as an *integral* part of the everyday from the perspective of locals. The idea of being 'nothing without tourism' precisely reveals how even attempting to delimit the contours and limits of tourism and of that borderzone is difficult, if not impossible, because of its all-pervasiveness. For those whose stories appear here, tourism *creates* and *is created* by the everyday: the borderzone extends into their homes, their past,

present, future and even their bodies and minds.

Considering the hosts' experiences does not imply that I focus solely on the 'natives', as Bruner's characterization of the touristic borderzone may imply (Bruner 1996, 2005). Like many global resorts, the valley was characterized by the great variety of its approximately 4'000 inhabitants. Some were indeed 'natives' or *Einheimische* like Adrian. They carried in their names their belonging to their homeland (*Einheimische* literately translating to 'in the homeland' or *Heimat* in German), often for multiple generations. This latter status was marked by family history, a local family name, speaking a local dialect, having the municipality inscribed as one's 'place of origin' (*Heimatort*). The *Einheimische* were seen and often felt like 'authentic' village dwellers, who originally came from the valley, making them hosts *and* natives. Others were 'outsiders' (*Auswärtige*), coming from other Swiss valleys or regions but also other countries and who worked in various sectors of the local economy, especially in the hospitality industry. In the local everyday talk, these migrants were addressed as 'foreigners' (*Ausländer*) and their contribution to the realm of tourism labour was, to a certain extent, limited to the hospitality sector as waiters, kitchen or hotel workers in the region's many hotels, restaurants and rentals. As of 2017, the booklet I was given as a new inhabitant in the municipality indicated that the locals who had lived in it since birth made for 31 percent of the total village population and the proportion of foreigners was of 24 per cent.[14]

Such heterogeneity of population should not be seen as exceptional. Various scholars of tourism have discussed at great length how tourism implies a wide array of actors and positions in the industry (Chambers 1997) and the 'host community' (Stronza 2005), particularly as tourism resorts often rely on migrant workforce and other 'brokers' or intermediaries (Bianchi 2000). However, we know surprisingly few about this heterogeneity: the question of *how* inclusion and exclusion dynamics may unfold between different groups remains rather unexplored in full-length ethnographic studies (besides, e.g. Adams 1992; Tucker 2005). My

work sheds light on the importance to acknowledge how such uneven categories of population are re-made in the everyday to understand tourism dependency, its benefits and constraints, and its uneven manifestations.

## Tourism Dependency

Over the last decade, social scientists have increasingly described tourism as an extractive industry because of its reliance on the exploitation of environments, landscapes and people (Azcárate 2020; Büscher and Davidov 2013). And where it contributes to the creation of monocultural environments via extraction, tourism is particularly prone to shocks and crises that disrup03/11/2026 12:23:00t not only economic branches but also entire communities (Milano, Novelli, and Russo 2024). At the same time, in spite of this acute awareness of tourism's negative consequence in and outside of academia, many of its dependents continue to seek opportunities to be or remain involved in tourism. It remains undoubtedly tied to promises of development, stability and reparation (Mostafanezhad, Azcárate, and Norum 2021).

Accounting for such paradoxes of tourism as a simultaneously creative and destructive industry (Enzensberger 1996: 121-126; Stasch 2017), many analysts have carefully distanced themselves from earlier positions describing tourism *either* as an agent of chaos *or* as a promise of betterment (Krippendorf 1975). Described by various authors as not intellectually productive and too narrow (van den Berghe 1992: 235; Loloum 2015: 37), these analyses overlooked tourism's inherent contradictions. They did not acknowledge the fact that tourism creates exotic, pure, wild and paradisiac destinations *while* domesticating them and subjecting them to capitalist processes of value extraction. The current momentum nonetheless underscores the inevitability of debates over tourism's impacts. In a world of increasing social inequality, of economic and ecological insecurity or sanitary uncertainty, the nefarious and salutary effects

of tourism for the environment, for local communities or for the economy have increasingly shaped academic discussion (Duffy 2006; Moore 2019; Mostafanezhad and Hannam 2016), as well as various actors from the broader society and private and public institutions.[15]

If tourism presents a case of 'moral reasoning' for those who are observing it (Caton 2012), for those who depend on it to make a living, it embodies both an existential promise and a threat. The tourism dependents I met during my fieldwork saw themselves tied to tourism as an unmanageable but essential business, relying on the unpredictable wanderlust of others. Travel for leisure was a luxury that many people would give up on first in times of crisis and inflation, especially for a trip to expensive Switzerland, as I was told multiple times. Yet, the growing crowds of tourists also weighed heavily on locals, who regularly expressed that tourism had become 'too much' and destructive of their natural and social environment. Both the disappearance and the presence of guests, the past and the future of tourism development were reasoned with intensively, revealing an acute problematization of locals' tourism dependency that echoed with other destinations globally, as we shall see.

To be clear, tourism dependency is not a new topic in tourism studies. In the 1970s and 1980s, the followers of the so-called dependency theory[16] saw the growing tourism industry in the Global South as paradigmatic of a problematic state of dependency between the powerful West and the powerless Rest (Erisman 1983; Morgan 1987; Turner 1976). Tourism, they argued, was one of the forces sustaining the underdevelopment of the former colonies or the peripheries while benefitting the industrialized core or centre (Britton 1982; for a review see Bianchi 2018; Chaperon and Bramwell 2013). These patterns were considered even more problematic on islands or isolated enclaves, which were often made dependent on the Western world and exhibited continuities with the plantation economy model shaped by colonization (Bastin 1984), now driven by transnational corporations (Britton 1980). Anthropologists influenced by this scholarship, for instance, denounced the increasing reliance of indigenous

populations on Western tourists visiting their home villages (Nash 1989) and feared for the disappearing native traditions that should be salvaged from commodification (Greenwood 1989). If criticized for their essentializing portrayal of dependent local communities and determinism, such grand narratives – often formulated in terms of 'impacts' – effectively countered those of liberal optimists, who presented tourism as a positive developmental strategy enabling poorer countries to quickly and smoothly enter globalization (Simoni 2018: 508-509; Leite, Castañeda, and Adams 2019).[17] As a consequence of its simplifying narratives, the dependency theory in tourism and beyond reached an 'impasse' in the late 1980s (Schuurman 1993).[18] So much so that speaking of tourism dependency became extremely marginal, especially within anthropological scholarship on tourism.

Informed by the limitations of the 'classical' tourism dependency framework, my work revisits tourism dependency debates as essential issues shaping my field site—much like other destinations—but approaches them through a different lens. It engages with recent anthropological scholarship on dependency, which has contributed to important discussions on personhood, the state or distributive politics by challenging the often simplistic and deterministic views of dependency as the negative, pathologized counterpart to freedom, individualism, or choice (Martin, Wig, and Yanagisako 2021; Martin 2021; Martin and Yanagisako 2020). The sole position of the Alpine village where I conducted fieldwork points to intense relations of interdependency: village inhabitants have historically depended on the wanderlust of others to make a living, while tourists have depended on the services offered by the inhabitants to enjoy their journey. Local native inhabitants have also relied on the presence of other, outsider or foreign, inhabitants migrating into the village to sustain and develop this industry, while these 'new-comers' have depended on the valley's job opportunities to secure livelihoods.

