Chapter 8
The Production of Disqualified Youth Through Basic Vocational Education and Training Provision: Examples from Valencia

Míriam Abiétar López and Almudena A. Navas Saurin

Abstract Basic Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Spain is specifically addressed to young students that are previously categorized as early school leavers in the educational system. In this chapter, we approach this type of VET provision by focusing specifically on its influence on youth production. By doing so, we attempt to show connections among the training provided in a specific Spanish region and the youngsters' pathways. This will be accounted in terms of the constraints and possibilities it provides the youngster, and both will be examined under a dimensional social justice theory focusing on the professional transitions and social participation it enables. Overall, we aim to approach to this training from the perspective of the subject it produces.

Keywords Educational policy · Educational resources · Career development · Education work relationship · Social justice

8.1 Introduction

According to the latest statistics provided by the Autonomous Educational Administration of Valencia, in the school year 2016–2017, 5288 students enrolled in basic VET in this region. These students were differentially distributed among the 16 sector branches that make up this training in the Valencian Autonomous Community. Within every branch, students choose among several degrees: for instance, one can choose Health as a branch and then decide to follow the Ambulance

M. Abiétar López (✉) · A. A. Navas Saurin
Department of Didactics and School Organization, Faculty of Philosophy and Education
Sciences, University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain
e-mail: Miriam.Abietar@uv.es; Almudena.Navas@uv.es

Driver Degree or the Social Healthcare Aid Management Degree. They could, presumably, choose among pursuing studies in public or private educational organizations or in others that exclusively develop all kind of vocational training. In every case, all of them belong to the educational system. Depending on the characteristics of the organization and the resources made available to them, they could conduct practice field training, again of several kinds, or only study the practicalities of their future profession inside the organization premises. All these programs aim to grow the student's need for higher levels of training and, indeed, skills, so they can enter the world of work. However, as defined by law nowadays, these kinds of schemes are designed to be final and not necessarily propaedeutic.

Taking these data as our starting reference, the questions that guide the research we present in this chapter are the following: what happens with these students once they finish their training? If they find a job, could we consider that it is a successful professional transition? Going a step further: can a working-class trajectory—characterized by an early labour insertion after a short training, as explained further in the chapter—be considered successful in the current socio-historical moment? What then is the situation of these young students in a historical moment which is predominated by a millennial vision of youth, situated within the framework of the liquid modernity presented by Bauman (2008)? That is, a youth that is in contrast to the linear perception of time and to the performance of the "art of life" of the Baby boomer generation develops their life trajectories with a greater uncertainty but, on the other hand, through multiple experiences in different fields.

The data regarding the unemployment rates of young people in the Valencian Autonomous Community, where our research is located, and in Spain in 2017, according to the educational attainment level, show clear differences based on the situation when they exit from the educational system (Table 8.1). Thus, the statistics point out that education becomes a protective factor in the labour market. This result coincides with the analysis presented in the last report on youth in Spain (Benedicto 2017).

In order to situate basic VET in these data, it should be noted that the qualification that the students obtain after finishing this training is included in levels 3–4 (upper secondary education) of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). This is, as formally defined by the UNESCO (2013), postsecondary education non-tertiary that reinforces the knowledge acquired in secondary education, prepares for the labour market and for tertiary education. Despite the inclusion of basic VET in this level, it is quite remarkable that the skills, competencies and knowledge

Table 8.1 Unemployment rates (%) by age (25–34) and educational attainment level in the Valencian Autonomous Community and Spain, 2017

	Valencian Autonomous Community	Spain
Compulsory secondary education and lower	24.9	27.8
Upper secondary education	17.6	18.4
Tertiary education	12.5	13.9

Source: Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional (MEFP). Sistema estatal de indicadores de la educación. 2018

imparted at this training are below the level of complexity that characterizes tertiary education. Thus, the legal options offered for the students do not really correspond to the actual options they have once they finished their basic VET training.

As shown in Table 8.1, the unemployment rate in ISCED levels 3–4 in 2017 was 18.4% on average in Spain, compared to 27.8% of levels 0–2 (Compulsory Secondary Education and lower) and 13.9% of levels 5–8 (tertiary education). In this regard, the statistical information available allows us to affirm that professional transitions from basic VET encounter obstacles based on the credential obtained in this training and the labour positions it gives access to. A second obstacle is the difficult access that basic VET students have to the subsequent educational levels based on the reduction of the conceptual demand in basic VET and the institutionalized obstacles in the current organization of the Spanish educational system (Abiétar López 2016). Considering these two main points, the aim of our research is to describe and analyse what kind of transitions and, therefore, what kind of young subjectivities are produced in basic VET.

In order to achieve this aim, we start this chapter stating an important and often forgotten fact about the people following this kind of training: they are characterized as young. Then, we will present the theoretical framework, mainly based on the production of the GRET group of research, and we will connect those transitions with the general framework of Nancy Fraser's social justice perspective. Both of them give us the theoretical basis to sustain the research project we are developing. Finally, we will present some general thoughts about the data gathered here.

8.2 Youth as the Key Dimension of the Research

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, one of the most famous sociologists of all times, Pierre Bourdieu (2002), enlightened all of us by stating that youth *is* just a word. There's no possible way to gather any individuals under the umbrella of the youth concept by solely paying attention to the biological age. Even though this statement is sturdily accepted in academia, it seems to evaporate whenever we address policies of education, schools or educational institutions: most of the times when we speak of young people of basic VET, we take for granted that they *are* young.

