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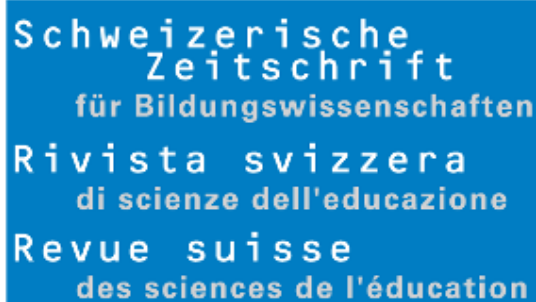
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## Swiss in-company trainers: multiple ways to train and socialize apprentices

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*The Dual system, which involves courses at vocational schools and in-company training, is the most popular form of post-compulsory education in Switzerland. The role of in-company trainers has not been extensively studied to date. This article aims to fill this research gap by highlighting their role as socialization agents. Qualitative and typological analyses point out the different practices and contents of apprentices' socialization, structured around four ideal-typical profiles of trainers called "entrepreneurs", "artisans", "converted" and "resigned". This typology was constructed based on their perception of apprentices and their satisfaction with the training function.*

### 1. Introduction

This work closely examines Switzerland's prominent dual vocational education and training (VET) system (Gonon 2018; Wettstein et al., 2018). In Switzerland, after compulsory school and at the age of 15-16 years, approximately two-thirds of students choose one of 230 different occupations of the VET path, lasting between two and four years. Most students (90%) opt for the dual system. In 2020, of the 102,884 students who started upper secondary education, two thirds (64,696) were enrolled in dual education (SEFRI, 2022). In Switzerland, VET, and in particular, the dual system, usually combine alternating periods of learning at school and working at the workplace, with 60-80% of learners' time spent at the company and 20-40% spent at vocational school. Practical training at a training firm is supplemented by theoretical classes (vocational and general educational subjects) at the VET school. Furthermore, the apprentices attend inter-company courses at labor organizations, in which they hone their practical skills.

In these Swiss dual-track VET programs, a specific population plays a key role in the training of apprentices: in-company trainers. The company plays a key role in the apprenticeship system because of the weekly training of three to four days, depending on the occupation. According to the Federal Law on Vocational Training of 2002 (VPETA) and the Ordinance on Vocational Training of 2003 (VPETO), the training function is assigned to company trainers, who are responsible for "providing training in vocational practice". The conditions for access to this function are stipulated at the federal level by the VPETA and the VPETO. They include a federal certificate of competence in the field, a certain number of years of experience (two to five years depending on the field), and a 40-hour training course in vocational education. The federal legislative framework and the training ordinances for the various occupations dictate the minimum requirements for training to be performed by the training companies. However, the share of training work is not regulated at the federal level and is rarely specified within the training companies.

This lack of regulation of the trainer's role goes hand in hand with an invisibilization of it (Besozzi et al., 2017) and its understanding in research on VET system. As Imdorf et al. (2010, p. 7) write, "Despite the considerable sociological work which has been accomplished [...], many fundamental sociological questions and 'black boxes' remain", such as "Who are the trainers and teachers at the different training venues, and how do they relate to the apprentices and students?" Indeed, despite the central role of in-company trainers in the abovementioned training process, only a few studies have focused on trainers in Switzerland (Barras, 2011; Filliettaz et al., 2008; Filliettaz et al., 2011; Gonon et al., 1988; Lamamra et al., 2019; Salini, 2013) or on the European level (Bahl, 2012, 2018, 2019; Capdevielle-Mougnibas et al., 2013; Favreau, 2013; Pelé-Peycelon, 2018).

A doctoral thesis aims to fill the above gap (Besozzi, 2022) by highlighting the diversity of these trainers' relationship with their function, depending on their professional *ethos* (Mercure & Vultur, 2010) and the concrete conditions under which they fulfil their duties. "Professional *ethos*" in the context of this paper refers to the values, attitudes and beliefs about work that shape the way they carry out their job on a daily basis (Mercure & Vultur, 2010). More precisely, as Mercure and Vultur explain (2010), it means examining, in a

given context, the values that guide life at work or values “in action” that reveal a hierarchy of preferences. It also implies identifying attitudes, which designate a set of dispositions – attitudes that are cognitive, affective, and that orient behavior in a certain direction. This study attempts to understand the meanings and values mobilized by in-company trainers in the context of their training function in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The aim of this work is to explore and highlight the diversity of in-company trainers’ practices and their socialization, which can help underline the implications for these actors, apprentices, and, more broadly, for the VET system.

To explore this aim, a theoretical background on learning practices, professional socialization, and methodologies used is provided, followed by the organization of the results around the themes mentioned, crossed with the profiles of in-company trainers. The concluding discussion explains trainer profiles and their respective in-company training approach. The intersection of these dimensions helps question and understand the diverse ways of training youngsters and the aims of dual VET.