Acknowledging this situation, I embrace an understanding of tourism dependency as a

relational 'mode of action', capable of accounting for the complex history, activities and relations that mark states of dependence (Bayart 2000: 218; Ferguson 2013, 2015). In this understanding, being dependent does not indicate passivity, but instead, highlights people's capacity to access resources and support and to make claims on what or whom they depend on.[19] Being dependent on tourism means to possess acute awareness of tourism as a source of income and exchange, to actively reflect on it and one's position in relation to it. Looking at the relations that shape tourism subsistence reveals how those who live off tourism formulate demands on the tourism industry, its participants and representatives, and the affective states that accompany these demands, such as hope, fear or confusion. Sometimes however, an empirically observable reality of tourism dependency may not lead to a socially recognized status of tourism dependent, as this book shows in the case of migrant hospitality workers (see chapter 5).

Although not explicitly framed within the context of tourism dependency, several anthropologists have explored tourism's paradoxical power—both in opening up opportunities for dependents to connect, learn, or move, while also constraining them (Leite 2017; Tucker 2005; Kahn 2011; Chio 2014). Matilde Córdoba Azcárate's recent book *Stuck with Tourism* most poignantly reveals the necessity to reopen the question of tourism's ambiguity in its ability to better *and* deteriorate (non-)human life. Based in some of Mexico's famous touristic resorts, her research looks at how tourism 'sticks' and 'entraps' those who depend on it, precisely because it enables the 'short term' betterment of 'precarious conditions', while foreclosing alternatives (Azcárate 2020: 16). The precarious context that Azcárate witnesses in the Yucatán Peninsula is the result of colonial processes, the decline of the henequen monocrop industry, and ruthless capitalist investment driven by the Mexican state from the mid-1970s. While her work contrasts with that of the simplistic analyses of the dependency theorists of tourism, it marks a regained interest in anthropology, in fact even a necessity, in examining the states of

dependence created by tourism in marginalized, postcolonial regions.

The context that informs Azcárate's insightful analysis is arguably quite different from the one that interests me here. The Swiss Alps are located in the centre of Europe, in a country that is known for its wealth and stability and which has largely profited from its neighbours' colonial enterprise (Purtschert, Lüthi, and Falk 2012). Contrary to the Yucatán, the Jungfrau Region, like various resorts in the Swiss Alps, draws on a very long history of tourism – 200 years at least. Yet, here too, tourism enabled locals to be 'something' in a region that would be 'nothing' otherwise, meaning struggling with poverty and the outmigration of its inhabitants to wealthier, urban and more diversified regions. Beyond their obvious differences, tourism developments and the dependency this creates for those who live off it in the Yucatán Peninsula and the Swiss Alps are marked by their greater or lesser proximity to becoming 'nothing' *again*, because of the context of marginalization and/or the precarity that characterizes their pre-tourism history.[20]

Although Azcárate reveals the strategies put in place by locals who had no other choice but to sacrifice for tourism, her book reveals that most of her interlocutors had little power to change their conditions. Local populations in the Yucatán Peninsula, she notes, resorted to various narratives to 'make sense' out of tourism effects as 'necessary evil' (Azcárate 2020: 8). The sacrificial logics of tourism were also present for locals I met who, like Adrian, argued that innovation, as painful it was, needed to be undertaken for the sake of the community. This however coexisted with more upfront problematizations of tourism dependency. For many of the people I follow in this book, tourism no longer 'made sense' because it no longer seemed to be benefitting for those it ought to – local tourism dependents. Putting forward their status as tourism dependents, as locals or citizens of Switzerland, they wished to address this situation and sometimes concretely attempted to do so. Such problematization of tourism by its dependents, by virtue of their dependent status as 'affected' population (see chapter 5), reveals

precisely what anthropologists of dependency recently argued: looking behind the imaginaries of subjugation associated with it, one might find that being dependent and being socially recognized as such may be marked by a greater form of agency (Ferguson 2015).

The critiques uttered by locals toward tourism reflect growing, wider social movements targeted against tourism's excesses in various (especially Western) destinations. In cities like Paris, Amsterdam or Barcelona, locals have expressed discontent with tourism's excesses and claim their right to define its development according to their needs and call for the implementation of various regulations to safeguard their quality of life (Milano 2018; Peeters et al. 2018). In the sociological and anthropological tourism literature, these have been described as social mobilizations or activism against the phenomenon of 'overtourism' or 'mass tourism'. This strand of scholarship has discussed how locals of overtouristified destinations more or less openly confront, attack, resist or 'cope' with those associated with tourism growth, be they promoters, planners, policy makers or tourists (Boissevain 1996; Milano, Novelli, and Cheer 2019; Milano, Novelli, and Russo 2024). My work draws inspiration from these studies, recognizing the greater agency of Swiss and native locals in shaping, navigating, and responding to their tourism dependency, in contrast to cases like those described by Azcárate. While not as influential as the 'suppliers' of tourism—such as lobbyists, experts, hoteliers, and business owners who controlled the means of production and shaped tourism to suit their interests—many locals mobilized a critique that contrasted 'quantity' tourism with 'quality' tourism. Based on this, they argued for business models that would be closer to those of the more sustainable and ethical 'slow tourism' or 'eco-tourism' (Sidali and de Obeso 2017; Ars and Bohanec 2010), instead of the alienating and accelerating 'mass tourism' imposed on them.

At the same time, the sole mobilization of a progressive 'resistance' framework to analyse these local critiques and movements can be misleading when it fails to recognize their role in reproducing nativist, exclusionary attitudes. Contrary to urban contexts like Barcelona,

where movements against overtourism stem from activist circles already involved in providing affordable housing or fair work (Milano, Novelli, and Russo 2024: 18), the reactions against overtourism in the Swiss Alps do not draw on the same political genealogy. In a political landscape dominated by economic liberalism and social conservatism, many of the locals I met in the village attributed tourism's nefarious consequences to specific actors – non-European 'mass' tourists framed as the 'bad' tourists, because they deteriorated the local landscape contrary to historical, Western tourists (Breiby et al. 2021). At the same time, the migrant workers, although dependent on tourism, were largely excluded from local efforts to counter overtourism and shape its development in a 'profitable' and meaningful way for the dependent local community.

Based on these developments in the field of tourism studies and the anthropology of dependency, this book proposes to address tourism dependency as an experience, as a problematic state of those who stand between tourism's promises and threats in a context shaped by the increasing pressure of touristic capitalism. The resort I studied, as a place that seems to exemplify the robustness of this industry, is not exempt from this global phenomenon. At the same time, I develop an understanding of actions, relationships and politics that shape the formation of the 'tourism dependent' category, particularly when it is mobilized to critique excessive developments.

## Chronopolitics of Tourism, Slipperiness and Entrapment

While many scholars of tourism have emphasized the spatial dimensions of tourism development and its impacts on the livelihoods of local communities and environments (Chen and Chen 2017; Williams and Lew 2014; Azcárate 2020), the problematization of tourism dependency I encountered in the valley during fieldwork mainly manifested as a temporal concern. Individually and collectively, dependents expressed their reflections on tourism

through temporal objects like hotel ruins, or what I call 'temporal projects' such as a new mega-infrastructural project (a cable car, see chapter 2) imagined by the valley's most powerful tourism company, JR, or a theater play (see chapter 3). These projects present particular cases of dramatization of tourism dependency and its capacity to (un-)make history or the future but the concerns they reveal long shaped the everyday of the village and continue to do so. On the one hand, they highlight how the valley's long history of tourism has fostered a local interest in the past: many locals (typically men over fifty) had gathered materials and written about history, while others collected postcards or participated as lay actors and audience members in historical plays, drawing on the region's vibrant theatre tradition (Bendix 1992, 2018). On the other hand, they also illustrate the inescapabilty of the future in the valley and beyond. Besides the omnipresent threat of global warming, particularly weighing on the ecosystems and economic structures of Alpine skiing regions (Nöbauer 2022), was intensely debated around JR's new cable car—seen by some as a means of 'securing' the valley's future, while for others, it represented a threat to its very existence. In this context, I suggest that, to understand tourism dependency, its uncertainty, its promises and threats but also the ways it shapes issues of belonging and social in-/exclusion, it is essential to look at its temporal orientations.

