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Youth in No Man's Land. Immigrant Children on the Outskirts of Madrid

*Jeunes dans un « no man's land ». Enfants d'immigrés dans un quartier
périphérique de Madrid*

*Jóvenes en tierra de nadie. Hijos de inmigrantes en un barrio de la periferia de
Madrid*

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Youth in No Man's Land. Immigrant Children on the Outskirts of Madrid

Cecilia Eseverri-Mayer¹

Introduction

In large European cities there exist neglected areas that can be especially revealing for social analysis. Especially during periods of economic crisis like the one now underway, they are veritable laboratories for understanding new social difficulties and for identifying the resources a society has for overcoming them².

These "disadvantaged," "sensitive" or "marginal" urban spaces came to the forefront in current affairs with the first French and British urban riots in 1981. In conjunction with the dismantling of the industrial production-based economic system, rising youth unemployment and the new urban concentration of poverty, burning cars, street vandalism and police confrontations have become recurring events at different times and in different places in France and England over the past thirty years. A surge in youth violence in the fall of 2005 in France and in the summer of 2011 in England confirms how significant this social phenomenon has become and reveals the severe conditions under which some youths find themselves: children of colonial immigration with French or English nationality, excluded from the education system and employment³.

In southern European countries such as Spain, even though most immigration is more recent, immigrant children in the poorest neighborhoods have begun suffering from problems similar to those of their European counterparts. The immigration *boom* (Arango, 2009) between 2000 and 2007 caused an increasingly visible concentration of foreign population in the old working-class neighborhoods away from historic centers (Lora-Tamayo, 2007). These areas are underserved, and the unemployment levels and school dropout rates are much higher than they are in other parts of the cities.

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2 This article was translated by Nicolas Jara Joly.

3 In the worst *cités* in Paris, one out of every two young people is unemployed (Donzelot, 2011) and in the poorest neighborhoods of East London, youth unemployment has soared from 10% in 2001 to 24% in 2011 (Ceri and Lizzie, 2014).

Sociological studies are still in their early stages in Spain as compared to their development in the Anglo-Saxon and French literature. The Chicago School has already dealt with inter-ethnic relations and crime in large cities in the 1920s (Park, 1928; Thomas and Znaniecki, 1958), and in the 1960s urban sociologists warned of deteriorating relationships among residents in poor neighborhoods (Jacobs, 1961) and the emergence of a *culture of poverty* (Lewis, 1965). In France and England, riots in the inner cities and *banlieues* impelled sociologists to take their work into these urban areas to gain insight into the causes behind the *galère*⁴ (Dubet, 1987) and this new marginalization of youth (Rex, 1982). Literature on both sides of the Atlantic seems to agree that the processes of social and ethnic segregation today are more damaging than they were in the past (Dubet and Layperonie, 1992; Massey and Denton, 2003; Kasinitz *et al.*, 2006). Young people living on the outskirts of cities share a common experience of *disconnection* from the networks that provide access to educational and employment opportunities in the big cities.

In Spain, there was no talk of “second generations” until 2003 (Cachón, 2003). It was then that focus started being placed on institutional policies (López Sala and Cachón, 2007) regarding incorporation into the job market and educational integration (Cebolla and Garrido, 2011) and identity conflicts (Echeverri, 2005). Unlike those in Northern Europe, recent quantitative studies in Spain have led to more or less encouraging results (Portes *et al.*, 2013; Crul *et al.*, 2012)⁵. They highlight progressive educational integration of youth, an increase in their aspirations and academic expectations, and positive identification with Spain.

While these research studies do not deny the possible difficulties ahead (discrimination or dropping out of school, and unemployment), it has not yet been possible to gain insight as to the specific problems faced by youth of immigrant origin in segregated neighborhoods. That is, the importance of the *urban context of incorporation* and the role played by *intermediary structures* were not taken into account when observing this phenomenon. This research, carried out between 2005 and 2010 as part of a doctoral thesis, was conducted for this purpose and entailed moving to one neighborhoods in Madrid hardest hit by poverty.

In 2005, with the riots in the French *banlieues* taking place in the background and the media wondering whether they might spread to Spain, I came to the neighborhood of San Cristóbal de los Ángeles. It is a secluded area south of the city that welcomed farm laboring immigrants in the 1960s and today has the city’s largest proportion of foreign population (41.1%). It was a key location during the major neighborhood movements in the 1970s in Spain (Castells, 1972) and today remains an innovative place for dynamic political and community action. However, the unemployment rate in this neighborhood has been rising steadily since the beginning of the crisis in the Spanish construction sector, from 7.1% in

4 Colloquial expression used by French youth living in outer neighborhoods. *Galère* means shambles, mess, trouble. The verb *galérer* refers to the situation of a young person “struggling to get by in life”

5 ILSEG Project (Longitudinal Study of the Second Generation in Spain) led by Alejandro Portes and Rosa Aparicio (Princeton University and Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset). And the European Project TIES (The Integration of the European Second Generation), directed by Maurice Crul, Amsterdam University.

