

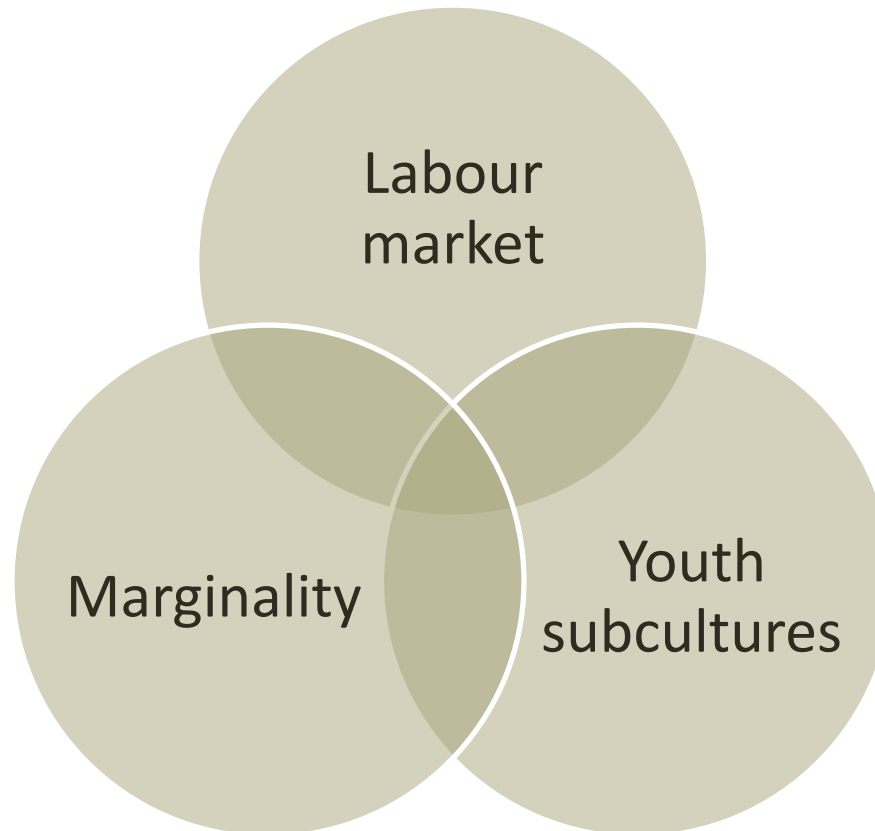


Discussing the concept NEET: active young people in vulnerable situations

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Introduction

- NEETS in Spain
- Themes

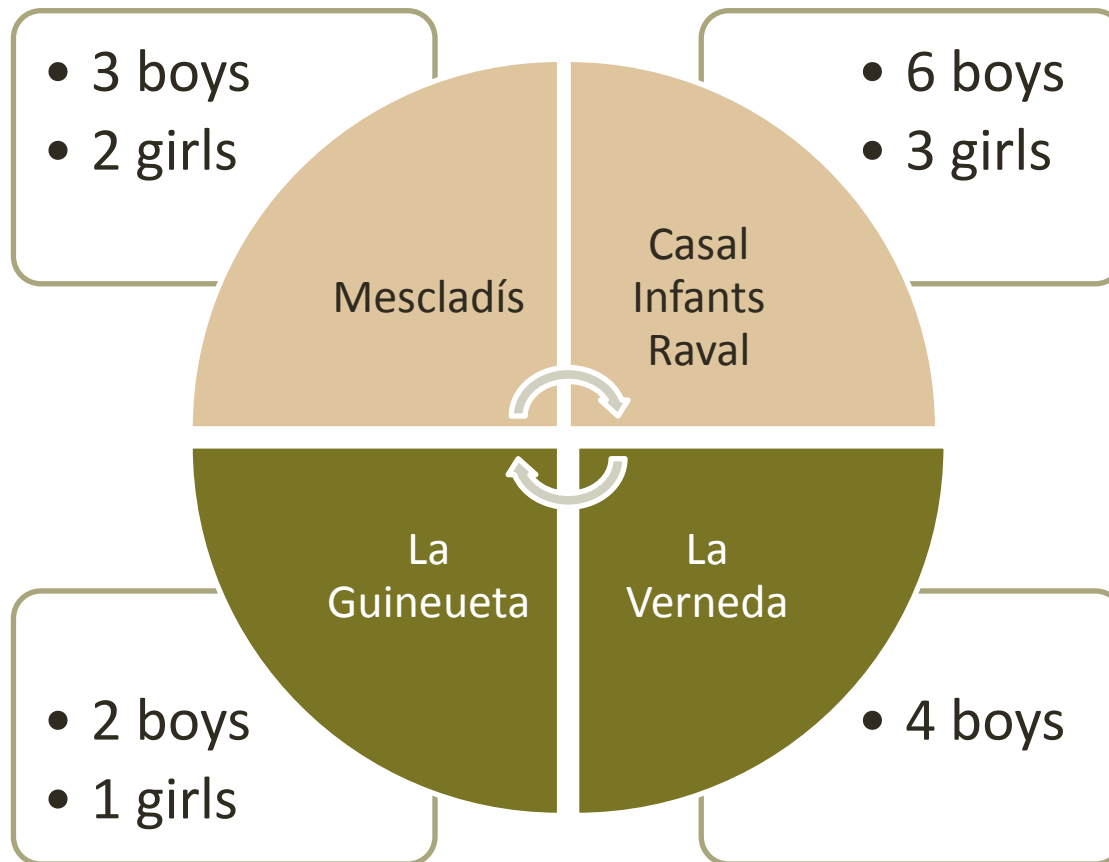


Research question

How do young people labelled as NEET satisfy their basic needs as well as their need for belonging and participating within society?