Such an explicitly temporal approach to tourism has remained rather absent from academic considerations of tourism (for exceptions, see Cohen 1986; Crossley 2020; Edensor and Holloway 2008). This is particularly surprising given that tourism is shaped by a puzzling temporal paradox: while it is an industry rooted in the critique or escape from capitalist time, it remains deeply embedded within its very logic. This is what anthropologists of tourism Roger Norum and Mary Mostafanezhad describe in one of the few articles addressing time and tourism (2016). The 'chronopolitics of tourism', they argue, are shaped by an ambiguous relationship between 'capitalist time' and 'authenticity'.[21] In tourism, 'capitalist time' pursues future-oriented ideals of progress, development and growth, *as well as* nostalgic or escapist

imaginaries that break away from capitalist time, often by seeking an 'authentic' connection with what has been destroyed (see also Leite 2014). Tourism is thus both forward and backward-looking – an industry that both purifies the past and destroys it for the sake of the future.

Who makes these capitalist touristic futures and what they precisely entail varies, especially if different business models – of humanitarian, eco-tourism, slow-tourism, community-based tourism – are at hand in different destinations. But, in the dominant model of globalized capitalism, many analysts of tourism agree that this future-making is predatory because dictated by logics of growth, geared towards expansion and value extraction (Franklin 2008; Mostafanezhad, Azcárate, and Norum 2021). In a world shaped by interconnected and competing transnational markets, my work shows that dominant tourism players successfully impose these futures of growth and acceleration as means to way to achieve stability, even if they often cause ecological and social damage that local populations lament (see chapter 2). These favour concerns over the short-term future, where more innovation and acceleration are needed to maintain or 'stabilize' existing achievements in the race of modern capitalism (Rosa, Dörre, and Lessenich 2017; López-González and Fennell 2020). As such, the making of tourist futures exemplify the 'mix of utopic and dystopic representations of time' (Bear 2014b: 78)in capitalism, where time's passage is both creative and destructive of value.

In comparison to more recent considerations of the future and tourism development, the realm of the past has been a classical topic of tourism and its study. The Romantics – crucial inspiration figures for the later emerging industry of tourism – formulated critiques of the industrialization and rationalization period in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth precisely because they saw these as threatening and alienating for individual human expression (Stone 2014; Watts and Houtman 2024). Thanks to their remoteness, their 'backwardness' (meaning their underdevelopment) and therefore 'unspoilt' character, the Alps became healing sites

where the Romantics believed one could reconnect with one's true essence, with oneself, via the experience of the Sublime (Denning 2014). This imaginary of the Alps as authentic was also deeply nostalgic: it associated this region with the past, a remnant of an authentic but disappearing life (Starobinski 1966). In the Alps and elsewhere, the industry of tourism then successfully captured such Romantic critique and affects to attract nostalgic travellers (Enzensberger 1996; Graburn 1995). Based on this genealogy, much of tourism scholars' efforts consisted in explaining how, in the words of one of its most famous theorists, *the* tourist sought (and failed) to escape the 'alienating', 'workaday' world through 'his' quest of authenticity and wholeness as a 'modern man' (MacCannell 2013). Since then, authenticity and nostalgia (often in connection to heritage) have remained central themes in the tourism studies, now approached with greater nuance (Dann 1998; Wang 2000; see also Leite and Graburn 2009).

The nostalgic appeal of the Alps still attracts a lot of tourists, now also in connection with other motivations such as what one could call 'adventure tourism' based on fun, adrenaline and speed. I am here nonetheless primarily interested in a locals' perspective on their own past, in their own valley, interacting with, negotiating and reformulating the tourist's imaginaries of authenticity as has recently been discussed (e.g. Cohen 1988; de Bernardi 2019; Salazar and Graburn 2014). After centuries of touristification, my work speaks of the imposition of an originally externally projected romanticized past on the Alps and how this manifests ambiguously for tourism dependents. Many problematized it, feeling 'trapped' in the tourist expectations of timelessness and underdevelopment of the Alps (Petite 2013), as well as integrated a romanticized narrative of the past in their perceptions of their community (see chapter 3).

While the chronopolitics of tourism shape how tourism is made and shaped as business and consumed by tourists, these dynamics also deeply influence the lived reality of tourism

dependency. Tourism dependency, I argue here, is shaped by the inherent tension between the conflicting demands of capitalist tourism: creating a future-oriented industry while simultaneously preserving an idealized past. It therefore translates in a backward- *and* forward-looking temporal practice in which inhabitants ponder on tourism's capacity to make history, the present and the future while fearing its upsetting, destructive power over everything that once was.

To capture the temporal expression of tourism dependency, I take my cue from anthropologists of time who have theorized crisis and uncertainty as moments of interrupted normalcy that 'stimulate temporal thought' (Knight and Stewart 2016: 2) and dramatically reveal people's temporal expectations and yearnings (Narotzky and Besnier 2014). Under such circumstances, they have described how pasts and futures make themselves present in the lives of individuals and how people 'temporally reason' with them (Knight and Stewart 2016) (Jansen 2015; Kleist and Jansen 2016). Such mundane engagements with time often resist and/or contradict the linear succession of events proposed by a normative, Western historicism that orders and separates past, present and future. This scholarship reveals how we perceive time as a result of an intimate and malleable 'social and personal relationship to the past and the future' (Hirsch and Stewart 2005: 262; Moroşanu and Ringel 2016), as well as how it can be dictated by models and ideologies such as nationalism or modernity. My understanding of time lies at the intersection of such existential and structural concerns.

The temporal orientation of the methods adopted during my research also profoundly shapes the presentist perspective I adopt in this book. Conducting ethnographic fieldwork allows for a limited insight on a field from the present of the ethnographer, a present from which she accesses her interlocutors' evocations of the past and future (Hastrup 1990). In line with an undetermined, presentist approach, I consider that 'the past and the future do not exist other than in their representations in the present' (Ringel 2016:403; 2018; Bear 2014b). This is not

to say that we experience time in a presentist way since we perpetually 'temporally reason' into the past or the future from the present. But adopting such a presentist lens, in combination with one attuned to people's temporal reasoning, enables to create a critical and analytical distance with naturalized temporal narratives such as those of development so present in tourism (see chapter 2). At the same time, the discussion of temporal projects in chapters 2 and 3 of this book reveal how the efforts and strategies put in place to *represent* the future and the past profoundly shaped the present and the everyday of the valley.

