

Paper 5 - Deconstructing Early School Leaving. Youth, exclusion and policy intervention in Barcelona (Spain)

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The ESL rate in Spain was already 26, 5% in 2011, right the double of the EU average ESL rate. However, there is still very little research on ESL in Spain to date, and usually only as part of larger projects on school failure and dropout. Many of the efforts made to retain students in post-compulsory education are addressed to the age group 16-18 after students complete compulsory secondary education, especially to those who do not graduate, and the debate is focused on different conceptions on VET programs intended to favour their incorporation to a precarious labour market, that also has high youth unemployment rates. The paper will reflect on what 'leaving school early' means in a context of growing educational and social inequalities, especially affecting students from the working class and those with an immigrant or minority background, and will analyze the underlying assumptions of different policy approaches and practices in the area of Barcelona in a period characterized by dramatic economic and political changes.