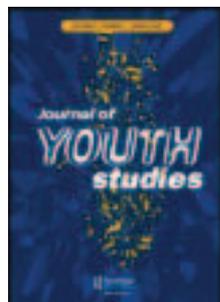


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NEET youth in Austria: a typology including socio-demography, labour market behaviour and permanence

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NEET youth in Austria: a typology including socio-demography, labour market behaviour and permanence

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Due to the limited relevance of traditional labour market indicators for youth unemployment, researchers and policy-makers focus on an indicator known as not in employment, education or training ('NEET'). The underlying assumption is that NEET indicates young people with a high risk of social exclusion. For political solutions, it is necessary to consider the heterogeneity of the NEET group. This paper examines the socio-structural attributes that characterise NEET youth in Austria, the main reasons for the NEET situation and whether NEET status, once assigned to an individual, is permanent or temporary. Latent cluster analyses identify seven subgroups of NEET youth, all of which face different challenges. The data source used is the Austrian Labour Force Survey (micro census) from the years 2008–2010, and young people between 16 and 24 years old are analysed. A panel data-set is created to analyse NEET permanence. Drawing on the identified reasons for a permanent NEET situation, this paper argues for more job and training opportunities that fit the needs of young people, especially those with illnesses. Finally, this study asks whether the definition of NEET should be adapted to exclude young mothers with care responsibilities who are not actively looking for a job.

Keywords: social exclusion; youth unemployment; NEET; Austria; Labour Force Survey

1. Introduction

Young people have been more affected than other groups by the current economic crisis. The increase in youth unemployment has been faster and greater than the average for the population of Europe (Bell and Blanchflower 2011). Due to the limited relevance of traditional labour market indicators for young people, politicians and academics focus on an indicator known as not in employment, education or training ('NEET') (Eurofound 2011, 3), which encompasses young people who are not integrated into the labour market or the education system at a certain point in time. The underlying assumption is that NEET indicates young people who are at high risk of social exclusion. The NEET-indicator includes, for example, those young people who withdraw from labour market due to hopelessness. These youths are not covered by the usual unemployment statistics because they are not actively looking for a job. Approximately, only half of the NEET-youth are looking for a job and, hence, are counted as unemployed.

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