Whereas the falling together of different temporal frames is most definitely a feature of human life, Daniel Knight has recently discussed how 'vertigos' are part of the 'affective structure of the Time of Crisis' (Knight 2021: 8). Based on his interlocutors' experiences under conditions of Greek austerity, Knight shows how temporal vertigos manifest in feelings of nausea, dizziness or 'confusion and anxiety about where and when they belong in overarching timelines of pasts and futures' (Knight and Stewart 2016: 32). Temporal vertigos point to the experiences of interruption of normalized linear connection between time frames. This generates an 'anguish of dehistoricization or removal from normalized temporal and historical succession' (Knight 2016: 10) and makes people draw unexpected connections between events they previously saw as distant (Knight 2017). Looking at everyday experiences of people inhabiting a historically, economically and socially stable context like Switzerland might thus be expected to tell us little about their temporal awareness. The story I tell here shows precisely the opposite. It reveals how global capitalism and tourism's intrinsic uncertainty and ambiguity as an industry torn between future-making and preservation of the past manifest in people's temporal preoccupations, their feelings of doubt and fear, in ways that are close to those described in acute crisis contexts (Knight 2015, 2017, 2021). The privileged context of Switzerland and the Alps provides insights into the pervasive and mundane sense of instability that touristic capitalism engenders for those who depend on it, even as they seem to profit from

it. As such, my work contributes to a better understanding of the 'doubts' and 'conflicts' of modern capitalism (Bear 2014a) from a place that seems to illustrate its functioning.

This highlights what I have elsewhere described as the *slipperiness* of tourism dependency (Leitenberg 2023a). If you have ever been in the mountains, you know how quickly a storm can form, how safe trails can suddenly turn into dangerously unstable grounds when covered in rain, and how a fall, especially in an inaccessible area, can have tragic consequences. My understanding of slipperiness derives from this experience of the Alpine environment to capture the proximity between promise and threat, success and failure, in the unpredictable but dominant industry of tourism, which relies on the unmanageable nature of other people's wanderlust. It encompasses people's concerns over their capacity to innovate and behave in sync or 'in time' with the accelerating tourism market, as well as their wishes to belong to the rest of the world in a peripheral region, thanks to escapist, touristic imaginaries of timelessness, authenticity and purity to which they also adhere. It also speaks to my local interlocutors' belief in a possible return to times of 'nothingness', poverty and farming without sufficient investment in tourism development, as well their increasing experience of dissatisfaction and disorientation in seeing the boundaries between past and future eroded in the present.

However, as we shall see, experiencing slipperiness is not always the mark of a negative, submissive state of dependence, it also means that you care, or, rather, that you are *made* to care, that the developments that characterize tourism speak to you, as a dependent and that you see yourself in relation to them. Slipperiness can then also be the mark of a certain privilege – something that is particularly striking when contrasted with experiences of *entrapment*. Such feelings marked the experiences of migrant hospitality workers I met, restricted in their capacity to 'temporally reason' in the same way than the Swiss and native locals because spatio-temporally excluded or 'othered' from the country and the village's life (Fabian 1983; Çağlar 2018). As such, I see slipperiness and entrapment as two uneven and interconnected

manifestations of the temporal nature of tourism dependency. Importantly, these are never 'just' temporal, they are also 'thickened' by spatial, embodied, affective, political dimensions (see chapter 5 and 6).

My Alpine field site and its long history of touristification provides an ideal site to explore the slipperiness and entrapment that emerge from structural contradictions between creation and destruction, between the past and the future, at the heart of the 'chronopolitics of tourism' and capitalism. This is not to say that these experiences of tourism dependency have not and will not transform. The developments I trace in this book point to the changing dynamics of capitalist tourism in the village since the end of the twentieth century and the growing power of some others, as well as the digitalization and acceleration of life and crises (Eriksen 2016). If instability is 'rooted' in capitalism (Harvey 2007), and even more so in touristic capitalism, the forms and ways this reality manifests are both changing and uncertain.

## Nativism and Othering in the Globalized Alps

In resorts visited for their naturalness or authenticity, smallness and marginality often coexist with global connection. The circulation of romanticizing works of art for the past two centuries has led many to think of the Alps as an isolated area, inhabited by naturally rooted and simple or even naive inhabitants (Schär 2012; Kilani 1984). Contrasting with such stereotypes, many anthropologists working on the region have shown how the Alps is a complex border region, shaped by mobility patterns and interconnections with the rest of the world for the past centuries (Burke et al. 2023; Cretton, Boscoboinik, and Friedli 2020; Membretti and Viazzo 2017; Nöbauer 2022; Viazzo 1989; Schneider and Tauber 2024). The lack of opportunities that its inhabitants may experience – and many do – is the result of a *process* of marginalization that is subject to action and change. At the same time, this remoteness is also a 'resource' (Saxer and Andersson 2019) or a capital that has attracted new inhabitants in search for greater connection

with nature of better work-life balance (Boscoboinik and Cretton 2017). These authors' descriptions of mobility and interconnection as fundamental features of the Alps, even in non-touristic regions, are particularly relevant for understanding the power of the developmentalist tourism narrative. Tourism is not the only means for Alpine communities to achieve mobility, but it has come to be perceived as such.

Without subscribing to the simplistic narratives of backward, isolated mountain regions, this book engages with the work of those who have portrayed the Alps as spaces of critique toward the urbanized world—not only in the eyes of artists and intellectuals from the lowlands, but also for the inhabitants of the Alps *themselves* (Stacul 2003a, b, 2006; Lems 2023). In their seminal work *The Hidden Frontier* on ethnicity and ecology in the Italian Alps, Cole and Wolf have shown that this critical stance is particularly important in the German-speaking context. Comparing the Italian-speaking village of Tret and that of German-speaking St Felix, they reveal how dwellers of the latter associated their rural world with autonomy and a superior, healthier world, as opposed to the former, who viewed the city as 'the seat of civilization and urbanity' (Cole and Wolf 1999: 10). For German-speaking Alpine dwellers especially, the idea of the *Heimat*, which stands for homeland but also the more material definition of home and farm, represents the centre of one's material and cultural world (Leimgruber 2019; Applegate 1990).

The Alpine villages analysed by Wolf and Cole in the 1970s surely present contexts that are different from the one I examine here: my field site is a wealthier village and touristic resort visited by countless visitors who largely outweigh the number of locals. Yet, although tourism may well be the cosmopolitan activity *par excellence* (Salazar and Graburn 2014), my findings reveal how this industry has done more than simply replace the forms of rooted belonging in the valley that could be associated with rurality and farming. On the contrary, ideals of autochthony and rootedness informed the attitudes of many locals, who insisted on their

naturalized belonging as 'original' inhabitants of the village, the descendants of poor farmers, who were truly 'at home' in it, because they were born and raised in the village, carried authentic local last names, spoke typical local dialect, had a long family history in the municipality or had it inscribed as their 'place of origin' on their identity cards.[22] Some institutions were also particularly emblematic of this native identity, such as the common property institutions like the Alpine corporations, present in many mountain regions (Haller et al. 2019). Alpine farming, though largely supplanted by the tourism industry, has endured as a symbol of nativeness, preserving its cultural and traditional essence.