Youth is a quite novel concept since it has been built over the last century. In fact, we may find the starting point of the thinking about youth with Stanley Hall in 1916 on the basis of a biological fact and of features that are desirable and accepted in the Global North cultures in which we live. At the same time, young people maintain a vision of time and its consequences, which differs from the youth researchers' visions. Thus, we realize that how a society selects and distributes constraints and possibilities among those called young is a fundamental arena of struggle that is worth a look at in social sciences research.

Our society, and every society in the Global North, establishes the pathways that allow people of certain characteristics to be included in the options provided to young with their institutions, their policies and several programs. However, at the

same time, being young is only possible because one can benefit from those institutions, those policies and several programs. We are facing here the old chicken-egg problem. It is essential to us to realize that whenever we conduct research on young populations, they are young because they are being trained in those programs. Once we do not study them inside the educational organizations, we cannot acknowledge in which social category they may fit. In this way, youth is a category closely related to their participation in the educational institution, as its custody function allows us to locate and contact them at a very specific time and space in their life. As soon as they stop being students, their location in a social category is more diffused, as it is no longer related to their situation in the educational institution but instead to an intersection of several categories. As an example, the most recent report on the Spanish Youth (Benedicto 2017) describes them—in line of the previous ones—by their relation with several social facts, institutions and fields such as the socioeconomic situation, the world of work, consumption, technology, health, and social and political participation, among others. In the same way, the difficulty in situating youth in an age range and the continuous extension of this category confirm, as Bourdieu explained, that it *is* just a word. Moreover, as we research, we also have to think about the methodological possibilities given that it is really hard to contact the students once they have left school.

Having these theoretical considerations on the basis of our approximation to youth, we are evaluating the itineraries in accordance with what traditionally has been made available for us: their career development. They are often based on classic issues of education and work relations and focus on how to learn the content in the context of an initial training for work. This educational context is already labeled as a failure for the youth of an upper secondary program. Therefore, it is a clear limit to the research reported here. We have in mind that we should be able to incorporate it in order to have a more authentic vision of what is happening in the field of education for young people in situation of social vulnerability. To be able to integrate this involves considering how the youth—as depicted by Bauman (2008), Tapscott (1998), Feixa (2006)—and its millennial features (focused on new technologies, very creative, with non-traditional relationships of commitment, and above all, with a pointillist vision of the future and the achievements that will make life a work of art) have an impact on the results that we get from the investigation. These results will be presented in terms of itineraries, transitions and social justice.

8.3 Researching VET: Transitions as a Biographical Contextualized Process

VET as an object of study can be approached from several perspectives that focus on different elements depending on the discipline in which they are positioned. From the academic context in which we are situated, we can identify at least three

strands of research that address the transition process and its effects on the biography of people from different disciplinary fields, as we expand on Marhuenda Fluixá, Salvà Mut, Navas Saurin and Abiétar López (2015). These lines are the developmental psychological research, which includes the study of access to adult life and individual expectations, characteristics and capabilities (Zacarés-González and Llinares-Insa 2006); the sociological research, which focuses on school failure and the transition processes within the educational system (Casal et al. 2006a); and the educational studies. This third strand is where our research is mainly located, focusing on several aspects of the pedagogical practice in these programs and its effects on the careers of the students, such as teachers training, teaching methodologies, students' situations, as well as organizational aspects that may interfere in the educational process, for example, the educational offerings. Some examples of these researches are collected in Marhuenda (2006) and González (2015).

In our research of basic VET and the youth it produces, we focus on transitions as the process to which young people are subjected during their stay in the educational institution. Specifically, we propose the educational itinerary developed throughout schooling as the process that contributes to the social construction and to the social delimitation of youth. More specifically, we highlight that the educational itinerary provides the credentials that positions students differentially in their transition to adult life.

In order to situate this subject in this section we will present the way in which we approach the transitions. Our main reference is the theoretical framework offered by the research group Labor and Education Research Group (GRET) in their approach on the sociology of youth from a biographical perspective (Casal et al. 2006a). Their theoretical production has been constructed in four research lines: educational expansion, competencies and labour market, university studies, and youth and school-work transition. Our own research interest leads us to take the third line as the main reference to address our subject of study. In particular, from their theoretical proposal we take the following concepts as key elements for specifying the analysis of transitions and relating them with the educational practices in local contexts: itinerary and trajectory, external and internal transitions, and the forms of transitions to adult life.