2007 up to 29.94% in 2013⁶. The convergence of a change in demographics and poverty is affecting the quality of public services, and schools in particular. An increasing number of young people between fourteen and eighteen are getting stuck in *no man's land*, excluded from training and unable to find a first job.

This article describes a new outcome of *vulnerability* by studying the educational and social trajectories of young people of Ecuadorian, Dominican, Moroccan and Spanish origin. The main objective is to explain the causes that lead young people away from studying. To this end, cases of educational attainment and failure will be analyzed. In addition, the risks faced by youth during this period of uncertainty are to be identified, as are the resources and opportunities at their disposal in their immediate surroundings. The first section of this article deals with the advances made in this field of study and the research hypotheses. The second describes the methodological strategy employed. The sections following describe the different paths taken by young people and the elements and categories in the fundamental analysis are presented. Lastly, conclusions are drawn on this case study's main findings.

The Theoretical Discussion and Hypotheses

The most influential theories today on the integration of "new second generations" come out of the United States and are called *segmented assimilation theory* and *straight-line assimilation theory*. The former brings the original theory of the founders of the Chicago School (Park *et al.*, 1925) up-to-date and is optimistic in the sense that it predicts a gradual increase in the possibilities for integration and rising mobility among the children of immigrants.

The latter, in contrast, sees a trend toward greater segmentation and deals with three kinds of acculturation: The first, *constant acculturation*, occurs when the parents and children abandon their language and culture of origin and adopt American culture at the same rate. The second, *dissonant acculturation*, occurs when the children learn American culture much faster than their parents do. In this case, these children face discrimination in daily life and a segregated job market and a disadvantaged urban environment. And thirdly, *selective acculturation*, which occurs when they enter American society with support and ties to the ethnic community, which lessen exclusion. This diversification of how immigrants integrate is the result of a new bifurcated job market, one marked by ethnic discrimination, in which youth lacking good qualifications are more likely to experience this new precariousness and *downward assimilation*.

This research ventures away from this concept and this idea of *exclusion* so in fashion these days in Europe, because it seems to imply a dead-end situation, a society divided into those who are outside and those who are inside. Instead, the concept of *disaffiliation* (Castel, 1995) shall be employed because it allows for a study of the *processes* (the steps taken by youth leading up to "the fall") and helps to flesh out the nuances in each of the paths studies. Castel defines *disaffiliation* as an experience that combines job precariousness and the fragile

⁶ Data on demographics and employment from the database owned by the *City of Madrid's Statistics Management Office*.

nature of family and community bonds. However, he describes it as a situation that does not have to lead to a total disconnection from society (Castel, 1995: 17). It is a condition that has appeared in Europe as a consequence of the deterioration in the sources of individual support: those stemming from employment and social protection, and those arising out of solidarity and interpersonal relations.

Other European and American research emphasizes the influence of the *context of integration* on families (the kinds of educational institutions and job market structures) (Crul *et al.*, 2012) and they highlight the effects of *residential segregation* (Kasinitz *et al.*, 2006). They also call into question the favorable effects of 'ethnic embeddedness' and note that upward mobility is most likely when the bond with ethnic networks is strengthened by social capital, thus allowing for access to significant resources (Crul and Thomson, 2007).

Upon the initial exploration of the San Cristóbal neighborhood, it could be immediately seen how important it would be to measure the influence of the *segregated environment of incorporation* and to assess the role held by the *intermediary structures* in the new processes of disaffiliation. These structures are defined as the areas between state institutions and citizens, an individual's most immediate surroundings, such as family and community (local associations and ethnic communities). In addition to the importance of ethnic embeddedness, this research defends the need to consider the effect of *collaboration among structures of civil society in disadvantaged neighborhoods to understand the new processes of youth disaffiliation*. To measure its effect, the classical definitions of *human capital* and *social capital* (Coleman, 1990) are used. Human capital is created when people acquire a range of skills and abilities through training or experience. Therefore, it is not strictly associated with the level of education, but instead measured through a series of personal skills, especially social and communication skills, that allow one to adapt to different cultural contexts. Social capital, in turn, refers to social relationships, which "have the quality of creating sufficient resources for those involved in them to carry out their interests" (Coleman, 1990: 305).

An in-depth study of both dimensions – the segregated environment and the structures of civil society that make them up – give rise to the formulation of the following research hypotheses:

- The social incorporation of youths of immigrant origin is conditioned by the social and educational context of the neighborhood of San Cristóbal. The accumulation of social and educational difficulties leads to the emergence of a youth minority that gets stuck in a kind of *limbo*, a place halfway in between, one that does not result in a complete separation from society, but does not provide the youth with a connection to the formal structures of social integration (the educational system and the labor market) either.