As such, this ethnography draws parallel with what is the last ethnographic monography on the Swiss Alps in English, written by the American anthropologist Robert Netting, who explored the role of pastoral commons in the village of Törbel (Netting 1981).[23] The 'ecological balance' sought by Netting's interlocutors was also a concern in the valley I studied, where the increasing pressure imposed by tourism and capitalist actors on these resources and institutions was deeply felt (see chapter 2). However, where farming marked the subsistence of Netting's interlocutors, in the touristic resort where I conducted research, it was a distant but re-activated reality that participated in defining genuine, *einheimisch* or native belonging to the valley. This situation raises the question of how, and through what social efforts, the exclusive category of 'natives' could be evoked and re-created within a complex world. Exploring the role that the farming past played in shaping these evocations, I adopt a perspective that social scientists have described as 'boundary-work' (Barth 1998; Lamont and Molnár 2002) on belonging and exclusion. This implies an attention paid to the processes, the social efforts, or 'work' through which many of my *Einheimisch* interlocutors (among others[24]) actively performed these identities in opposition to others – tourists, outsiders, foreigners, lowlanders, etc.

To be clear, this is not a study of an Alpine valley's 'native' population nor do I wish to imply that the natives I met neatly fit into this category. Like any other population, the natives

were characterized by their heterogeneity. Nevertheless, many in the valley emphasized the profound distinctiveness—or even incommensurability—of native identities in a world marked by increasing acceleration and interconnectedness. These entailed a conservative, down-to-earth, healthier lifestyle typical of Alpine 'village life' that many locals *and* (Western) tourists believed tended to disappear in the urbanized and more progressive lowlands. In accordance, many of my interlocutors explained that it was only natural that the natives should be given primacy and priority as original inhabitants, be it to find accommodation or jobs in the region. In other words, they subscribed to De Genova's definition of nativism[25] as a 'preference for the "native" exclusively on the grounds of "*being* native"'(De Genova 2016: 233, italics in original; see chapter 1). This nativism sometimes takes the shape of localism, sometimes national nativism – often both.

Nativism constituted the dominant 'politics of belonging' (2006) at play in the village, to refer to a concept coined by sociologist Nira Yuval Davis. This entailed deeply intimate feelings, in this case 'homely' feelings linked to ideals of *Heimatverbundenheit* (attachment to the homeland), as well as highly political dimensions, creating boundaries between those who belong and those who do not. These local attitudes were also embedded in nativist national politics, portraying Alpine dwellers as the embodiment of the 'authentic' Swiss identity, with mythical roots deeply tied to the Alps (Schär 2012). They speak of a local and national context shaped by the successes of the nativist, (far-)right-wing conservative Swiss People's Party (SVP), as well.

Throughout the following chapters, the village emerges as a paradoxical space—both deeply embedded in globalized networks and marked by conservative, nativist tendencies. These tensions—between tradition and change, isolation and connection, conservation and development—are deeply connected to the temporal paradoxes that define tourism dependency, a state marked by the opposing demands of preserving the past and advancing the future. They

also translate in attitudes — of embrace or rejection— between self and others: non-native locals, migrants, 'mass tourists' or returning, historical guests (*Stammgäste*). These oppositions serve as the backbone of the story told here, offering a lens through which to examine how various actors negotiate and respond to these competing dynamics. At the same time, the situation of this Swiss Alpine village reflects broader global realities, increasingly shaped by the interplay of nativist movements and global interconnection (Guia 2016).

### Migrant Hospitality Labour

In the valley, the spectrum of non-indigeneity stretched from 'outsiders' (known as *Auswärtige*, literally from another place), who were other Swiss locals who did not draw on markers of nativeness – such as having been born in the valley, or having typical names or dialect, but spoke Swiss-German and were relatively well-included in the local community – to *Ausländer*, foreigners or migrants, who represented the majority of the valley's workforce in hotels and restaurants. The latter belonged to the 'toured ones' – they were dependent on tourism too – but their belonging to the village was contested by many native or Swiss locals but sometimes also migrants themselves. This position, its historical roots and social consequences, highlights another critical aspect of tourism dependency: its unevenness.

In defining the issue of migrant tourism labour in this way, I do not suggest that the distinction between tourism and migration is clear-cut. Extensive scholarship has illuminated the blurred boundaries between the two, emphasizing the risks of adopting a Western-centric perspective that may obscure their intricate and intersecting dynamics (Adams 2022; Bloch and Adams 2022; Vietti 2024). However, my perspective on migrant labour is again shaped by the emic insights of migrant locals, who expressed a keen and deeply felt awareness that their lives were fundamentally different from those of the tourists they were often tasked with serving. As one migrant worker I encountered aptly put it, tourism labour for her was not merely

about ‘living *off*’ tourism but also ‘living *for* it’. It is this all-encompassing presence of tourism labour in one’s life that I seek to explore and interrogate here.

Migrant presence in the valley, the Bernese Highlands and the Alps draws on a long history. By the end of the nineteenth century already, workers from Northern Italy had migrated to Switzerland and the Jungfrau Region to participate in the country’s rapid industrialization and construction of a dense railway system, often at the risk of losing their lives (Moser 1997). At the same time, women from other regions of Switzerland and migrants from Italy or Germany were employed in many hotels and restaurants. Throughout the twentieth century, the national, regional and local hospitality sector developed thanks to an important migrant workforce from Italy, Spain or Portugal. As of 2017, migrants represented 24 per cent of the village population.[26]

Such developments, driven by a migrant workforce, exemplify a global trend of dependence on minority or marginalized populations to perform essential labour under precarious conditions (Seiger et al. 2020; Bastos, Novoa, and Salazar 2021). Those who cross borders are stripped off their qualification, experiences and opportunities and pushed to perform jobs that often endanger their long-term financial and existential well-being (Barber and Lem 2018). In tourism and the hospitality sector, a large number of social scientists have discussed how racialized and ethnic minorities, women and migrants have long represented the majority of workforce in the hospitality sector and tourism industry (Janta et al. 2011; Janta and Ladkin 2024; Ladkin 2014; Ioannides and Zampoukos 2018). They have described how these populations have been integrated in a labour-intensive business in perpetual search of unqualified labour, to perform tasks marked by a difficult working environment with scattered working hours, short-term contracts based on seasonality, low salaries, physical and emotional stress, or the low presence of unions (Baum 2007). In doing so, they have revealed the importance of considering tourism development together with the effects of migration regimes

that are strongly differentiating workers according to their provenance (McDowell, Batnitzky, and Dyer 2007, 2009).

In one of the few ethnographic monographies published on the topic of hospitality labour in touristic resorts, Adler and Adler (2004) describe the strong hierarchies differentiating between types of workers in Hawaii: the lower, consisting of immigrants from developing countries (the 'newcomers') and 'brown-skinned' locals of Asian, Polynesian, Pacific Island, Hawaiian, and Portuguese descent ('the locals') and the higher, made up of young, educated, middle-class individuals from mainland America seeking an alternative lifestyle ('seekers') and career-oriented 'managers' from mainland Americans involved in top-level management (2004). Their analysis highlights the ethnic stratification within hotel resorts, while also drawing a critical distinction between migrants and locals on one side, and seekers and managers on the other. The first, significantly larger in numbers, is characterized as 'trapped labourers', being 'completely subject to the economic vicissitudes of the local labour market' (Adler and Adler 2004: 6). In contrast, the second group is described as 'transient' due to the greater flexibility they possess in moving in and out of the resort.