Firstly, the distinction between itinerary and trajectory is based on differentiating what has been finished up to the present moment and the probable itineraries deployed after this moment. In our research we place "this moment" in basic VET. Although this difference may seem mild, it is quite relevant for us to draw a distinction between the past itineraries ("done itineraries") that take the students to the present moment and the deployment of trajectories ("future itineraries"). Thus, it allows us to visualize the effects that the programs may have on the future itineraries, that is, the way in which the educational practices may produce different itineraries and subjectivities. A production in which the done itinerary represents unequal arrivals to the present moment and in which the deployment of future itineraries represents in turn unequal exits due to the diverse probability of developing trajec-
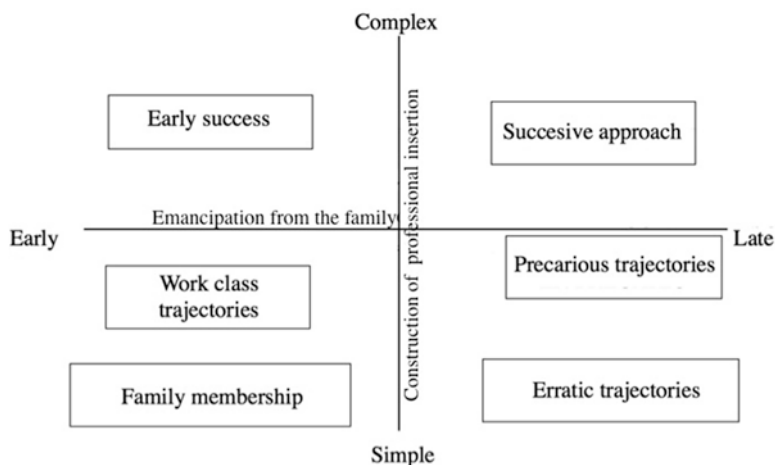
Illustration 8.1 Forms of transitions. (Source: Authors' translation from Casal et al. 2006a, p. 39, with permission from Maribel García)

tories. Since the academic literature on transitions makes different uses of itinerary and trajectory, we chose to talk about done itineraries and futures itineraries to clearly represent the biographical moment to which they refer.

Secondly, the difference between internal and external transitions allows us to situate the process of the transition in relation to the place of origin and destination. While the internal transitions refer to those that occur within the framework of the same institution, the external ones refer to those that take place between different institutions (García Gracia 2013). Placing these definitions in the educational space, the internals would represent the path between different levels (primary and secondary education); while the external ones can refer to the passage from family to school, as well as from school to work. In our research, we focus on the latter, although we certainly cannot ignore the influence of family on the transitions as a differential positioner.

A third element that is worth mentioning is the proposal of the GRET on the forms of transitions to adulthood. Although we assume that it is not possible to generalize the transitions due to the casuistry derived from the individual characteristics, as well as the external influences that condition the process, it is very interesting to consider the model they present for our work (Casal et al. 2006a, b). Their proposal is represented in a scheme organized in two axes: the horizontal refers to the early or late emancipation from the family, and the vertical to the complex or simple construction of professional insertion (referred mainly to the qualification level attained). In the resulting space there are six forms of transition (Illustration 8.1), which have to be thought from the internal heterogeneity of each group.

Quoting the authors themselves (Casal et al. 2006a, pp. 39–41), *early success* identifies the quickly developed trajectories towards successful professional positions and involves early forms of emancipation from the family. Generally, they

involve obtaining high degrees and professional insertions with a future projection. *Working-class* trajectories identify patterns of early emancipation and an early labour insertion due to short school training and a short ceiling of professional qualifications. *Successive approach* refers to those trajectories that point towards a successful insertion that demands decision-making and long training itineraries but also certain delays or adjustments to study and/or work situations, as well as to family emancipation. *Precarious* trajectories identify those transitions that are rather simple in training and professional qualification and contextualized in a very precarious labour market. This group may include both people with low degrees and people with high qualifications that have had to make adjustments due to scarce possibilities of professional promotion. *Family membership* refers to isolated cases of young people who develop a transition linked by their family, where there is not an election but an adscription to the family occupation. Finally, *erratic* trajectories identify the transitions of those who remain outside the circuits of training and work for many years. Considering all these definitions, we place the theoretical possible transitions from basic VET as simple in the construction of the professional insertion (lower area of the Illustration 8.1) due to the educational itineraries and the qualification level attained. In this frame, the success in these transitions would refer mainly to the early emancipation of the family, thus realizing a working-class trajectory.

This proposal of forms of transitions may be extrapolated to other Spanish regions. Moreover, it has been represented and validated throughout the results obtained in the successive Catalonian Youth Surveys (Casal et al. 2004; Miret et al. 2008; Serracant 2013). Their different distribution in the data obtained in the surveys shows the historical and changing nature (Casal et al. 2006a) of transitions and their strong relationship with the socioeconomic situation in which they take place (Adame Obrador and Salvà Mut 2010). In this regard, we emphasize that transitions are processes framed in the socio-historical context in which they take place. Thus, it is necessary to contextualize transitions to avoid the individualization of a social process that the subjects develop within several institutions and conditioning factors. In this line, it is worth highlighting how the academic literature on transitions has emphasized the rise of a de-standardization of the process compared to the characteristic linearity of previous historical moments (Machado Pais 2003; Walther 2006). A change understood as the development of transitions with processes of alternating training and work experiences, stages with greater instability and insecurity. In short, a development that contrasts with the linearity that involves the direct step from school to work and that is framed in the liquid modernity widely described by Bauman (2008). For basic VET youth, these changes have obvious effects: their chances of developing their professional transitions and competing in the labour market are reduced because of the short educational itinerary and their low qualification. The production of this youth through the educational provision has contextual causes to be added to the structural and institutional ones.

8.4 The Effects of the Educational Practices: A Matter of Social Justice

The second theoretical perspective from which we approach the analysis of basic VET is a dimensional perspective of social justice. We consider that this is a necessary critical approach for the analysis of the role that education plays in the social construction of youth. This perspective allows us to assess democracy in education considering the way the pedagogic rights are institutionalized in educational relationships (Bernstein 1998). These rights are the following: enhancement, inclusion and participation. All of them have as a necessary condition that subjects have to feel that they have an interest in school, and they have to trust that their interest will be considered. The first right, enhancement, refers not only to the right to be more in the personal, intellectual, social and material realm, but it is the right to access to the means of critical understanding and new possibilities (ibid, p. 25). The second right, inclusion, is the right to be included socially, intellectually, culturally and personally, which involves the right to be autonomous. The third right refers to participation, which does not only mean having the opportunity of discussing but also to produce some results in practice. It is the right to participate in the construction, maintenance and change of the social order.