## 2. Theory

Theoretically, training activities in companies appear to be self-evident and conducted spontaneously (Kunégel, 2011; Moreau, 2000; Thébault, 2018; Vadcard, 2018). In fact, scant research has focused on in-company trainers’ practices and role and the socialization of apprentices (Mulder, 2013). The works conducted on workplace learning have focused on the company as a training setting and have revealed that most in-company trainers develop and implement teaching methods that are fairly well-defined, organized, structured, and planned, alternating between explanation and practice (Kunégel, 2011; Olry & Cuvillier, 2007; Thébault, 2018; Vadcard, 2018). These studies also indicate that the transmission of knowledge and the development of skills in the workplace are, in the absence of alternate prescriptions on the subject, the responsibility of in-company trainers (Vadcard, 2018). Moreover, Kunégel (2011) distinguishes between two orientations, namely, hands-on work and professionalization, foreshadowing that apprentice either progress to a workforce job or to a professional endeavor. It should be noted that these three conceptions of tutoring are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, Kunégel (2011) shows that they are generally adopted successively by the same trainer as they accompany an apprentice. He observes that, initially, the company trainer stays close to the apprentice to provide instructions and explain the actions to be performed. In the second phase, the trainer intervenes on a more ad hoc basis to “correct” any mistakes made by the apprentice. In the final phase, once the ability has been assimilated, the teacher lets the apprentice work independently and hardly intervenes at all. Thus, several modes of transmission are employed during training. As specified by Kunégel (2011), this succession of different modes is far from being as linear as described above. The apparent order of events leading to the apprentice’s autonomy at their workstation can be disrupted, particularly because of the demands of production. This is what has been highlighted by research linking the approach to skills transmission with the organizational context of the company in which the training occurs.

Additionally, in the context of apprenticeship, the company is sometimes seen as the setting for the professional socialization of apprentices (Chaix, 1996; Cohen-Scali, 2000; Dubar 2015; Masdonati et al., 2007). By forming and transforming individuals (Darmon, 2016; Demazière et al., 2019; Dubar 2015; Lahire, 2013), the trainer is a key element of professional socialization. To operationalize the concept of professional socialization, we refer to a variety of components (Duc et al., 2020). The first consists of “socialization to the profession”, which concerns the transmission of knowledge, interpersonal skills, norms, and values specific to a certain field (Dubar 2015). This socialization allows apprentices to gradually become part of a work collective, a community of practice (Lave & Wenger 2002). The second component is “organizational socialization”, which refers to the familiarization with the values of the company in which the training takes place (Kergoat, 2006). “Socialization to the job” is the third component, which refers to the logic of the professional sphere relating to the organization and the division of the labor market as well as to working and employment conditions (Moreau, 2003). In this contribution, the concept of “socialization” enables one to question the practices and contents of professional socialization favored by in-company trainers. One can assume their plurality, with each trainer favoring one aspect of socialization over another. Some, who are particularly attached to the company that hires them, might prioritize organizational socialization. Others, such as the artisans, might be more attached to their trade and emphasize socialization to the trade. Still others might insist on socialization to their work. It then becomes a question of knowing not only which of these aspects is favored by different trainers, but also of analyzing the basis of this preference as well as its implications for the concrete exercise of the training function according

to the professional *ethos*. Revealing the differences in professional *ethos* in the survey population has helped highlight that the way in which the training function is exercised is shaped both by this professional *ethos* of trainers and by their concrete conditions of exercising the training function.

### 3. Methods

The current study (Besozzi, 2022) is based on a comprehensive qualitative methodology (Miles et al., 2014; Schnapper, 2012), which was considered to be the most fruitful way of collecting and analyzing the subjective viewpoints of in-company trainers. The fieldwork was designed with the primary aim of understanding the representations and experiences of trainers during apprenticeship training. Specifically, the aim was to understand the interviewees' relationship with work, their professional *ethos*, and their representation of the training function in companies. Semi-structured interviews appeared to be the most appropriate method for obtaining interviewees' accounts of their professional career and their representations (Besozzi & Colombo, 2014; Demazière & Dubar, 1997; Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016; Paugam, 2019). Thus, the interview method was chosen as the main source of data collection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with trainers (N = 80) to examine their training background, professional background, and in-company training experience. These interviews were conducted with people training one or more apprentices in companies of different sizes (micro, small to medium enterprises [SMEs], and large companies) and in various professional sectors in French-speaking Switzerland.

To cover the heterogeneity of this population, trainers were selected based on their age, gender, sector of activity, type of in-company training function, and years of experience as trainers, with the aim of understanding the causes of the abovementioned diversity. Thus, the trainers interviewed were mostly men (M: N = 48; W: N = 32), occupied various positions within the training companies (employees, managers, independents), and had different functions in relation to the supervision of apprentices (administrative or human resources responsibility, day-to-day training). They worked in businesses of various sizes (large companies: N = 50, SMEs: N = 21, and micro-companies: N = 9), with different traditions of training. The semi-structured interviews were subjected to a thematic content analysis (Miles et al., 2014) to identify the central elements relating to the experiences of a population that has rarely been studied until now (trajectory, motivations, roles adopted, practices, socialization processes, and working conditions).