In the Swiss Alps, like in Hawaii, the crowd of hospitality workers I encountered was made up of different people, of various statuses and provenance. Individuals with the lowest levels of language proficiency and education, often hailing from Southern or Eastern Europe, were typically assigned to roles commonly referred to in tourism literature as the 'backstages' of tourism labour (Urry and Larsen 2011; Kensbock et al. 2016). These jobs were characterized their invisibility to the tourist, working spaces (such as kitchens, washing rooms) inaccessible to them, or during times when they were absent (such as cleaning rooms).[27] Those who could speak German were moved to 'front-stage jobs', interacting with customers and those who spoke German as a mother tongue often occupied manager positions, overseeing the other groups of workers. As many hospitality workers and hoteliers themselves told me, the Swiss

made for a small minority among workers, usually as managers. Native locals were nearly completely absent in the hospitality sector, except for Adrian, whom I introduced at the outset of this chapter and who insisted on his exceptional position as native local *and* hotel worker. His fellow native locals avoided this sector not only due to its poor working conditions but also because of the socio-cultural meanings attached to hospitality work as we shall see (especially in chapter 5). This stood in stark contrast to the affinity many locals displayed for other forms of tourism labour, such as working on ski lifts.

While united in their dependency on tourism, both vulnerable or 'subject to the vicissitudes' (Adler and Adler 2004: 6) of the tourism market, the migrants and native locals in the valley experienced this state very differently.[28] Many of the hospitality migrants I spoke with were determined to remain in the valley and establish their futures within the village. However, they faced significant obstacles, as the anticipated opportunities for social and existential mobility (Hage 2009) promised by tourism and migrant labour failed to materialize—often with quite the opposite effect. Cast as outsiders, but contributing to the industry from the inside, they also spoke of the highly politicized process of integrating into the conservative Alps but also Switzerland generally speaking, a country with some of the most restrictive citizenship regulations in Europe (Steiner and Wanner 2019). Continuously evaluated in terms of deficit, with the looming threat of deportation, they found themselves at the bottom of the local and national politics of belonging and turned to the hospitality industry as an entry into the job market of wealthy Switzerland from below, overtaking activities that were largely disregarded by citizens (see also Graf 2021). In spite of having spent years in the valley contributing to its tourist economy and although a historical reality, my work among migrants and following their historical, often barely visible, traces in the valley's history of successful touristification was marked by a sense of exclusion and temporariness.

The case of the touristic Swiss Alps, likely similar to other European resorts (Marcher

et al. 2022), prompts us to rethink the dynamics revealed by Adler and Adler in Hawaii. Contrary to what they describe for the Pacific Island, local and national belonging in European contexts is often intertwined with privilege and marked by other experiences of tourism dependency. This does not mean that these experiences aren't marked by difficulties, much to the contrary: in the Alps, processes of domination, of dispossession and increasing instability or precarity shape the conditions within which *all* inhabitants find themselves, although people unequally experience them. This reflects tourism's 'predatory' logics (Azcárate 2020) but also global backdrop of uncertainty, shaped by a context of acceleration of crises (Eriksen 2016), of ecological, social and financial precarity (Tsing 2015).

Acknowledging this widespread form of instability, mobility and migration scholars Ayse Çağlar and Nina Glick Schiller (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018; Glick Schiller 2021) have called to move away from the sole focus on migrants in refugee, migration or mobility studies.[29] They have argued for the examination of both migrants and non-migrants under the same analytical lens. Çağlar and Glick Schiller have pleaded for a study of the general processes of dispossession that (unevenly) impacts populations *across* migratory statuses (2018; see also Ramsay 2019). Focusing on both those who (have) migrate(d) (mobile hospitality workers) and those who stay put (Swiss and/or native locals) in a context marked by uncertainty, this book seeks to illuminate the shared realities of tourism dependency, while highlighting the uneven impacts on populations of varying statuses and categories. These reflections underscore relationships that cannot be neatly compartmentalized into separate areas of scholarship, such as mobility, migration, tourism, capitalism, or Alpine societies.

## Village Ethnography in a Connected World

The work presented here is based on data gathered during the majority of my fieldwork, which took place between September 2017 and August 2018, followed by shorter stays and visits

between January 2019 and May 2023. The vastness of the valley's territory, it being one of the biggest municipalities in Switzerland, combined with the frenetic rhythm of the tourism economy soon became serious challenges for my research. With everyone running around me, between activities, jobs, guests and tasks, I struggled to establish relationships beyond the very limited time that tourism encounters offered – a common difficulty when researching in the fleeting, complex and uncertain economy of tourism (Graburn 2002; Kaaristo 2018; Leite, Castañeda, and Adams 2019). My decision to focus on tourism dependency – a reality experienced by those who, like me, lived in the village in the everyday – responded to this challenge.

To get a sense of the complexity and reality of this particular place and those who lived in it, I turned to one of the foundational tools of anthropological research: village ethnography. Many have unveiled the problematic assumptions of village ethnography and its 'rooting' of often extra-European community natives in places and cultures that could be 'discovered' by the ethnographer (Amit 2000; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Malkki 1997). In a world shaped by globalization and in a transnational context like the tourist resort I researched, this choice might seem surprising, if not anachronistic. Conducting a village ethnography in the Swiss Alps, however, proved to be a fundamental tool for exploring how humans navigate some of the greatest challenges of our time, be they environmental or social. As the insightful critiques of Matei Candea (2007) and Michael Herzfeld (2015) have revealed, village ethnography needs to be recalibrated for the study of the contemporary, instead of relegated to the background. Such a task involves complicating what we understand of 'the village' and its inhabitants and how we mobilize these notions to address particular questions. Village ethnography, as I understand it here, thus comprises both openness and boundedness (Herzfeld 2015: 338). Rather than contradictions, such features become objects of study, to reveal the ongoing significance given to place and local, regional or national particularism in a globalized world

for both the industry of tourism and political nativism.

Conducting village ethnography as a non-holistic, bounded and open enterprise does not involve talking with everyone and giving a full overview of what happens in the village. Rather, it interrogates how locality and sitedness transpire in a transnational context and how they are experienced by a selection of actors. As mentioned earlier, this village ethnography is thus centred on the particular categories of people I followed in their everyday experiences because of what they exemplified of the village dwellers' unequal dependency on tourism: the so-called insiders (the Swiss native locals) and the outsiders (migrant hospitality workers). This is not to say that I wish to challenge the fluidity of such categories or the actors situated in between, such as the non-native Swiss locals. Like the tourists, they come and go in this study, but they are not its main protagonists.

To understand how the local financial, social and moral economy of tourism worked and to approach the reality of tourism dependency, I conducted participant observation in different private and public settings. I could attend private general assemblies of regional and local businesses, tourism lobbyist meetings, club meetings, project launches, political meetings and municipal assemblies as a social anthropologist. I was also authorized to work in a hotel for four half-days in order to conduct participant observation among the hospitality workers. Next to these more formal settings, I spent time with village inhabitants (both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and those who were neither *Einheimische* nor migrants) and their families, accompanied them on short trips, stayed in their houses, helped them in everyday chores, and regularly visited them at work. I also conducted participant observation in multiple tourist settings, stayed in hotels as a guest, went on numerous guided tours, attended countless more or less formally organized tourist events, and used the local touristic infrastructures on a daily basis. Next to the many informal discussions I had on these occasions and during my quotidian chores, and during my day-to-day life in the village, I conducted around seventy-five recorded

interviews and a handful of written ones. Approximately half of these were expert-interviews with tourism lobbyists, hotel owners, political leaders, association members and so on, the other half being with inhabitants and biographically oriented. I conducted all interviews in German, English and French, and have relied on assistance for some of the transcriptions of interviews in local dialect. All English translations are mine and I cite the original statements in standard German and not in Swiss-German if not mentioned otherwise, for reasons of feasibility and consistency. While I usually met with such experts once, I met at least twice (usually three times) with a dozen informants for biographical interviews that lasted from one to three hours. I also relied heavily on the communal archives, which I visited in order to access information on the population, as well as newspaper articles, reports and the like.