- The risk youth face of a *disconnected* or *disaffiliated* outcome does not depend exclusively on their ethnic origin or migration experience, but rather stems largely from a lack in economic, social and human capital from families and immigrant communities.

- Despite the risks related to the setting, San Cristóbal has a capacity for social and ethnic exchange, which dampens the effects of segregation while also fostering youth re-incorporation via networking and collaborating among schools, associations, families and ethnic communities, largely thanks to the existence of *spaces for action and local participation*.

The Method is the Experience

My interest in this issue first began in France in 2004 while studying the youth riots in the *banlieues*. Seeing life in these places made me wonder about the living conditions for young immigrants in Madrid. On my return to the city in 2005, the immigrant population had tripled (10.29% of the total population) and I decided to carry out an in-depth case study. I chose a traditionally industrial area on the city outskirts that had been particularly hard hit by the economic crisis of the 1980s and had a proportionally high rate of foreign residents.

An ethnographic work was the method chosen due to the high relevance of observation and participation. As far as the methodological strategy, a partnership was formed with one of the oldest associations in the neighborhood. For twenty-six months I was professor of language and literature to young people who had recently dropped out of school. This position helped me more clearly define the subject of study: disaffiliated youth between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, children belonging to families from Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Morocco and Spain who were born in Spain or who arrived during childhood (up to age ten).

The ethnographic experience and constant presence in the Association allowed me to collect a strategic sampling of cases and track their evolution over the course of two academic years. The sample consisted of fifteen young people, five of Ecuadorian origin, five of Dominican origin and five of Moroccan origin. For each national origin, and due to the overrepresentation of boys in this center, three boys and two girls were chosen. These young people were interviewed on two occasions: once in June 2006 and again in June 2007. This allowed me to reconstruct their life stories and identify the chain of events that weakened or strengthened them during this unstable period (Bertaux, 1976). In addition, five young people of Spanish origin (also three boys and two girls) were chosen in order to establish a control group and thus observe the weight to be given to the variables of *social class* and *ethnic origin* in youth re-incorporation.

A part of this initial sample, ten youths with successful educational experiences were interviewed. There were seventy-nine additional interviews conducted (including those with young people between nineteen and twenty-nine years of age, parents, educators, religious leaders, members of neighborhood associations, etc.) and fifteen discussion groups were held (eight with young people of different ages and seven with adults, retirees, educators, women, local residents, police and immigration associations).

Despite the worthiness of the ethnographic method, a survey was conducted in the neighborhood high school to learn more about the characteristics of the youth population. In 2009, 479 students of the total 700 enrolled were surveyed, which allowed me to learn that 56.6% of those questioned had been born outside Spain, that the largest collectives were youths of Ecuadorian origin, followed by Dominicans, Colombians and Moroccans. Only 9% of the youth with foreign parents had Spanish nationality and most had come to Spain during childhood (between ages six and ten), so we cannot speak of a "second generation" the strict sense of the term. This heterogeneous group in terms of cultural background, family situation and migratory path was, for the most part, the main focus in this new experience of *disaffiliation* on the outskirts of Madrid.

“Latin at Heart” The Consequences of Changing School Setting

In front of a brick wall to the High School of San Cristóbal, two young men face off. Gathering around in a large circle, their friends encourage them to fight. Perched on the wall, boys between twelve and thirteen years of age eagerly watch the fight to see who will come out on top. The street educators from the nearby association, upon hearing the commotion, rush over to the young men to break up the fight. Just then, a girl on the edge of the circle goes up to one of the disputants, raises her arms, shows her hands making a sign of a butterfly, shouts at the top of her lungs: I am Latina, Latina at heart! You're all just a bunch of shitty Ñetas! (Field notes, May 2005)

That girl was Emma, sixteen, originally from Ecuador. Shortly after the altercation, she was enrolled in the host program of the local Association. She ended up dropping out of school.

Her family's emigration story began in 1999. Her older sister was the first to arrive, after being sent by her mother, who had failed in her attempt to open a clothing shop in Quito. But her stay was frustrated and she failed to find a job, so her mother and father came to join her, leaving Emma, aged seven, and her brother, aged four, under the custody of their aunts.

Emma was ten when her mother could finally bring her to Spain with her brother. The reunion, though happy, was not easy. The little girl did not understand why they had to share such a small apartment with another family and why she was the one who had to look after the newborns while their mother was at work. The family situation affected her performance at school and she felt abandoned once again by her mother.

“In high school, I got stuck with them all. But I think I didn't study because I never got the books... I was told I'd get them, but they never gave them to me... the end of the year came around, nothing... And then my mom and sister had babies at almost the same time and I hardly ever went to high school. My sister couldn't handle both because there were two of them just two months apart and my mother worked all day, morning to night. And then there were some girls picking fights with me... I cried and told my dad: 'Why should I go? Just to get in a fight?'...”