The aim of this analysis was to process 80 interviews to understand the type of relationship that trainers have with their in-company training role. The analysis approach was both comprehensive and typological. Typological analysis, which arose in the context of comprehensive sociology, seemed to be the method best suited to revealing how trainers invest their role in training with meaning, as well as how they interpret it and make it their own. This typological method was borrowed from Demazière (2013). The approach aims to empirically describe a phenomenon by organizing material for discovery rather than verification. Moreover, as Demazière (2013) states, one aim of the typological approach is to use interviews to study the experiences of a population confronted with a similar or same situation and conditions. This is also why the approach appeared to be the most appropriate for analyzing the accounts of individuals who have apprenticeship training in common. Indeed, sharing a common status does not guarantee that people also share worldviews (Moreau, 2010). This typology is characterized by the ideal-types that constitute it (Schnapper, 2012; Weber, 1965), which are obtained through a process of selective abstraction (Demazière, 2013) wherein researchers select one or more distinctive features of the phenomena under study. Ideal-types serve primarily as an analytical tool. In other words, to analyze the social phenomena under study, each ideal-type should be confronted with the empirical reality and, thus, the degree of correspondence or deviation between the model and the reality resulting from the data collected during the sociological investigation can be assessed (Besozzi & Colombo, 2014; Demazière, 2013; Schnapper, 2012; Weber, 1965).

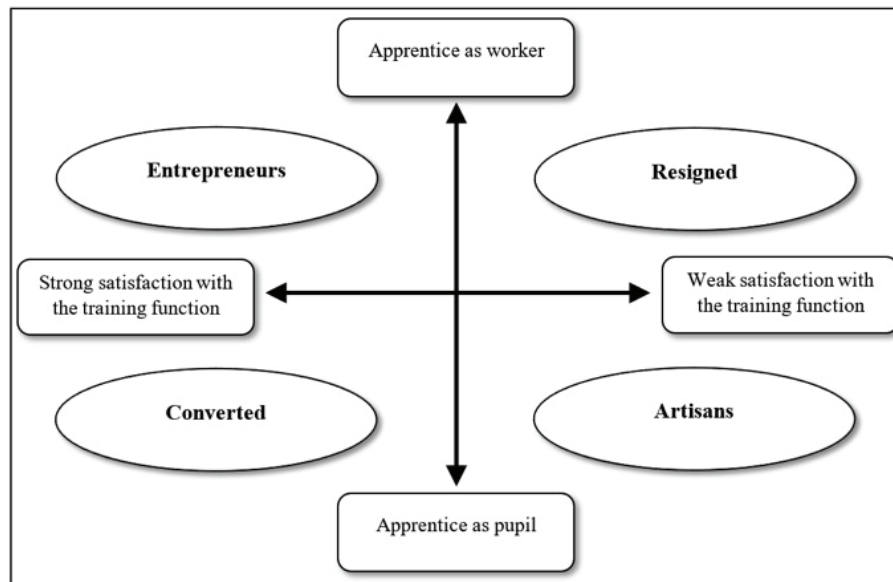
Several operations were performed to create this study's typology. The interviews were extensively compared. These comparisons highlighted two dimensions that are particularly relevant to this study: the way in which the interviewees perceive apprentices and the level of satisfaction that they express regarding their training function in the company. The first dimension – the way in which the interviewees represent apprentices – refers to the hybrid status of the apprentice, who is sometimes viewed as a pupil and sometimes as a worker (Moreau, 2003). Secondly, the degree of satisfaction of trainers with their in-company training function refers to a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience” (Locke, 1976, p. 1300).

The level of professional (non)satisfaction of the trainers with their function is situated in their feelings when their ideal representation of company training conflicts with the real conditions of its exercise. These two dimensions – representations of apprentices and satisfaction with the training function – were subsequently crossed by placing the first on a vertical axis and the second on a horizontal axis.

The intersection of these two threads of the narrative greatly facilitated the understanding and identification of the nodal theme, namely, the professional *ethos*, which gave the ideal-types their names: the entrepreneurs, the artisans, the converted, and the resigned.

**Table 1**

*Typology of the profiles of in-company trainers (Besozzi, 2022, p. 120)*



The thematic analysis focused on the interview extracts distributed in one or other ideal-type according to the above dimensions and on several core units identified from the previously in-depth readings of interviews, namely meanings attributed to school and higher vocational training, professional pathways, access to the training function, motivations for becoming a trainer, training practices, and the socialization process. The size and sector of the company and the type of function (training manager or person in charge of training) held in the company were also considered.

## 4. Results

The different profiles of in-company trainers that emerged from the analysis are presented below: the entrepreneurs, followed by the artisans, the converted and finally the resigned. Each section first presents the trainer profile and then details the practices and contents of the socialisation associated with it.

### 4.1 The entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurs are characterized by strong satisfaction with the training conditions and a perception of apprentices as workers. Twenty-two of the 80 on-the-job trainers interviewed come close to this ideal-type: they mainly work in large companies in the commerce sector and most of them hold positions of responsibility that require them to invest heavily in the economic success of their company. This ideal-type profile's *ethos* is centered on the ideology of the *self-made man*. The trainers associated with this ideal-type profile adhere to the notion that, by working autonomously, responsibly, and flexibly, it is possible to achieve rapid career advancement. In this context, the training function is not perceived as being primarily important at all; instead, the purpose of training is focused on the needs of the company, namely, the recruitment of future employees.



In the literature, the “ideal” apprenticeship is often envisaged as a gradual transition from the world of school to the world of work, from close support by the trainer to autonomy for the apprentice (Cohen-Scali, 2000; Kunégel, 2011). However, as apprentices are expected to adopt a proactive attitude as autonomous and responsible workers, rather than as learners, as soon as possible, in-company trainers also aim for a rapid transition from school to work. This passive support for the apprentice is all that is available, necessitating that the apprentices manage themselves:

But in the professional world we are in... you're often alone, so you have to learn to manage yourself and to take responsibility. Martial, trainer and head of logistics, SME.