On the basis of this proposal, our social justice perspective allows us to combine the study of basic VET with a wider analysis of the educational policies where these rights are considered as the main criteria to assess the educational practices (Abiétar López et al. 2015). For us, the key here is to analyse the way students are positioned in a social structure after completing their training. The differential positions are related to several ways of participating in society, thereby producing different "youths" and therefore, different performances of citizenship. This focus of research requires a dimensional perspective of social justice in order to embrace a wide sense of the concept. Throughout history, social justice has been conceptualized from quite diverse approaches that reveal diverse understandings of what society *is* and what society *should be*. That is, while analysing social relations and their consequences for the subjects as socially just, we are also stating what we consider socially unjust, and we choose what is considered to be better for society. As argued by Rawls (1985, p. 23): "even when justice has a certain priority for being the most important virtue of the institutions […] a conception of justice is preferable to another one when their consequences are more desirable". In a similar way, Wright (2010, p. 8) explains that: "behind every emancipatory theory, therefore, there is an implicit theory of justice, some conception of what conditions would have to be met before the institutions of a society could be deemed just".

Our approach to social justice is based on a dimensional perspective following the proposal of Fraser (2013), who has as core definition of social justice participatory parity in society. Consequently, the institutionalized obstacles that hinder this parity are to be considered socially unjust. These obstacles may be found in the institutions of the three dimensions or structures whereby social order is described: the economical, the cultural and the political one. In the economic structure, the

misdistribution or distributive injustice refers to the neglect of resources for social interacting. In the cultural structure, injustice means the misrecognition throughout institutionalized hierarchies of values that neglect the position of social groups and hinder their social interaction. Finally, in the political dimension, parity of participation may be impeded when there is no equity of vote and social representation, which would be misrepresentation. The key of this perspective is that parity of participation is needed in all of the three dimensions in order to have socially just practices; "representation is always already inherent in all claims for redistribution and recognition. The political dimension is implicit in, indeed required by, the grammar of the concept of justice. Thus no redistribution or recognition without representation" (Fraser 2013, p. 199).

On the basis of this conceptualization, we focus on the institutionalized obstacles that certain social groups find in the educational institution. More precisely, we focus on the obstacles that some students find during their training and the consequences they produce in their professional transition. That is, the consequences in the social production of unequal inclusions having in mind that "overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction" (Fraser 2005, p. 73). Therefore, we aim to describe those institutionalized obstacles in the educational structure and offerings that may promote or hinder social participation of the subjects.

As mentioned before, we focus on basic VET and on the students ("the basic VET youth") who participate in this training and are in a vulnerable position at risk of educational exclusion. Vulnerability refers here not only to their current position in the educational structure, but also to the future position and participation the programs enable. Therefore, we address the institutionalized injustice which is evidenced in the different pathways and professional careers produced for these students. As we explain in further detail in the next section, basic VET is addressed in the Spanish educational system to those students categorized as early school leavers. Thus, although being included as part of the VET system, it is mostly used as a remedial program to reduce the high rates of early school leaving in our country. As a consequence, we may state that this historical position of basic VET is being reinforced by conservative educational policies in Spain, thereby constraining socially just educational practices.

8.5   Basic VET in the Spanish Educational System: A Constrained Comprehensiveness Through Conservative Modernization

The Spanish educational policy is defined by the hasty succession of five laws that have been used since 1970 to regulate the educational system[1]. Nevertheless, these changes have not resulted in significant changes in the educational structure. More

---

[1] The General Education Act (LGE) in 1970, the Act on the General Organization of the Educational System (LOGSE) in 1990, the Act in the Quality of Education (LOCE) in 2002, the Organic Law

specifically, we state that basic VET has remained almost the same since they began in the framework of the Act on General Organization of the Educational System (LOGSE). In this regard, the first Social Guarantee Programs (PGS), the subsequent Initial Professional Qualification Programs (PCPI) and the current Basic Vocational Training Programs (FPB) have strengthened the position of basic VET as a path for those students categorized as early school leavers. This path reinforces their segregation by differentiating their future itineraries and by separating them from educational success. This success is understood here in a wide sense, not only referring to obtaining a certificate, but also of being able to participate in society.

Our analysis of the current law (the Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality, LOMCE) enables us to state that our educational policy is clearly placed in a framework of conservative modernization. As Apple explains (2006), this trend is a confluence of several sectors (neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, authoritarian populists and the professional and new middle class) that intersect in the fight for controlling the educational field. Although they may contradict each other in their approach to the sense and aims of schooling, their combination is a confluence that results in a conservative restoration of the system. This restoration is specified in measures that shape the programs in a very restrictive sense. These measures can be understood as the political technologies, which "are devices for changing the meaning of practice and social relationships" (Ball 2013, pp. 48–49). The author proposes three technologies: the market form of the system, the entrepreneurial management of the educational organizations and the performativity that is referred to accountability. The three of them reinforce a mercantilist turn of the system that encourages competitiveness and individualization. In the framework of this trend, the position of the basic VET programs is definitively relegated to the realm of educational failure and early school leaving.