Emma tried to adapt to the circumstances and cope with this new adversity. As a defensive strategy, she distanced herself from her school friends and chose to keep company with some new people. Her behavior gradually grew more provocative and aggressive. Falling behind in school, the conflict with her classmates, her absenteeism, an accumulation of warnings and a lack of support from her family, all led to her falling in with a gang of young people in the neighborhood, the *Latinos de Fuego* (“Latin Fire”).

“[...] In high school, it was like we got more aggressive. [...] I remember one day a friend and I wrestled each other to the ground for who knows what reason, like we were the only ones there. [...] In primary school and as a freshman I was quiet, but later on I became more of a bully, picking fights, looking to fight for no reason, no reason at all... [...] Then I started hanging out with this group... they said it was to defend ourselves against the ones fighting with us... Then me and a friend quit the group and they wanted to beat

us up for that. There was a time when we were afraid to go outside. There were lots of reasons: the ones across the street were out to get you, and the Ñetas were coming after you too... lots of reasons to be afraid to study."

Emma dropped out in her third year of high school. In this young girl's case, quitting school early, even though it meant leaving the education system, allowed her to gradually leave a negative environment and break off certain relationships that might have caused her serious problems in the future. However, she could not continue her studies. She now holds a job as a domestic worker alongside her mother and is expecting her first child.

Vulnerability of Families Facing Adversity

The family's structure, its economic status and the context into which immigrant families are incorporated are determining factors for the successful assimilation of the children (Portes, 1998). In Emma's case, her parent's precarious job situation, her family obligations and her conflictive relationship with her mother led to the young woman's quitting school early.

Emma's mother was also interviewed for this research. *"She is the one who bathes the baby at night, who puts him to bed, who gives him breakfast... I'm not there. I spend more time at work than with my children"*, says this forty-two-year-old woman, who works at a cleaning company during the day and in a fast food restaurant in the evening. New urban poverty is reflected in the lack of attention given to children. The guilt Emma's mother feels for not being present prevents her from asserting her authority and from deterring her daughter from dropping out of school. The circumstances have put both mother and daughter into a position of continuously skirting their responsibilities. The mother cannot take care of her baby boy because she has to work to make ends meet, and the daughter finds herself unable to manage her studies. This situation arises from out of an implicit agreement: the family is organized according to its needs and urgency, but in both cases, it becomes a convenient way for avoiding the effort required to break the dynamic, to change directions and to allow any one of the family members to make progress. Emma gives up her studies and her mother resigns herself to that fact, thus losing any authority she might have over her daughter. The family home serves as shelter against external adversity but, at the same time, also functions as a place where their lives stagnate; it keeps the young woman from adapting to school and attaining her education.

In addition, young people like Emma lack the tools for adapting not only to secondary education at the age of twelve-thirteen, but also to an environment where symbolic power is held by people who instill fear in others through violence, defying authority and undervaluing those who study hard. Emma breaks off from her "mixed" or "mestiza" group of childhood friends where she felt free and could make progress in her studies, and instead starts falling behind in school and seeks out protection from Latino groups. But as we have seen, it was this very strategy that led to the violence she experienced and her defenselessness.

Relegating “the Worst”: A Classroom for the Most Conflictive

Edwin came to Madrid from the Dominican Republic at age six. His mother, like so many other Dominican women, was the first link the family's migratory chain and she helped his sisters come. Thanks to social networks built up in their community of origin and after years as a domestic worker, she eventually managed to acquire a neighborhood shopfront to start her own business. “El Sureño” was one of the first immigrant-run bars in the neighborhood and is today one of the most often frequented by residents, regardless of nationality. Edwin's mother could bring her children over five years after arriving in Spain. Edwin and his younger brother had been in the care of their grandmother when their mother could travel to Santo Domingo to fetch them. For the children, coming to Spain was positive. Their mother had settled in well, and with the arrival of their cousins at roughly the same time, life in the neighborhood was not all that different from the daily routine in Santo Domingo. However, adapting to their schooling was not so easy. Edwin flunked sixth grade and then, when he started high school, his academic struggles led to his skipping class and spending the day out and about. He flunked twice and was expelled from the center several times for verbally attacking the teachers, damaging school property and harassing his classmates. Because of his bad behavior, he was transferred to a classroom-workshop for the more “conflictive” students. The purpose of *El taller* (“The workshop”) was to re-integrate the students through hands-on activities (such as carpentry, pottery, gardening) and to review their knowledge in core subjects (language and mathematics).

“[...] On top of it all, they put you together with the worst one, because in the workshop I was in, we were supposedly, like the principal said, we were the worst ones in school and they put us there to pass the time, to move us away from the other classrooms because supposedly it wasn't appropriate for us to be in the same classroom and study with the others. We got put in there to pass the time, they gave us some material and then ceramics and we did whatever we wanted and that was it. It's like they separate you from the others... and even though you're bad, no matter what you are, you get put off to the side, like one guy said: 'Come on, dogs over here, and the decent ones here!' I might be bad in high school, but once I got sent to a workshop like that, I've lost everything... And they always promise to send you back up after a month or two of good behavior, but that's a lie. I passed all my subjects but one, got the best grades in ceramics and everything, and nothing. It was all just a lie...”