As Bergman et al. (2011) have also observed, upon entering apprenticeship, the transition to worker status must already be made. Caroline, manager of a microenterprise in the sales sector, clearly expresses this approach: “[...] you have to say to them, ‘hop, go ahead, take off! Now you are in working life, you have chosen, you want a salary, you want to learn what the job is, but go for it’”.

As apprenticeship is mostly likened to confronting work, its formative mission – the transmission of know-how – is generally achieved by mimicry, observing how other employees work, and gradually reproducing their actions. Thus, when discussing their role as practical trainers and/or training managers in the organization where the apprenticeship occurs, these trainers agree that the practical organization of the training process is not their responsibility, but that of the apprentices, from their first steps in the company. Moreover, organization is broadly understood here in that it ranges from the definition of training objectives to the evaluation of the latter, including the definition and management of the productive tasks to be performed. Thus, the role of training managers in monitoring apprentices and organizing their training is largely delegated directly to the apprentices, who are, in a sense, responsible for supervising themselves. As has been briefly mentioned, the profitability of the business is the main concern in any decision relating to the apprenticeship, and the priority given to production appears to be self-evident. Learning must bend, or even be sacrificed, for the profitability requirements of the company, since “the goal of firms is not to educate youth; the goal of firms is to make money” (Culpepper, 1999, p. 5). Apprenticeship work is, therefore, not highly organized, but rather shaped according to the demands of production that the apprentice must satisfy.

The training also ensures the profitability of apprentices, as expected by the company. Consequently, in terms of socialization, the entrepreneurs emphasize employability, productivity, responsibility, and the division of labour through apprentice training practices involving immediate confrontation with work. Furthermore, a socialization to the corporate culture also characterizes the entrepreneur figure:

A good apprentice is... someone who knows how to mold himself into the company and who, in the end, is as efficient as an employee or the boss. Yvan-Jacky, restaurateur, and trainer in his small restaurant.

These trainers project their value system focused on responsible autonomy and self-management (Lallement, 2010; Linhart, 2015) onto their apprentices. These trainers thus embody, to varying degrees, the self-producing subject described by Vallas and Christin (2017) based on the work of Foucault (2008, p. 226): “[...] a regime of selfhood emerges in which workers are encouraged to become ‘entrepreneurs of themselves.’ Rather than the mere ‘partner of exchange’ central to classical liberal economics, neoliberalism expects the worker to become an ‘entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of his earnings’”. In this view, what the dominant institutions produce is not docile or compliant subjects, but rather self-producing subjects: individuals who take responsibility for working on themselves, for enhancing their own value-creating qualities, and for willingly engaging in productivity-generating activities. In keeping with these principles and values, it is a question of socializing, or “molding”, apprentices to this model, which seems to be gaining ground in the world of work.

With this type of in-company training, it is therefore mainly about “shaping” the apprentice into a future “virtuous employee” as Linhart (2015) understands it. Young people must then exhibit a responsible, rapid, and autonomous character, thanks to a mode of training in companies that is driven mainly by the objectives of profitability and rewarded by the promise of future recruitment. Thus, the injunction to autonomy in the adult labor market (Lallement, 2010), in that it constitutes “an implicit rule of the game”. To point them in this direction, the entrepreneurs encourage their apprentices to work as experienced employees; to self-train; to organize the pace and content of their own training; to define the tasks to be completed; to be proactive, autonomous, and responsible; and, at the same time, to adhere strictly to the rules of discipline. To do this, these trainers choose to invest as little as possible in the day-to-day support of young people, generally preferring to delegate this activity to others, devoting themselves only to occasional monitoring of the apprentices and to administrative tasks related to the training.

#### 4.2 The artisans

The artisans are characterized by weak satisfaction with the training conditions and a perception of apprentices as pupils. 19 in-company trainers come close to this ideal-type, and most of them are employed in large companies in the food industry or are self-employed in small companies (microenterprises or SMEs). This profile features a strong orientation toward the expertise of a trade to which they feel predestined: a kind of “vocation”. Their *ethos* is based on their “love of the job” and professionalism (Osty, 2003).

The analysis of artisans’ speeches explicitly describes their efforts to develop and implement strategies to train learners. When describing their practices as trainers, artisans mention issues that are likely to be of particular importance – such as the transition from school to work – and the solutions they adopt to ensure that these are addressed in concrete training practice.

In their accounts, they primarily describe the entry into apprenticeship as a smooth transition towards the world of work. This aspect is particularly considered by the artisans who, unlike the entrepreneurs, attach great importance to the success of this transition. For them, the aim of apprenticeship is to ensure the survival of the trade through practice-oriented educational support and a gradual school-to-work transition:

You don’t throw them in at the deep end. We first build their confidence. It’s important. And then we see how they react on the first day, the second day, and we also pay attention to their fatigue, because transitioning from school to work requires a lot of energy at the beginning – it’s an adaptation. Loïc, training manager at an SME in the watchmaking field.