The specification of these technologies into analysis criteria provides us with arguments for studying the programs. More precisely, we refer to the tracking of the system and the paths provided. On the one hand the tracking and future paths provided by basic VET are quite remarkable to analyse its position in the educational structure. On the other hand, it gives us information about the careers provided for these students. The students who access basic VET have to comply with two requirements: being 16 years old or occasionally 15 and having a previous path of school failure, which means that there are no expectations of obtaining the Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate (GESO). Once they finish basic VET, their continuity in the educational system is complicated, as the students do no obtain the GESO, which would enable them to access the post-compulsory level. For obtaining it, they have to pass the same exam that the students of the Secondary Education path need to pass. Obviously, their previously done educational itinerary positions them in a quite different situation to pass it. Moreover, the time allotted in basic VET for the academic contents is not enough to recover the educational deficit: the hourly load dedicated to these contents is situated between 35% and 40%

including the time for mentoring. Therefore, this exam turns into an institutionalized obstacle for their educational career and reinforces the undermining of the dignity of VET in our educational system, as explained by Tarabini and Montes (2015).

The current situation of basic VET in the Spanish educational system is evidence of a reduced comprehensiveness that constrains social justice. Just like social justice, comprehensiveness is a term that may have several definitions. As explained in Martínez, Bernad, Molpeceres, Abiétar, Navas, Marhuenda and Giménez (2015), it is possible to identify three approaches to the term. The first one is related to redistribution and equality, and it would have a main exponent in the universalization of education. Thus, enabling all the population access to the educational system would be a comprehensive policy. The second approach converts equality of access to equality of achievement: "the notion of 'giving according to need' instead of 'giving everybody the same' began to be regarded as a better embodiment of the equality principle" (ibid., p. 295). The third approach retains the competitive trend and strengthens the aforementioned conservative technologies, marketization, managerialism and accountability, which reinforce the individualization of the system. In this framework, basic VET is positioned within a structure that limits the options for their students in terms of training and itineraries provided. By so doing, they also reduce social justice to its distributive meaning, focusing on equality and not on equity.

From a dimensional conceptualization of social justice, it is necessary to consider the way social participation is fostered in the programs. With the current organization of basic VET, we state that social justice is constrained due to the way the educational system is tracked and how it segregates students. In order to change this, a structural proposal would be the introduction of feasible links between stages and programs so that students have a chance to continue their training. A second proposal would combine the redistribution with the pathways offered and the social participation they enable. This refers to a redesign of VET considering the professional branches provided in a specific territory. Thus, by analysing both the geographical location of the educational resources and the paths provided, we focus on the way educational policies and planning shape a given territory. Thus, our findings are focused on the professional careers provided in the region of Valencia.

8.6   Basic VET Provision in the Region of Valencia

The results we present here are based on the research we are conducting in the region of Valencia. We are replicating the project: "Success and dropout pathways in vocational education and training levels 1 and 2 in Spain" (EDU2013-42854-R), led by the research group "Education and citizenship" of the Universitat de les Illes Balears (Spain) and funded by the Spanish Government. This project focuses on VET success and dropout, particularly in the initial and medium level, which refer to professional qualifications of level 1 and 2. Its main objectives are generating knowledge about dropout in these levels of the VET system and developing proposals of actions to prevent and reduce this dropout. The project was initiated in 2014

for a period of 3 years. More specifically, our research is framed in a cooperation agreement with the Education Department of the region of Valencia, which was signed in 2016 for a period of 3 years and funded by the Valencian Autonomous Government for 2018 and 2019 through the project: "Success and dropout pathways in Vocational Training level 1 and 2 of the educational system in in the Valencian Autonomous Community" (GV/2018/038).

The greatest strength of this project refers to its longitudinal methodological strategy. This approach is fundamental in the research about pathways and transitions, as it "contributes to a better understanding of the biographical processes of young people" (Casal, Merino and García 2011, p. 1150). As these authors explain, this approach may include several methods such as quantitative and qualitative, as it is the longitudinal character the feature that determines the transition approach. Having this consideration in mind, our methodological strategy includes three methods: (i) the analysis of statistical data regarding enrollments and completions in VET, (ii) the conduction of surveys in three consecutive years starting in November 2016 with students, (iii) and the development of focus groups with students and teachers, which is planned for the third year of the research. We are presenting here the results obtained throughout the analysis of statistical data regarding enrollments in VET. We combine these results with the information about the geographical location of the educational organizations that are conducting this training. By doing so, we attempt to connect the training provided in a specific region with the youngster's pathways and the social participation that it enables. Therefore, we aim to approach the production of this youth.

8.6.1   Basic VET Provision and Careers Distribution

How are basic VET students distributed among the educational offerings? This is our first question when trying to describe the educational and labour paths that basic VET students may start in this training. In this regard, the data presented in the following graphic show a significant concentration in specific professional branches (Graphic 8.1).