He dropped out of high school when he turned sixteen and spent his time with his friends, his girlfriend and occasionally helped out his mother at the bar. When he turned eighteen, his girlfriend got pregnant and the young man tried to get a more stable job. He worked in construction for a few months, but the working conditions were too hard and he returned to his routine in the neighborhood, spending as much time as possible hanging out with his friends. In 2010 he was arrested and imprisoned in Carabanchel for robbing a department store. Nine months later, he returned to the neighborhood. Today he has a new girlfriend and is helping out a family relative with his business while dreaming of a future in which he owns his own home and lives with his daughter.

The Consequences of Grouping and Disaffiliation

Edwin's case is an example of how warped the mechanics aimed at covering *special educational needs* are at their very core. Instead of fostering a young person's re-incorporation by focusing on their habits, discipline and responsibility, it separates them out indefinitely, thus sending them the message that they are "unrecoverable." As many researchers have suggested, gathering and separation of youth according to their "handicaps," restrict the possibilities of improving special education programs (Rutter *et al.*, 1970; Bale, 1981). Categories should be viewed not so much as a categorization of handicaps or a categorization of children but as a categorization of special needs. The concept of *special educational needs* should also include individual capacities and personal and social needs as well as more strictly educational ones (Gulliford and Upon, 1992).

In addition to the regulated grouping (in the "workshop," the remedial classrooms, A, B and C and diversification), the ethnographic work in San Cristóbal has made it possible to detect another mechanism, in which segregation informally divides the students up according to academic performance and behavior. The first classes (A, B and C) are usually classrooms for gifted students and the latter letters (D, F, G) are usually reserved for students with "special" needs or more "confrontational" behavior. Young people have named these classes the "classes for troublemakers" or "for the worst." This differentiation also fosters segregation of students according to national origin and ethnic group, since teenagers of immigrant origin are usually the ones to fall behind in their schoolwork. In the "lower" classes, foreign students make up the majority and in the "upper" classes, most are native Spaniards.

Most students interviewed stated that the beginning of the end of their academic lives was the moment they were placed in these "lower" classes. In these classrooms, student discontent is prevalent. They feel they are treated differently from the other students at the center: teachers' expectations of them are low, their explanations are less clear, they are not as well prepared and the teaching methods are repetitive and hardly innovative. This grouping results in an immediate drop in performance among students placed in the "inferior" groups. The atmosphere and the mere fact of being placed among "the worst" undermine their motivation and aspirations. These young people fall into a kind of apathy in which they no longer believe in themselves, develop a conflictive relationship with teachers and give up more readily.

After dropping out, as can be seen in Edwin's case, the young people get stuck for a time in an *intermediate space* halfway between two worlds: a "normalized" world (of being in contact with local associations and continuing to have friends in school) and an "informal" or "street" world (of coming into contact with groups operating in the informal economy). An unstructured routine that young people refer to time and again in their conversations as *hacer la gamba* (lit. "doing the prawn," meaning "goofing around"). This "in vivo code," as in the analysis by Glaser (1978), drawn from the language of the youth of San Cristóbal, sheds light on this situation.

Hacer la gamba means doing nothing all day long. Hanging out at home, going out on the street and spending the whole fucking day until eleven at night with your friends, playing video games, riding around on the moped, smoking joints, drinking beer and not working, or working a couple of months and quitting... and wearing nice clothes.

The experience of being in limbo, therefore, entails spending the day doing nothing; being enrolled in qualification programs, but skipping class; it is having a temp job though still depending on family members and committing misdemeanors without really being a delinquent. The *gambas* ("goofers") live in a state of contradiction: they have high aspirations (they want to earn money or dream of becoming artists or models), but at the same time have very low academic expectations. For most of those interviewed, getting a high school diploma is enough, a huge effort they expect would reward them with some benefit in the future. The trend is therefore to remain in a state of fantasy and inaction for a few years, either idealizing the future or believing it is all bound to go downhill. Once settled into these extreme and contradictory visions, one ideal and the other pessimistic, they try to prolong their time *in limbo* for as long as possible, thus putting off their incorporation into the job market, moving out of their parents' home and forming life partnerships.

How to Become Self-Empowered?

Younes never misses any of the meetings and community events held in the neighborhood. Since childhood, he has been enrolled in the association's after-school support classes and has accompanied his mother in her volunteer work. He has also always taken classes in Arabic and Islamic Law at the mosque. When he started high school, he decided to maintain his relationship with the association and mosque, and to take a more active role as a way of giving back for the help he received. "*By participating, you keep your ties to good people. In this neighborhood, no one has anything, but we help each other out*", he says with conviction.