Therefore, artisans greatly value the first steps, the first days, and the first weeks of the apprentices’ training by surrounding them so that they can best take their bearings in the company. Here, the diachronic model of tutoring, established by Kunégel (2011) in the field of car mechanics, comes into play. According to this model, the “guarantors of the trade” place particular emphasis on the first stage – that of “familiarization” – which Kunégel (2012) describes as the dominant configuration of the first few weeks. This is the period when the apprentice discovers the work, the organization of the company, the premises, etc. During this time, the apprentice stays close to the tutor and only leaves with his or her agreement.

As Eric, a self-employed baker and confectioner, describes it, the aim is to ensure that youngsters can leave their training course having acquired the necessary autonomy to practice their trade professionally:

My job is to make sure that, during the three years, all the bricks arrive. My job is to make sure that all the bricks, all the pieces are there; that’s my job. Eric, baker, training manager, and trainer in his small business.

To this end, once this initial adaptation stage has been completed, the “guarantors of the trade” seek to gradually progress towards the acquisition of this autonomy. According to their logic, the type of supervision also evolves as the apprentice acquires skills and autonomy by trial and error (Veillard, 2017), ranging from “close supervision” at the beginning to a gradual distancing (Kunégel, 2011) once the apprentice is judged to be fit for “work” (Kunégel, 2012), since the company’s project is to transform the apprentice into an autonomous producer. As the latter is considered competent for the task assigned to him or her, the exchange structure is reduced to a minimum: an instruction, possibly followed by a few details (Kunégel, 2012). Moreover, from the representations of artisans, the relationship between the trainer and the apprentice is, indeed, at the heart of this progression in learning. For them, this method, which consists of maintaining the tandem until the apprentice is judged capable of working alone, is seen as the most effective way to learn the trade properly.

The artisans want to communicate their job to young pupils through progressive training practices, and their aim is to pass on the love of the profession and to socialize the apprentices to their particular trade:

[...] and pass on to them the pleasure of the job. We don’t them to conclude after four years of training... they drop it. We also to transmit the beauty it – mechanics is beautiful after all. Alain, painter and trainer in a large company in the automotive industry.

This form of socialization is part of a professional tradition. The aim is to gradually bring the apprentice into a community of practices, those of the tradespeople. The challenge, therefore, is twofold: to ensure the next generation of apprentices for the company that has invested in the training of the apprentice and relies on qualified new employees and for the trade, so it can survive:

[...] safeguarding the trade. I want our trade to be better, I want to improve it. Eric, baker, training manager, and trainer in his small business.

The artisans’ love of their profession appears to be the driving force that allows them to maintain their identity as people of the trade and that motivates them to train future artisans. Therefore, the success of their apprentices helps them maintain their identity as people of the trade, and the love of their profession characterizes their relationship with their apprentices.

### 4.3 The converted

The converted also perceive apprentices as pupils but exhibits a strong satisfaction with the training conditions. 37 on-the-job trainers are close to this third ideal-type figure and they mostly work in large companies in various sectors. After unsatisfactory professional experiences linked to the pressure of profitability, the individuals in this ideal-type profile have reoriented themselves toward vocational training that they perceive to be more in line with their *ethos*, which is marked by an orientation toward service to others, in other words, to apprentices. To achieve this objective of social contribution, these trainers seek to accompany young people in a comprehensive, individualized, and regular way to prepare them for both the labor market and the adult world:

The apprentices are very young, they are still in the process of acquiring their own way of being, they have a lot to learn day-to-day. Grégoire, manager and trainer in a large company in the banking sector.

Gregoire emphasizes the youth of the apprentices and what they still have to learn, particularly in terms of behavior. For most converted in-company trainers, «At the end of the day, the apprentice is more important than the job» (Claudine). As envisaged by many of the converted, in-company training is mainly focused on apprentices, or young people, as they usually call them. This priority given to apprentices is the first and main characteristic of training as provided by the trainers closest to the “converted” ideal-type. They differ from the artisans in that their trade is the focus of the training, and from the entrepreneurs in that they base their approach on the recruitment of employees by and for the company.

Another characteristic of apprenticeship implemented by the converted, which is linked to the first, is how the apprentices are perceived: entrepreneurs generally perceive apprentices as workers; artisans believe apprentices represent the next generation of the company or trade; converted view apprentices as adults in the making, citizens of tomorrow (Bonoli, 2012). In this sense, these trainers claim that they desire to contribute to the well-being of these youth on their way to adulthood, a well-being that extends well beyond the professional framework. Claudine, a training manager in a large food-industry company, effectively describes this approach:

I am by their side through the process of an encompassing training [...]. I want to tell them that life is beautiful and that it is worth fighting for what you want, for their dreams, and that it matters. I think my role goes further than just providing professional training [...]. Claudine, chemical laboratory assistant and head of apprenticeship in a large company in the food industry.

In fact, to provide the best possible support to apprentices, these trainers consider the formers’ families and their economic and social situations with the aim of implementing a comprehensive training approach. The aim of training is no longer simply to integrate youth into the labor market, but also to contribute to their well-being and development as future adults by providing them with keys to understanding the world around them. In other words, the dual system of initial training is considered mainly for its integrative function here: it is about participating in the integration of youngsters into society. In this sense, the term “social mission” is used to describe this specific approach of trainers, who constitute the converted ideal-type (Capdevielle-Mougnibas et al., 2013; Favreau, 2013; Schweri, 2018).