Firstly, it is worth highlighting that those professional branches with more population enrolled seem to be quite distant from what we consider to be the potential interests of students. Despite their preferences for those branches with a greater demand of manual activity, such as Mechanics or Cooking, the provision is focused on Administration (24%) and Information Technology (22%). One of the specializations of Electricity and Electronic (Installation and Maintenance) is in third place with 15% of enrollments. This distribution could be explained in part by the fact that it is easier and cheaper for the educational administration and for the organizations themselves to provide the specific tools and spaces that are needed to teach these branches. So, the careers that may be started in these programs may not be explained only by the students' interests, but together with other considerations regarding the educational budget and the options of educational provision and planning. Data
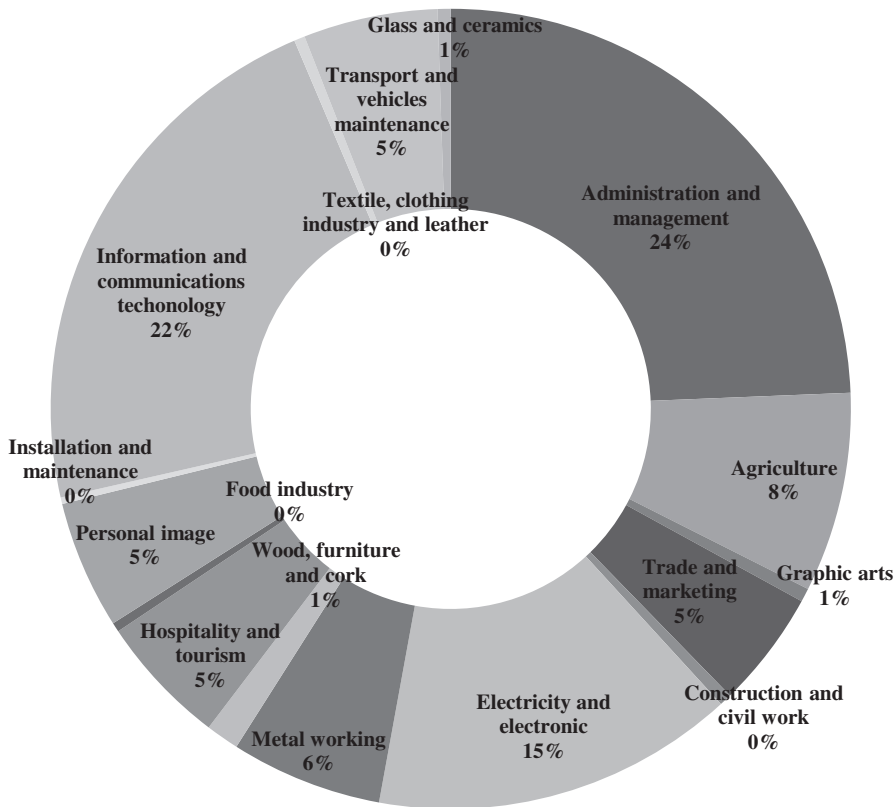
Graphic 8.1 Distribution of the population enrolled in basic VET by professional branches (2016–2017). (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

gathered in the surveys conducted in the first year of our research show that 56% of basic VET students[2] declare a main reason for having chosen their studies is that they like them and because they will allow them to improve their job options. However, in close examination by professional branch, data vary to 38% in the case of Administration, to 53% for IT and to 34% for Electricity and Electronics. As promising as these figures may at first appear, they declare as well that more than 60% of students in Administration are pursuing another agenda.

Secondly, the graph also gives us information about the options of the development of careers once the students finish the programs. Those branches with more students do not respond to the potential or emerging demands of the labour market.

---

[2] From a sample of 740 students for the academic year 2016/2017 in the Valencian region. Global population of basic VET students was for that period 5288 students. The sample was stratified by professional branches and location at the region of Valencia and had a 0.3% sampling error and a 95% confidence level. The Autonomous Educational Administration of Valencia provided the data used to conduct the study.

On the contrary, there is an under-representation of some branches that could give more options of career development in our productive context.[3] This would be the situation of the programs related to environmental issues, for example. The point here is that if we assess the options of participation that this training enables, i.e., the itineraries of the students once they finish basic VET, there is a need of updating of the professional provision. If we continue training these students for outdated professions that are not related to the current socioeconomic context in which they are to be integrated, we are anticipating their unequal social position. The labeling as "basic VET youth" does already situate them in a disadvantaged position that an out-of-date training restates in a context with changing demands. Thus, the distance with the aforementioned millennial youth increases with this training that prepares for uncertainty. Moreover, in terms of our theoretical framework (Casal et al. 2006a), this situation favours a simple construction of the professional insertion due to a short educational itinerary that positions the students in a disadvantaged competitive position in the labour market. In terms of social justice, the educational offering produces inequitable options of labour and social participation.

After considering the distribution of the students, the second aspect we describe here addresses the distribution of the programs themselves (Map 8.1).

The map represents an expectable concentration of basic VET provision in the city of Valencia and its closer metropolitan area. Likewise, there is a concentration in towns with larger populations groups. Evidently, in these zones there is going to be an increased demand of these programs—and even any kind of educational program. Having said that, we should also think about the possible demand in less-populated areas. Therefore, the lack of an educational provision that covers the different educational levels of our system entails an unequal distribution of resources. Therefore, we may think it is an unequal distribution of educational and labour itineraries for the youngsters. Moreover, if we take into consideration that basic VET is addressed to those students who have an educational path of failure, the absence of these programs in their surroundings or of the opportunity of accessing them involves a limitation of their educational and labour participation options. Consequently, and facing the impossibility of offering all the programs in all the locations of a specific territory, we should think about fostering the accessibility of all the students. Otherwise, the place where the youngsters live would turn into another factor of inequality that conditions the development of their biography. In this way, it would become a social injustice that favours the precarious transitions of basic VET youth.