Younes was born in Ashila (Morocco) in 1990. Since he turned one, he has been living "between two worlds": "*There are fourteen kilometers separating Morocco and Spain, and I feel tied to both countries, though at times different from the people in both places as well*". This feeling of belonging to two places stems from his changes in residency over the course of his childhood. He came to Madrid when he was barely one, and then at the age of six, his parents decided to move back to Morocco. Even though his father had a job (in construction work), he was homesick and wanted to return. After two years in his country of origin, however, they announced they would be moving back to Madrid. Younes was ten, and this time it appeared they were settling down for good. His father's work situation improved and he got a job as an electrician, and his mother started working as a cook. The family bought a home in San Cristóbal and Younes finished his mandatory education with good grades. That was when his family life took a turn. His father expressed his intention to return to Morocco, but this time his mother refused. The family was forced to separate, though the family bond remained strong, despite the distance. Younes faced the situation courageously and continued his education at his father's behest. He enrolled in a vocational school for certified training in electromechanics and

worked diligently for three years, after which time he got the highest grade point average in his class and a recommendation from his teacher for a job vacancy in a motor vehicle company. At the age of eighteen, he is satisfied with what he has accomplished. Even though he thinks he might further his education even more, he thinks he has acted sensibly in choosing a safe path and not being overly ambitious. This way, according to him, he might avoid greater difficulties that might eventually come up as a result of being discriminated against as a Moroccan for more skilled job positions. *"So then I'm going to be an electrical mechanic, right on! I'll stick with that!"*

Though his expectations are modest, they stand in contrast to his interests and aspirations; Younes has had a very positive outcome. According to him, he has been able to "deal with life thanks to what he learned at home." Two complimentary personalities – a strict and authoritarian mother and an attentive and thoughtful father – provided him the environment he needed.

- *"Who has influenced you the most? Your mother or your father?"*
 - *"My father more. I mean, my mother... I mean both (laughs). My father is a very intelligent man because he knows how to treat people, and he does it very well. He knows how to say, not such and such because..., my father reasons it out for you... My mother is, yes because I say so, total authority: I don't want to see you doing this! Because I say so! And my father reasons it out for you: 'Not this because such and such, you think that...'*
But I've always been very influenced by my father. My mother sees things very black and white. And even things that were over my father's head. So I was always closer to my father in certain ways, since I was a child. My father has always been there. And even though he isn't right now, we talk, we spend time together when I go there and he comes here (three times a year). But I think it's the foundation, it's the foundation they give you.
[...] If they bring you up with certain ideas, certain values and constantly come back to that, I think you won't have any reason to... I don't know, you'd think for yourself instead of for others. Instead of being influenced by others, you make choices by yourself."

His upbringing helped him become aware of his own limits. Unconsciously at first and out of fear of being reprimanded, he stayed away from certain situations he deemed dangerous and stopped hanging out with friends that were somewhat out of control and impulsive. He eventually came to understand the meaning behind the values and rules he learned at home. The world took on a different shade and a transformation inside him made him see things clearer and clearer: he was capable of self-awareness.

"I have had to hold myself back from doing things out of a fear of the consequences for my family... on the street, getting involved with certain people, from doing this or that. I have figured out, I think, how to get around many places. I have figured out how to be around many kinds of people. And I've had all kinds of friends: nerdy friends, students, rowdy friends, friends who steal... But because I've always known my limits, you know? 'You guys do whatever you want, but I'm not willing to go that far'. I had very clear ideas. Even though I goofed around a lot in high school, I've always subconsciously, I mean, I thought for myself about what I wanted to do, and what I didn't want to do, about what I was going to do and what I wasn't. At first you do it out of fear of your parents, and then you do it for yourself. The stages are: I need my parents; then you say, no, I'm grown-up now, I don't want my parents, and then in the end, I do want my parents back for their advice."

The Family and Community Support as a Source of Human Capital

One crucial aspect in cases where young people have assimilated successfully has been the presence of strict parental figures that control them and try to restrict their contact with life on the street, while at the same time trying to foster family contact, communication and the transmission of their own teachings and values. Respect, and especially respect for one's elders, is one of the most deeply rooted values in different cultures.

In the case of Younes, the combination of learning Spanish culture and conserving key elements from his parents' culture (including the language) allowed him to find a balance between two culturally different, and in some aspects, contradictory worlds. Frequent travel to Morocco, bilingualism, his mother's authority and the long conversations with his father allowed him to acquire the skill of looking at the world through two lenses and his endeavors in *identity bricolage*, discarding the negative and useless parts of each culture and conserving the positive and beneficial ones. In short, Younes acquired the ability to develop his own point of view; a difficult posture that requires constant self-monitoring, but one that provides an extraordinary resource: the talent of adapting to different environments.