Reflecting the variety of profiles in a village, my research involved studying 'up', 'down' and in-between, with interlocutors who had more and less power than me, making use of my insider-outsider position, as a Swiss *and* as someone from a different cultural and linguistic background than that of the locals (Mughal 2015; Leitenberg 2023b). I talked to local elites, such as tourism lobbyists who mobilized particular knowledge, expertise and power I did not have, and to natives whose belonging was naturalized, but also to denizens whose precarious living conditions were not comparable to mine, as a Swiss citizen. With others, such as Swiss locals who immigrated to the village for work from urban centres, I was on a more equal footing. In all these situations, my positionality as a French-speaking Swiss female anthropologist from the 'lowlands' shaped my relationships and my research.

This position also had geographical implications, as I lived in the centre of the village for most of my research, where most of the touristic events took place, surrounded by guests and dwellers from different horizons, who were often more urban-minded. Finding an accommodation online proved to be difficult and expensive, it was only during visits in the village, looking for ads in the local shops and after insisting that I was staying longer than the

season – and therefore working there in the eyes of many locals – that I was able to find something affordable. Contrary to my expectations, living in the centre of the village nonetheless did not allow me to form strong and immediate relationships, as rural village life often implies (Belina 2021) – at least not with everyone. The more I seemed to become familiar with those who were described as the 'insiders' of the village, the farther I moved away from the village's *Hauptstrasse*. My stays were punctuated by rather long trips, usually going up the valley's flanks by bus, to talk to those who lived on the outskirts of the village, in the (remnants of the) *Streusiedlung*, but were in fact its 'natives'. Migrant hospitality workers and other outsiders, to the contrary, lived in more direct proximity to me, in furnished studios or rented apartments. Studying 'up' and 'down' was not just a matter of power, as Nader (1972) famously implied, but also had topographical connotations that had central implications for people's way of engaging with tourist, as I will develop throughout the next chapters.

As a Swiss anthropologist studying the Alps as the epitome of Swissness (Zimmer 1998), it was sometimes assumed that I would share a degree of familiarity or at least cultural affinity with my field site because of my citizenship. This was often contradicted by my local interlocutors, who regularly insisted on my 'outsider' background, sometimes even questioning my Swissness. This relied on the strong localist discourses discriminating between 'genuine' natives (*Einheimische*) and Swiss outsiders (*Auswärtige*), as well as broader national narratives on the cultural divide or *Röstigraben* (the rösti ditch) between the Swiss-German and the Swiss-French parts (Wimmer 2011). For those excluded from the local but also the national community, such as the migrant hospitality workers, I was very much an insider to Switzerland. Contrary to them, I did not rely on a precarious working contract, my presence in the valley was not tied to revokable residency permits, and I benefited from a comfortable national grant and a stable financial situation. These workers from Portugal, Germany, France or Italy regularly asked me – often as the only Swiss they knew outside of work – for help, information

and advice regarding residency permits, citizenship tests, administrative tasks and school matters for their children.

## About this Book

Although they speak of the structural realities created by capitalism and tourism, the questions that animate this book cannot be approached without the deeply intimate experiences of people who depend on tourism to make ends meet. To counterbalance the fleeting nature of the village as a 'touristic borderzone' (Bruner 2005), each of the chapters follows a person whose experience casts a different light on tourism reliance and its temporal manifestations in the Alps. These characters' positions and views on tourism all display the heterogeneous and fluctuating nature of dependency. They appear in their capacity to navigate tourism's ambiguity instead of passively living off it: each chapter reveals how people reflect on, mobilize, address and (attempt to) modify tourism's development more or less successfully, in ways that resist fixed boundaries between dependent and independent.

The first chapter takes a detailed look at the historical and political context of the valley, as a touristic resort and a place shaped by nativism and anticosmopolitanism (chapter 1). The chronopolitics of tourism feature in the second and third chapters, based on the examination of two temporal projects – the new cable car and a local amateur theatre play – that both reveal the future-oriented, capitalist industry based on linear growth and acceleration into the future (chapter 2), as well as nostalgic imaginaries that serve to attract guests but also feed into local discourses of uniqueness (chapter 3). These projects problematize the temporal demands of tourism and are emblematic of how tourism domesticates and unsettles, as well as celebrates, the natural and human environment. In chapter 4, I look at how these tensions were experienced and navigated for locals who felt torn between the race forward imposed by the tourism industry and a yearning for the authentic past, also informed by nostalgic, Romantic imaginaries.

Whereas this points to intrinsic paradoxes of tourism, this chapter reveals the recent developments of this tension in the context of my Alpine field site.

In chapters 5 and 6, I bring back the deeply politicized matter of belonging and difference into the equation of tourism dependency. While all forms of dependency are unique, this part sheds light on the structural dependency of the local, Swiss and transnational economy on migrant labour for a functioning economy of tourism. Migrants themselves depend on tourism labour in Switzerland as a vehicle for a better future and a more stable life. Chapter 5 looks at this situation of interdependency, often described as 'win-win', to then shed light on how migrant workers have often been othered and made invisible for more than 150 years in Switzerland and in the valley. The temporal projects (chapters 2 and 3) that were said to gather and/or divide the village dwellers appear as the exclusive concern of only some of them.

Chapter 6 weighs up the moral paradoxes of tourism as a promise and a threat to explore how unequally and unevenly such contradictions manifest themselves in the lives of migrant hospitality workers. In the conclusion, I address the recent developments of tourism dependency in the aftermath of Covid-19, the relationships between uneven forms of tourism dependency and their manifestation in people's lives and bodies, as well as the imbrication between capitalism and nativism.

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[1] Given the contentious processes, events and ideologies that shape the small village I study, I have chosen to anonymize the name of my field site in this book. To protect the community and its activities, I refer to the location as 'the village', 'the valley', 'the municipality', or 'the resort', using these terms more or less interchangeably, to reflect different contexts (geographical/historical/social or legal). This approach to location anonymization is imperfect or more superficial than the deep anonymization strategy used for individuals (see note 2): it has evolved with time and alongside my research findings and occurs within a highly publicized and promoted field of tourism in the Jungfrau Region and the Bernese Highlands. It is further constrained by certain obligations, particularly the need to acknowledge the names of entities whose work I reference, in order to comply with copyright laws governing the use of protected material under 'fair use' (notably in Chapters 2 and 3). In this context, I have striven to balance my duty to protect informants, my obligation to appropriately cite material and my task as a researcher to 'provide a meaningful analysis of "real" issues, people, and places' (Vorhölter 2021: 16).

[2] All names of actors involved in this book have been anonymized in order to protect my informants, as is common practice in anthropology (de Koning et al. 2019; Pels et al. 2018). I adopted a conventional anonymization strategy in qualitative research by making people

unrecognizable, to both community members and the reader (Meyermann and Porzelt 2014). To do so, I have changed names, genders, attributes, ages and nationalities, and have merged claims and divided them. In some cases, this anonymity is fragile and relative as people have taken part in extensive public and media coverage. In such sensitive instances, I have balanced the actors' wishes to tell 'their side of the story' and my duty as a researcher not to contribute to further harm (Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger 2015).