Finally, the status given to the pedagogical and, more broadly, the educational aspects of company training is crucial. As mentioned above, many of the converted undertook the vocational training task because of their presumed “teaching skills”. It is, therefore, unsurprising that these converted exploit a seemingly increasing permeability (Fassa et al., 2018) between vocational schools (devoted to the “theoretical teaching” component of dual training) and companies (devoted to the “practical learning” component) in reality. It is seen that, in practice, this materializes as a penetration of the theoretical component into company training, among other things. In this case, these competencies are directly related to the apprentices’ employability but also to their entry into adulthood. Claudine adds:

I think that participating in knowledge transmission is important. When you see in their eyes that they have understood, it’s a gift to me, really. And it’s not only about professional knowledge, it’s also about knowledge of life... It’s about trying to show them how to be a good... human being! Claudine, chemical laboratory assistant and head of apprenticeship in a large company in the food industry.

This trend is related to issues that apprentices experience while transitioning from students to professionals and from young people to adults. The desire to train not only professionals but also adults or citizens is apparent among the converted. Consequently, the trainers’ emphasis is placed on the transmission of a general culture that extends beyond the knowledge linked to a profession to encompass socialization to the adult world. Mainly comprised of altruistic and humanistic values, this *ethos* takes shape in three main dimensions that are developed to different extents depending on the status of each trainer. First, the training is rigorously planned over time to



ensure a gradual transition to the world of work. Second, this progression is also reflected in the transmission of professional skills: the passage through a theoretical explanation appears indispensable. In other words, a central place is given to the trainer's pedagogy. Finally, these explanations can often extend beyond the professional framework, in that they also aim to train young people for adult life in the context of individualized support for apprentices.

#### 4.4 The resigned

The resigned perceive apprentices as workers, and their level of satisfaction with their role is quite low. Two in-company trainers were associated with this profile; one works in a small company and the other in a large one, both of which belong to the building and construction sector. After promising beginnings in terms of fulfillment through work, these individuals saw their expectations frustrated by a missed professional promotion, a reduction in professional skills, and a greater level of pressure at work. These trainers have gradually lost interest in their work and in the training function that should have enabled them to progress professionally. This function is then carried out by default, providing minimal support to young people:

[...] I tend to be more...lax – well, maybe it's not the right word, but for sure I tend to be more easy-going. Luc, trainer and logistician in a large company.

The resigned have gradually dropped the training function and delegated it to their employees. Specifically, as Edmond explains, their present tasks in training apprentices are mainly administration, organization, and supervision:

I'm not so much the one who trains the apprentices anymore. I'm in charge of the administrative side of the training. It's my employees who train the apprentices on the ground, even if it's me who follow their training as a whole. Edmond, trainer and painter in his small company.

These trainers say very little about the tasks they perform in training apprentices. This reflects their low level of investment in the training process as well as their role as managers – far removed from the apprentices – which they occupy in training. From the few comments that they make on training, an overview can be provided of the different dimensions of this type of training.

For these trainers, youngsters have to immediately perform tasks independently, as if the transition from school to work has already occurred. It may be assumed that apprentices are seen as workers in this approach, due to the trainer's low involvement in the training. Leaving youth to work independently is, subsequently, a way by which trainers minimize their supervisory tasks. Clearly, this type of minimal organization is a part of their detachment.

Furthermore, the tasks to be delegated daily to the apprentices are not defined beforehand. These tasks are not planned, but imposed by themselves, by the demands of production. Edmond, who owns a small business in the construction sector, describes a typical week for an apprentice training under this approach as follows:

When we start a new construction site, say on Monday, the workers don't come back to the workshop. I do the restocking, and they go straight to the site where they are in charge of executing the job as a whole. It's them giving the apprentices specific tasks to do, depending on the need on site.

As Edmond's comments suggest, this approach is not only chosen "by default" but also "on principle." Thus, the tasks assigned to the apprentices according to the production requirements are not as randomly defined as it seems. As in the profile of the "self-employed", there is very little mention of prior explanations. Some trainers, particularly in the converted profile, devote a significant part of the in-company training process to explaining the practice and its objectives so that the youngsters who are going to face it later can better understand it. In the profile of the resigned, this component is almost non-existent. This is explained by Luc as follows:

Instructions to the apprentices are given on the spot and in the situation. I'm not going to take them to the office to explain things for half an hour. Yeah, it's on the spot.

The methods of transmitting are mainly based on mimicry and corrective pedagogy (Kunégel, 2011). They involve letting the apprentice reproduce the gestures of their elders, followed by correcting them when they err:

I go to the construction site every day, so I can see very well what the apprentice has done. If I am not happy with what I see, I first tell the worker off and then I tell the apprentice off.