He did not acquire these qualities on his own, however, but rather thanks to the human and social capital possessed by his parents. Younes' father's skill and intelligence helped him acquire critical awareness necessary for fulfilling his academic obligations and carrying out his life plans. His mother's attention and strictness showed him the limits of his everyday actions. In addition, his ties to the mosque helped him maintain the bonds with his family's values, while at the same time, the Association allowed him to get involved with the host society without being stigmatized as a Muslim, as happens in the school environment. For the Association, Younes is of great value because he participates in the struggle for improving the urban environment and also serves as an example for younger generations.

Yasmina's Possibilities

Berber and originally from Alhucemas, Yasmina was born in Fez and is the youngest of five siblings. Her father, who emigrated to Spain eight years ago, lives in San Cristóbal, is remarried, and has a job installing motors into wells and swimming pools. Yasmina had just turned ten years old when she came to Madrid and fondly remembers her first years of school. Things got more complicated, however, upon starting high school. Her father told her she had to wear a veil because she was a grown-up now and this meant a big change for her. "*In Morocco, my mother let my older sisters not wear one and I felt disoriented in a country where no one wore one*". Moreover, hostility from her classmates and the distant relationship with teaching staff demotivated her and caused her to drop out.

She signed up for one year at the neighborhood Association to get her general education degree. She made notable progress and her tutor encouraged her to continue her studies the following year and to consider her preferences.

Surprised at her own possibilities, she told him her dream was to become a nurse. However, the main obstacles were her father and her boyfriend. Yasmina was engaged to one of her cousins and she was to marry him in a year and a half. They did not stop her studying, but they thought she should only do so as long as she was single. Once married, the community frowned upon women who studied and who came into contact with men their own age.

"Moroccans are very hard-headed. I don't know how to explain it, it is as if everything in the future was bad ... 'You can't do this, you can't do that, no, no, no, you can't learn Spanish, you can't study'... And what it is they're afraid of is 'what others might say if they see my daughter'... The Spanish are different. They always see the future as bright, you can improve, you can change. I want a bright future."

The window for taking action was narrow, but the opportunity did present itself. Her tutor told her about the possibility of doing a mid-level course in Assistant Nursing Care for a period of a year and three months, which included hands-on experience in a hospital. The role of this "special person" (Portes and Fernández, 2007) was crucial. He took the young woman seriously, helped her through the whole process and mediated between her, her family and the professional training center. Educators visited the father and explained the conditions under which his daughter would study and the possibility of her wearing a headscarf. At the same time, the institute accompanied the young woman through the registration process. Her father and fiancée's fears abated and those at the mosque most likely to spread rumors could not call Yasmina's honor into doubt. She just wanted to study and was lucky in the sense that, in her case, there understood and collaboration among the different actors in civil society.

Outside Support: Using the "Cracks in the Freedom" of the Culture of Origin and the Opportunities in the New Country

Moroccan parents often want their daughters to thrive in Spain, but at the same time are afraid they will get too absorbed into the new culture. This is the reasoning behind the strictness for wearing traditional clothing, going out with friends, having boyfriends and coming home late. The veil, for them, is a shield against adversities (excessive freedom, relationships with the opposite sex, drugs, etc.) in the new social environment. These parents instill their daughters with discipline and self-control, but they are not often much help when it comes to encouraging their studies. Not only can they be unsupportive, but they might also even prove to be an obstacle through their disapproval of them.

The existence of intermediate spaces and *an architecture for local participation* (which relies on existence of places for round-table discussion and cooperation on youth issues, education, and neighborhood communities) makes it possible to improve the living conditions for disadvantaged youth. The Association served as this mixed and intermediate place that Yasmina needed – a place between two shores – crucial for bridging the gaps that had opened up between the family, the community of origin and the new society. Within this structure, family values get reinforced while at the same time, new doors are opened (and *connections* formed), thereby honing the immigrants' skills at adapting to the new environment and providing information necessary for gaining new educational opportunities. But more than anything, *the collabora-*

tion between the Association, the family and the educational system allowed the young woman to develop a positive self-image and impelled her to choose an unknown (and disapproved) path without having to break off ties with her family.

Conclusions

In-depth observation of the paths taken by youth shows that in segregated Spanish neighborhoods, more and more teenagers, primarily of immigrant origin between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, are experiencing a process of *disaffiliation*.

It is a group living for a time *in non man's land*, neither fully a part of, nor outside, society: disconnected from the educational structures but connected to the family, ethnic community and networks of local associations. The research also shows that this *interim situation* is not static in nature, but rather dynamic. Teenagers enter and leave this "no man's land" as they take their studies back up or quit them once again. They occasionally leave this unstable and dangerous place for good (because they decide to complete training or start working) and, on other occasions, enter it full force under the influence of harmful social capital that might bring them into contact with delinquent behavior.

In this vein, this research highlights a serious problem affecting northern European countries such as England and France as well, though it also points out the existing resources and means by which to combat it.