---

[3]Nowadays, in the Valencia region there is no study conducted that allows the Educational Administration to know which are the branches more demanded by the labour market. Recently, the Educational Administration and the University of Valencia signed a cooperation agreement that hopefully will provide this kind of data to improve the political decisions behind the VET provision.
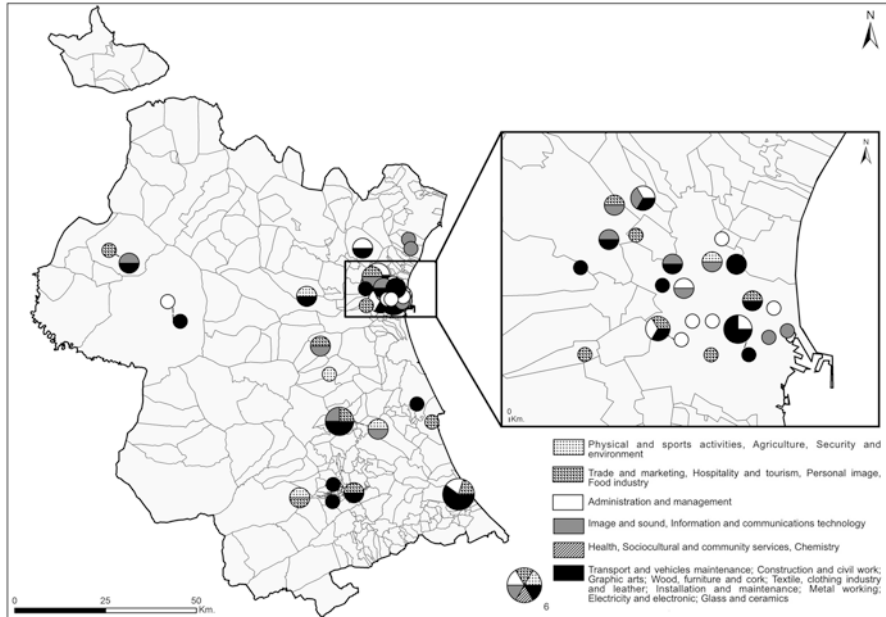
Map 8.1 Geographical distribution of basic VET programs (2016–2017). (Source: Authors' own elaborati)

8.7 Conclusions and a Brief Note for Continuing the Research

The analysis presented in this chapter of the current development of the basic VET as an educational policy shows us that in its current arrangement, its final meaning concludes shortening the transition time. It does so by giving rise fundamentally to working class or precarious transitions depending on their success finding a job in the labour market. Both subjectivities are the main two possibilities offered to youngsters studying basic VET.

The data on the enrollment and the current distribution of the programs in the territory show the type of careers provided to these students from the political level. In this regard, it is worth highlighting the distance between what is mostly offered with the potential interests and even with the possible updated labour needs of the territory. In this sense, in the frame of the proposal of forms of transitions, the paths provided are placed within the framework of working-class trajectories. Therefore, in terms of social participation produced in basic VET and the production of youth, we state that it is a subjectivity production limited to a specific area of labour and social life. All this leads to the fact that basic VET favours the production of disqualified youth that are left in a position to perform unequal insertions into social

life. From the perspective of social justice exposed, these programs contribute to the differentiation of citizenship performances, and of their options of representation and participation in social life. We are not suggesting, then, that basic VET should be removed from the educational scene; on the contrary, given the socio-political conditions of the region, it is needed, but we strongly think that it must represent the first step of a professional career, not the final one.

Being young is an experience that includes multiple experiences in several realms. In terms of Bauman (2008), there are multiple ways of developing the "art of life" and constructing our own biography, i.e., our masterpiece. Although we may identify common trends that acquire meaning when they are situated in a social, economic, political and historical context, mostly in the framework of a generation there are no masterpieces alike. In this process of creating master-pieces, the educational system turns into one of the most significant social institutions having a determinant influence in this creation. The knowledge distributed, the way students are classified and positioned in the educational structure, and, on the whole, the constraints and possibilities each person finds in her/his itinerary result into several ways of being "a student". At the same time, it results into several ways of being "young". Youth studies only serve for a type of youth "white, visible, affluent and creative middle class", who ask for the meaning of what they do in their lives, and pretend to give it meaning. However, youth with more pressing and complex materialities, who is in need of an immediate response to life situations, cannot be considered as *young* today, at least, if we refer by young a liquid and millennial way of life. Instead of being young today, they look like the young adults of the baby boomer generation, with quite solid, although impoverished, perspectives.

By focusing on the study of basic VET, we focus on those students that are in a disadvantaged position not only regarding their previous path, but also taking into consideration their future itineraries. The options of careers provided for them are related to the production of a youth ("the basic VET youth") that will have fewer opportunities of performing citizenship and participating in social life in a wide sense. Of course, each individual masterpiece may occasionally become a hit, but *our* research interest in the educational field focuses on the way youth as a whole is produced throughout educational policies and practices. In this regard, the analysis of the development of basic VET in the Valencian region allows as to state that, at the moment, basic VET produces a disqualified youth that is unequally positioned for developing their professional transitions and, therefore, for performing social participation. The research we are conducting allows us a wide approach to this production. In the tracking of the students' paths we are interested on analysing the practices and trends that turn these youngsters into this "basic VET youth". With this expectation in mind, this proposal is to be continued.

References

Abiétar López, M. (2016). *La producción social de itinerarios de inserción: análisis de la Formación Profesional de base desde una perspectiva de justicia social.* Doctoral dissertation, Universitat de València, Valencia, Spain.