The resigned tend to move apprentices immediately into a "rough" work context to which they socialize them in some way. The professional socialization that is offered concentrates on the harshness of the work, and the emphasis is on basic skills and the execution of tasks. Similar to the approach taken by the entrepreneurs of the

apprentice as a worker, the importance of passing on to the apprentice a number of elements is emphasized: rigor, efficiency, the will to move forward, and the resolution not to be satisfied with the minimum. More broadly, the resigned ideal-type appears to be the result of the destabilizing confrontation of a generation of workers identified with a contemporary world of work. However, it would be very simplistic to radically oppose the previous model of reference used by these respondents when they entered the labor market in favor of the new work modalities, since these changes have been, and still are, the subject of a process spread over time. The resigned trainers have become hostages of a system whose values and choices they do not share (Degoulet et al., 2019), and they reveal themselves to be dissatisfied, disappointed, and tired. All these feelings have led them to progressively disinvest in their work and to choose a minimal supervisory role.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

As noted by several researchers, studies on trainers in Europe, in general, and Switzerland, in specific, are scarce (Imdorf et al., 2010; Masdonati & Lamamra, 2009; Mulder, 2013). To fill some grey areas of research on in-company trainers, the research question of this article was oriented to highlight their work and roles and the implications of their activities for apprentices. Thus, this contribution indicates the various ways in which the training function is assumed, the diversity of meanings attributed to it, and trainers' relationship with their role and professional activities. Additionally, practices employed by trainers are not very formalized and mostly depend on the individual initiative of the people involved in training. This room for maneuver yields a diversity of practices of socialization (which are also contributed to by the lack of regulation of the training function) and ways of understanding the training function, the complexity of which this article intends to reveal via a comprehensive, qualitative, and typological research approach. Specifically, the results have been illustrated using four ideal-type profiles.

These variations depend on the professional *ethos* (Mercure & Vultur, 2010), whether focused on the career (the logic that governs the entrepreneurs and the resigned), the profession (the profile of the artisans and the resigned), or on service to others (the converted ideal-type). They also depend on in-company trainers' perceptions of apprentices (Moreau, 2003), which can lie along a continuum extending from gradual and accompanied confrontation with the professional activity to immediate and accelerated immersion in economic production (Kunégel, 2011).

In-company trainers' practices lie along a continuum, which extends from an immediate confrontation of young people with the world of work to the relative protection of apprentices via their gradual introduction to the work environment. The entrepreneur and the resigned ideal-types fall under the apprentice-as-workers category. Here, a young person's transition is assumed to be rapid after the apprenticeship contract is obtained (Bergman et al., 2011). Thus, the exposure of apprentices to work as well as their assimilation into the workforce must be immediate. However, despite these similarities, the meaning that these trainers attribute to the support provided to apprentices and the methods used to provide it vary significantly from one ideal-type to another. For the trainers associated with the entrepreneur ideal-type, the aim is to teach responsibility by forcing the apprentices to train themselves independently. These trainers' *ethos* is wholly consistent with one of the main competencies expected in the world of work: responsible autonomy among workers (Mercure & Vultur, 2010). By contrast, the transmission of knowledge, among the resigned trainers, is mainly the result of their relative disinvestment from their formative function.

At the other end of the continuum is the notion that apprentices are pupils; this concept is shared by the trainers designated as the artisans and the converted. This representation of the apprentice goes hand in hand with a school-to-work transition envisaged over the long term and with in-company trainers' support. For the artisans, apprenticeship features instruction based on doing rather than on explanation. Here, immersion in technique and know-how allows for learning by trial and error within productive activities (Veillard, 2017). Meanwhile, trainers belonging to the converted ideal-type believe that apprentices should ideally achieve their workplace goals gradually and accompanied by support. This type of approach differs from that adopted by artisans. Additionally, the trainers who follow the converted ideal-type mainly conduct their pedagogical work outside of productive activity.

Several types of socialization of apprentices emerge from the typological analysis, including a socialization to the requirements of the labor market (employability and productivity) and to the division of labor (managerial or executive positions). Another type of socialization is linked to the organizational culture, or in other words, to its norms, values, and objectives (Kergoat, 2006). Under this socializing logic, where the organization's prior-

ities are profitability, productivity, and wages, training and trade lie in the background in favor of apprentice employability (Moreau, 2016). Furthermore, this socialization is linked to the profession. This is the case of the artisans (who focus on in-house skills), while the entrepreneurs emphasize molding or adapting young people to the organization, thus attempting to prioritize “the hierarchy and the division of the company” (Duc et al., 2020). The emphasis on love of the profession indicates that apprentices are perceived as professionals, consistent with traditional forms of transmission of the craft (Osty, 2003; Veillard, 2017). Moreover, socialization to the adult world is another form of socialization mobilized: here, apprentices are perceived as pupils and are supported as they transition into adult life. Above all, it entails preparing youngsters to enter the job market as workers and to enter society as citizens. Consequently, through socialization content and training practices, the Swiss apprenticeship system seems to be a plural training approach oriented to produce workers, professionals, and citizens (Besozzi, 2022; Lamamra et al., 2019).

In conclusion, some implications of this study to further research on the VET system and the practices of in-company trainers can be specified. From the socialization perspective, the typology presented in this paper hints at how the trainers themselves were socialized into their roles. Indeed, they can be considered both as key actors in the socialization of apprentices and as professionals being socialized in their training role (Besozzi, 2022). This socialization can be illustrated through their daily working conditions, including the training function, conflicts between production and training needs, the meaning associated with the training function within the company, the motivation to become a trainer, and their professional pathways. It appears that the ways they were socialized during their apprenticeship reflect in the way they socialize their own apprentices. From a methodological perspective, the study’s main results would benefit from being complemented by more detailed analyses in terms of sector of activity. Certain profiles are more represented in certain economic sectors than in others. Given that the sectors are not all subject to the same economic or structural pressures, it would then be necessary to further examine the sectoral implications for trainers and in-company training. Furthermore, the distribution of the four ideal-typical figures seems to vary according to occupation, and this point also merits additional investigation. For example, it would be important for the VET system to more closely study knowledge obsolescence to better understand the updates that would be necessary to improve the role of trainers (Lamamra et al., 2019).