1. Describe how young people from vulnerable backgrounds cope with their lives
2. Describe what stigmas or discrimination young people experience
3. Identify the key elements that help young people from vulnerable backgrounds overcome their situation

Methods



Result 1: Empowerment

- Life security and participation
- How they got involved and the role they played at the organization

Passive roles become active when they have the opportunity of making some decisions. This is the case of POC: “We got along together really well, we made trips to discuss things about the Organisation and we controlled a bit the Organisation since we organised activities in order to help the youth worker” (116)

Needed a youth club: «We were in a play centre, but once you turn 16 you have to leave it and you cannot do activities anywhere else» (106)

Active role: «We are the bosses. For instance, if we decide, obviously with a reason, that the youth worker should not continue working here , she should leave» (119)

Result 2: Stigmatisation

- For being **immigrants** (skin colour, difficulties in speaking Catalan/Spanish or different Spanish accent).

«Spanish people see you are Latino and they start to... You know? They want to introduce you into that world because they know your situation, and they want to take advantage of people, and many young people arrive here and they have no other way to make money but to resort to... Quick means, sell drugs or do other things, you know?» (111)

Sometimes this lead into racism:

- «Sometimes, when there is a fight between [diminutive of his nationality] and someone else, they say, ‘get out of here, what are you doing here, if you do not like it here then go to your country’» (114)

Belonging to a **urban tribe** (chavs, posh, hippies, punks and swags)

«Q: how do you, chavs, dress?

A: With skinny, with a cap... Skinny trousers are essential!

Q: But the posh people also dress like that, huh?

A: But the posh people wear shirts, and they act like posh people, and they talk like posh

Q: And how is to act posh and talk posh?

A: Eh... Someone who acts posh is always trying to make a good impression. For instance, throw something on the floor and try to pick it up and to make good impression! We throw something on the ground and it depends on what we have thrown we pick it up or not!(107)

Q: Would you say you are a chav?

A: No.. I do not like to be told that I am a chav but... We act like... I mean, I am more a swag, you know? There was a time in 2012 when chav were shaved, playing loud music while driving... Chavs have already evolved, before they were NEETS, now we do not all work, but we study” (107)

- For being **alternative youngsters**. The stigma is related to someone who smoke marijuana all the time, who is socially marginalized and who does nothing with his life.
- This stigma is the reason why the neighbours do not pass by the youth club and cross the street all the time, as well as the reason why other young people refuse to take part of the organisation:

«Here there is a school, and there are some mothers who pass by here and say to their children: run, run, run! They are a bit afraid their kids could see this or that, you know? So.. Well! If they really knew what we do here and the work we do with young people.. But people from outside just see graffiti, sometimes they smell marijuana, and that's it! Then they all say that young people do nothing and think that this center was built to put all these youngsters together» (118)

Result 3: Outsiders and drugs

Drugs are on their everyday life, and the informants have pointed to two elements that are related to drug use:

- **Broken families** (divorce, addictions or domestic violence):
«When you talk to them you realise they have a lot of traumas. The father has left the mother; the father beats the mother... And they end up looking for problems» (118)
- **Lack of belonging** (either at home, among peers or at school), which is even more important on adolescence since they are constructing their identities:
 - «My mum is always telling me to not use makeup, not to talk this way, not to run like I do... She is ashamed of me» (118)
 - «I've never had friends at school, to be honest, until then I never had a group to go for a coffee, to go to the movies or even to go and just play to their homes» (118)

- Young people agree that nowadays is very easy to find drugs:
 - «People usually consider this problem to be marginal, but be really carefull with drugs! Because there are many young people who are hooked. It is not that they just use drugs, because I use drugs at parties [...] But I do see many people hooked to blow, and very young people! [...] I believe that one of the main problems is that people not love themselves enough and turn to this substance in order to scape from reality» (118)
- However, after finding a place where he can be himself, he has been able to change the reasons why he uses drugs:
 - «So maybe I was looking for a way to escape [...] Now I smoke while saying ‘I am gonna do this’ You know? I smoke but I am doing something else, it is not like I am sitting at the bench saying ‘life sucks’» (118)

Result 4: relations

- The informants agreed that what helped them to overcome their situation has been establishing a relationship with someone who **listens and supports them**:
 - «When you are 16, 17 and even 18 sometimes you have problems but you keep them to yourself because you think they will not understand you» (116)
- The supportive person must be someone who **listens without judging, suggests solutions without imposing anything and provides a space where they fell important**. This person can be a youth worker, a young person who has experienced the same or an organisation.
- Characteristics for a supportive organisation: a specific place to meet, an activity to take part of, meeting new people and have some kind of responsibility.

Conclusion

Concept **NEET**: informants were not apathetic and passive but active and committed to contributing to society through the organisations they are part of.

Key aspects:

- NEET and gender
- Social engagement and life security
- Stigma (internal and external)
- RELATIONS!



PROMISE

Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement

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