[3] This also recalls tourism's growing importance globally, since its democratization in the 1970s, making up 10.3 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019: https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact (accessed 06/16/2023). I am using data from 2019 as the global tourism industry is still recovering from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

[4] These were for instance mercenaries rented out to European powers in the seventeenth century (Netting 1981) or dwellers who migrated to North America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to find land and resources, and gain power (Schelbert 1976).

[5] Along with its already existing difficulties, mountain farming suffered from a market liberalization at the end of the twentieth century which had favoured the emergence of bigger farms from the flatlands and causing mountain farming to become increasingly less productive (Tiefenbach 2013).

[6] This echoes British author Leslie Stephen's characterization of the Swiss Alps as 'the Playground of Europe' (Stephen 1895).

[7] This, in many ways, reflects the omnipresence and fuzziness of tourism; at once a process, a social field, a cultural and historical phenomenon, a socio-economic exchange and an individual and collective experience, tourism engages a multiplicity of practices and a wide array of actors and institutions (Leite and Graburn 2009).

[8] https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/regionalstatistik/regionale-portraets-kennzahlen/gemeinden.assetdetail.11587763.html (accessed 06/09/2023)

[9] https://www.bernerzeitung.ch/die-berner-oberlaender-bevoelkerung-unter-der-lupe-284763144085 (accessed 06/09/2023)

[10] Only one much smaller business remained, owned by a rival of JR, consisting of a small gondola, with a restaurant, a summer sledge, and more recently, a 'fly-line', open from May until October. The influence of this business is incomparable to JR, which owns infrastructure across the entire Jungfrau region and plays a crucial role in various advisory boards of the Swiss tourism branch.

[11] In 2019, tourism represented a quarter of new jobs created across the world, before the setbacks following the outbreak of Covid-19. See: https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2021/Global%20Economic%20Impact%20and%20Trends%202021.pdf (accessed 06/16/2023).

[12] This recalls Besky's description of monoculture in the colonial context of Indian tea plantations: 'monoculture sutures people's identities to single things' (2017).

[13] Such as presented by (Cohen 1979; Graburn 1977; Smith 1989; MacCannell 2013).

[14] This does not mean that *all* foreigners in the village were working in the hotels or restaurants. However, given the important reliance on this type of workforce, present in all restaurants and hotels, it accounted for the majority.

[15] See: https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2020/12/impact-of-the-pandemic-on-tourism-behsudi (accessed 08/06/2024). Since the outbreak of Covid-19, debates on the future of tourism, for instance, took place at the European Council in 2021 and 2022, revealing the interest of public and private actors in the matter. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/05/27/tourism-in-europe-for-the-next-decade-council-adopts-conclusions/, and: https://www.unwto.org/news/unwto-and-european-commission-share-joint-vision-for-tourisms-future (accessed 20/09/2023)

[16] Broadly speaking, the dependency theory explains global inequalities by emphasizing

the exploitative relationships between developed (core) countries and developing (periphery) countries. It explains the 'underdevelopment' in peripheral nations is not a result of internal deficiencies but a consequence of their historical and structural dependence on more industrialized nations. (Bianchi 2018)

[17] Various authors have also discussed how assumptions about the positive or negative qualities of tourism often simplify and essentialize our conceptions of the community, of who 'counts' as a local or a host (Kaaristo 2018; Stronza 2005; Tucker 2005).

[18] Bianchi adds: 'This view was reinforced by the fact that attempts by 'Third World' states to pursue strategies of economic self-reliance through state-led tourism development, for example in Grenada, Jamaica, Tanzania, had met with limited success.'(Bianchi 2018: 91)

[19] The context in which Ferguson (after Bayart 2000) propose to understand this dependency as a 'mode of action' is different from that of my field site in that the latter focus on the strategies put in place by poorer populations in southern Africa in order 'draw on the income and wealth of better-resourced others' (Ferguson 2015: 107). Ferguson explains that dependency plays a central role in the 'distributive labour' put in place by these populations, actively embedding themselves in various relationships of dependence (formal or informal) to access resources. The financial stability enjoyed by the majority of my informants shifted the stakes of dependency in the Swiss Alps: they concerned the ability to critically reflect on and modify an industry of tourism that *already* provides access to resources. The isolation and precarity experienced by migrant workers I present in chapters 5-6 could however be read as serious challenges posed to this capacity to perform 'distribution labour' via relations of dependency.

[20] Regarding the potentiality to be 'nothing' if it wasn't for tourism, Azcarate explains: 'Often, particularly among indigenous peoples working at beach resorts or luxury hacienda hotels, [tourism stickiness] was used to conjure up a centuries-long, thriving monocrop agro-

industrial landscape that had turned to ruins, leaving people devoid of economic alternatives by the 1970s, but which people "had grown used to". Being stuck with tourism, then, also established a comparison with the way things were in the past. (…) As an expression, "stuck with tourism" reminded people that state-led tourism was a long-term response to another economic and social crisis.' (2020: 17)

[21] Norum and Mostafanazhed identify a third aspect of the 'chronopolitics of tourism' in 'ecology'. Since in the tradition of Romanticism nostalgia merges imaginaries of authenticity of places and understanding of the Alps as a 'pure' environment, I understand the authenticity and the ecology as part of the same realm (see chapter 3).

[22] *Heimatort* in German is a legal category that defines municipal citizenship, where their ancestors lived, and where their family name comes from for every Swiss citizen. The *Heimatort* is inherited through the father, according to the principle of *jus soli*.

[23] And many other works that have, mainly, focused on the changing relationship between farming and the natural/social environment (Krauß 2018; Jaeggi 1965), often in the Swiss Alpine region of Valais (Berthoud 2001; Niederer, Bätzing, and Anderegg 1993; see Leimgruber 2005 for a review)

[24] As the next chapters reveal, they were joined by other Swiss locals and tourists. See for instance chapter 4.

[25] My approach here differs from recent discussions of 'neo-nativist' movements in Europe (Guia 2016; Betz 2017). These have also grown in Switzerland over the last years, for instance in reaction to immigration or the state's governance of the pandemic. My findings nonetheless point to a longer tradition of nativism that I will describe in chapter 1.

[26] This was also indicated in the local booklet handed out to all new inhabitants.

[27] I did not observe nor could collect data on racialized workers occupying the least visible positions in the industry as is often reported in the literature on hospitality work (Adler

and Adler 2004; Azcárate 2020). However, my access to the backstages of hotels was limited (I could only visit three). Worker Rachid, who I present in chapter 6, was the only racialized worker I met and he performed jobs with great degrees of interaction because of his language proficiency. However, the racial discrimination in hospitality businesses has been described in great detail in other Swiss contexts (Kalbermatter 2020).

[28] This contrast between hospitality migrants and native locals and what it revealed of an acute but differently experienced tourism dependency led me to focus primarily on them, instead of the 'seekers' or lifestyle migrants, who were also present in the village but made for a more marginal position. Because of their education, age and provenance, these workers experienced a tourism dependency that was not 'problematized' in the same way it was for the two other groups. Chapter 6 however reveals how 'seeker' positions may also turn into entrapping hospitality migrant positions.

[29] Janine Dahinden has similarly called to 'demigranticize' mobility and migration research (2016) but more as a way to move beyond the essentializing categories of the nation-state or the migration apparatus.