Finally, the results obtained can help toward preparing recommendations for the various institutions involved in the VET system in Switzerland (training companies, social partners, vocational schools, cantons, etc.), based on the profiles sketched (Besozzi, 2022). One recommendation is to improve both the training of trainers and their pedagogical preparation for their role. For example, trainers associated with the artisan and converted ideal-types emphasized a need for additional knowledge, especially in the field of adolescent social psychology and in the pedagogical follow-up of apprentices (to improve support during their training). Additionally, artisans report a specific need for updating their professional skills. This is the case where trainers are particularly concerned by the technical, technological, and IT developments that are redrawing the contours of their trade or even their professional practice. In fact, updating professional skills seems necessary, not only for the exercise of the profession itself, but also to be able (and to feel able) to impart it to new generations. However, the improvement of in-company trainers’ situation cannot be achieved without considering the concrete conditions offered to them to fulfil their duties. Indeed, it seems necessary to establish a framework favorable to the exercise of their function, which could clarify the company’s training policy and specify the organization of youth training, including its delegation within the work group (as is the case with entrepreneurs) and its vision of the role of trainers. Their crucial role in the apprenticeship and socialization of young people could then be more recognized, valued, and supported at the level of companies and the VET system. This could further promote the investment of trainers, prevent different forms of disinvestment (as has been observed with the resigned), and improve the in-company training provided to apprentices.

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**Keywords:** Dual system; in-company trainers; socialization; Switzerland; training practices



## Ausbilderinnen und Ausbilder in Betrieben in der Schweiz: Vielfältige Möglichkeiten der Ausbildung und Sozialisierung von Auszubildenden

### Zusammenfassung

Das duale System, das den Unterricht in der Berufsschule und im Betrieb umfasst, ist die häufigste Form der nachobligatorischen Ausbildung in der Schweiz. Die Rolle der betrieblichen Ausbilderinnen und Ausbilder wurde bislang nicht eingehend untersucht. Dieser Artikel soll diese Lücke schliessen, indem er ihre Rolle als Sozialisationsagenten beleuchtet. Qualitative und typologische Analysen heben die unterschiedlichen Praktiken und Inhalte der Sozialisation von Auszubildenden hervor, die um vier idealtypische Profile von Ausbilderinnen und Ausbildern herum strukturiert sind, die als «Selbstunternehmer\*innen», «Garant\*innen des Berufs», «Umsteiger\*innen» und «Resignierte» bezeichnet werden. Diese Typologie wurde auf der Grundlage ihrer Wahrnehmung der Auszubildenden und ihrer Zufriedenheit mit der Ausbildungsfunktion erstellt.

**Schlagworte:** Duales System; betriebliche Ausbilderinnen und Ausbilder; Sozialisation; Schweiz; Ausbildungspraxis

## Les formateurs et formatrices en entreprise en Suisse : de multiples façons de former et de socialiser les apprenti-e-s

### Résumé

Le système de formation dual, qui comprend des cours en école professionnelle et en entreprise, est la forme de formation post-obligatoire la plus fréquentée en Suisse. Le rôle des formateur-trice-s en entreprise n'a pas fait l'objet d'études approfondies jusqu'à présent. Cet article vise à combler cette lacune en mettant en évidence leur rôle en tant qu'agents de socialisation. Des analyses qualitatives et typologiques mettent en évidence les différentes pratiques et contenus de la socialisation des apprentis, structurés autour de quatre profils idéaux-typiques de formateur-trice-s appelé-e-s «entrepreneur-euse-s de soi», «garant-e-s du métier», «reconverti-e-s» et «résigné-e-s». Cette typologie a été construite à partir de leur perception des apprenti-e-s et de leur satisfaction à l'égard de la fonction formatrice.

**Mots-clés :** Système dual ; formateur-trice-s en entreprise ; socialisation ; Suisse ; pratiques de formation

## Formatori e formatrici in azienda in Svizzera: molteplici modalità di formare e socializzare le persone in formazione

### Riassunto

Il sistema duale, che comprende dei corsi presso le scuole professionali e nelle aziende, è la forma di formazione post-obbligatoria più diffusa in Svizzera. Il ruolo delle persone formatrici in azienda non è stato finora studiato in modo approfondito. Questo articolo intende colmare questa lacuna evidenziando il loro ruolo come agenti di socializzazione. Delle analisi qualitative e tipologiche mettono in luce le diverse pratiche e i diversi contenuti di socializzazione degli apprendisti, strutturati intorno a quattro profili idealtipici di formatori denominati «imprenditori di se stessi», «garanti del mestiere», «riconvertiti» e «rassegnati». Questa tipologia è stata costruita sulla base della loro percezione delle persone in formazione e della loro soddisfazione nella funzione formativa.

**Parole chiave:** Sistema duale; formatori aziendali; socializzazione; Svizzera; pratiche formative

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