Abiétar López, M., Navas Saurin, A. A., & Marhuenda Fluixá, F. (2015). Aportaciones desde la Justicia Social para una Educación Justa. La Identidad Pedagógica en Formación Profesional Básica. *Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia Social, 4*(2), 145–161.

Adame Obrador, M. T., & Salvà Mut, F. (2010). Abandono escolar prematuro y transición a la vida activa en una economía turística: el caso de Baleares. *Revista de Educación, 351*, 185–210.

Apple, M. W. (2006). *Educating the "right" way. Markets, standards, god and inequality* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. (2013). *The education debate* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The Policy Press.

Bauman, Z. (2008). *Una nova escena del drama entre vell i jove. New performance of the old vs. young drama* (Vol. 36). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament d'Acció Social i Ciutadania, Secretaria de Joventut.

Benedicto, J. (2017). *Informe Juventud en España 2016*. Madrid: Instituto de la Juventud (INJUVE).

Bernstein, B. (1998). *Pedagogía, control simbólico e identidad. Teoría, investigación y crítica*. Madrid: Ediciones Morata.

Bourdieu, P. (2002). *La juventud no es más que una palabra Sociología y Cultura* (pp. 163–173). México: Grijalbo.

Casal, J., García, M., Merino, R., & Quesada, M. (2004). *Enquesta als joves de Catalunya 2002. Itineraris educatius, laborals i familiars*. Barcelona: Secretaria General de Joventut, Generalitat de Catalunya.

Casal, J., García, M., Merino, R., & Quesada, M. (2006a). Aportaciones teóricas y metodológicas a la sociología de la juventud desde la perspectiva de la transición. *Papers, 79*, 21–48.

Casal, J., García, M., Merino, R., & Quesada, M. (2006b). Changes in forms of transition in contexts of informational capitalism. *Papers, 79*, 195–223.

Casal, J., Merino, R., & García, M. (2011). Pasado y futuro del estudio sobre la transición de los jóvenes. *Papers, 96*(4), 1139–1162.

Feixa, C. (2006). Generación XX. Teorías sobre la juventud en la era contemporánea. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud, 4*(2), 21–45.

Fraser, N. (2005). Reframing justice in a globalizing world. *New Left Review, 36*, 69–88.

Fraser, N. (2013). *Fortunes of feminism. From state-managed capitalism to neoliberal crisis*. London/New York: Verso.

García Gracia, M. (2013). *Absentismo y abandono escolar*. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis.

González, M. T. (2015). *La vulnerabilidad escolar y los Programas de Cualificación Profesional Inicial*. Barcelona: Wolters Kluwer.

Hall, G. S. (1916). *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education* (Vol. 2). London: D. Appleton.

Machado Pais, J. (2003). The multiple faces of the future in the labyrinth of life. *Journal of Youth Studies, 6*(2), 115–126.

Marhuenda Fluixá, F. (ed.). (2006). La cualificación profesional básica: competencias para la inclusión sociolaboral de jóvenes. Revista de Educación, *341*, 15–253.

Marhuenda Fluixá, F., Salvà Mut, F., Navas Saurin, A. A., & Abiétar López, M. (2015). Twenty years of basic vocational education provision in Spain: Changes and trends. *International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training, 2*(2), 137–151. https://doi.org/10.13152/IJRVET.2.2.8.

Martínez Morales, I., Bernad i Garcia, J. C., Molpeceres Pastor, M. A., Abiétar López, M., Navas Saurin, A., Marhuenda Fluixá, F., & Giménez Urraco, E. (2015). Comprehensive education boundaries and remedies on the edges of Spanish educational system. *European Educational Research Journal, 14*(3–4), 293–311. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904115590043.

Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional. (2018). *Sistema estatal de indicadores de la educación. Edición 2018.* Retrieved from: https://www.mecd.gob.es/dms/mecd/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/indicadores-publicaciones-sintesis/sistema-estatal-indicadores/SEIE_2018.pdf

Miret, P., Salvadó, A., Serracant, P., & Soler, R. (2008). *Enquesta a la joventut de Catalunya 2007: una anàlisi de les transicions educatives, laborals, domiciliars i familiars*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament d'Acció Social i Ciutadania, Secretaria de Joventut.

Rawls, J. (1985). *Teoría de la Justicia*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Serracant, P. (coord.). (2013). *Enquesta a la joventut de Catalunya 2012*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Benestar Social i Família, Direcció General de Joventut.

Tapscott, D. (1998). *Growing up digital: The rise of the net generation*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Tarabini, A., & Montes, A. (2015). La agenda política contra el abandono escolar prematuro en España: la LOMCE contra las evidencias internacionales. *Avances en Supervisión Educativa, 23*, 1–20. https://avances.adide.org/index.php/ase/article/view/20/21

UNESCO. (2013). *International standard classification of education. ISCED 2011*. Montreal: Instituto de Estadística de la UNESCO.

Walther, A. (2006). Regimes of youth transitions: Choice, flexibility and security in young people's experiences across different European contexts. *Young, 14*(2), 119–139. https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308806062737.

Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. London: Verso.

Zacarés-González, J. J., & Llinares-Insa, L. (2006). Experiencias positivas, identidad personal y significado del trabajo como elementos de optimización del desarrollo de los jóvenes. Lecciones aprendidas para los futuros Programas de Cualificación Profesional Inicial. *Revista de Educación, 341*, 123–148.