As far as the problems are concerned, social and educational segregation introduces an economic disadvantage into the places that condition the lives of young people and their everyday contacts, thus hindering access to new references, role models and opportunities. They are seen governed by the surroundings, by circumstance. The study of educational paths demonstrates how since the late 1990s, a *pattern of abandonment* in education has taken form, the same one actually affecting both Spanish teenagers and youth of immigrant origin. This pattern begins with the youth's premature incorporation into secondary education, their falling behind in schoolwork, and struggles in adapting socially into a setting perceived as hostile. And it ends with the development of conflictive behavior, quarreling with teachers, getting relegated to the classes for 'the worst' students, absenteeism and dropping out before the age of sixteen.

The research also confirms findings from the sociology of education (Bourdieu, 1970), which has shown that parents with social and human capital steer their children better through their studies. For this reason, beyond just the consequences of having migrated and even their economic capital, parents with the necessary social skills can strengthen their children's self-confidence and help them access structures for integration (educational system and employment). The contrast with Spanish youth (as a control group) reinforces this hypothesis. The path taken by a Spanish teenager has not been included (for lack of space). Nevertheless, the research demonstrates that, despite the fact that this group has the best academic performance, the Spanish youth that fail do so for the same reasons as their peers of immigrant origin: single-parent, low-income families and most of all, a shortage in social and human capital. The young people of Dominican and Ecuadorian origin are the group most at risk because

they have the most freedom and least amount of attention from their parents, and they are not so closely tied to the ethnic community or the neighborhood associations as their Spanish and Moroccan-origin peers.

The social capital in the Moroccan community is capable of controlling the youth, especially the girls. Research conducted in England has shown that in disadvantaged urban settings, there is a risk of experiencing isolation and discrimination, which might foster the development of a certain kind of social capital that fails to ensure a balance between *community solidarity* and *individual liberty* (Joly and Khursheed, 2012). In the case of San Cristóbal, one cannot speak of this type of community withdrawal. The economic organization does not allow these groups to be self-sufficient and both men and women must find the means for ensuring their subsistence from the outside.

This research demonstrates that keeping ties with the ethnic community is also positive if it is nourished with *social capital* connecting youth to new opportunities. And this kind of social capital arises from *ties among the intermediary structures*. The connection between a family, a local association and the Muslim, secular or religious community multiplies the possibilities for young people to adapt. The opposite situation – the decoupling of these structures – creates a vacuum and sense of not-belonging. This is not just about a young person individually having ties with associations, a good relationship with his or her parents and being tied to the community of origin. Of course, these conditions are beneficial, as has been demonstrated by *Segmented Assimilation Theory* (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). But they are not determining factors in fighting against the new process of *disaffiliation*. A young man who has dropped out may be a member of the Association and go to the mosque on Fridays, but he may change his life path regardless. What this research shows is that for this young man to give up one type of undervalued lifestyle, prior work must be carried out among the family, community and associations. This openness to collaboration among the different structures results in a new kind of self-confidence in the young man, a feeling of belonging and a series of extra opportunities that aid in connecting him once again with the educational system.

In San Cristóbal, unlike in French *banlieues* where there is significant ethnic and religious segregation (Layperonie, 2008), the contact between the different backgrounds and religions and their links through spaces for participation prove beneficial to the adaptation of youth. In this sense, the tradition of mobilizing the neighborhood plays a central role. Neighborhood issues are dealt with through *round-table discussions and participation* initiated and led by neighbors of different nationalities and religious groups, and the educational system and local institutions are also represented. This commonplace encounter leads to a dynamic of mediation and of taking action at times of conflicts, while also pressuring the Administration for certain social rights.

Therefore, policy interventions should be directed in two ways. Firstly, the participation of youth in the educational system and the structures of civil society must be incentivized, though it must also involve families and ethnic networks in the community dynamics. The reinforcement of these *collective and mixed initiatives* would make it possible to build up trust among residents and offer youth growing up in segregated settings the opportunity to start over again.

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Cecilia Eserverri-Mayer

**Youth in No Man's Land.
Immigrant Children on the Outskirts of Madrid**

This article discusses new processes of *disaffiliation* (Castel, 1995) among youth in a case study conducted in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Madrid. Through the study of educational attainment and failure among children of Ecuadorian, Dominican, and Moroccan immigrants, insight is gained into a problem affecting numerous European countries, thus making it possible to identify the resources necessary to combat it. Research shows that the most determining factor in disaffiliation is human capital (Bourdieu, 1970). Likewise it demonstrated that links to ethnic networks can be beneficial as long as they are combined and supplemented with social capital that opens up new opportunities for the youths. This social capital stems from collaboration among *intermediary structures* (family, ethnic community, associative networks) and is generated in new spaces for participation. These make it possible to find a balance *between community solidarity* and the *youth's individual freedom*.

**Jeunes dans un « no man's land ».
Enfants d'immigrés dans un quartier périphérique de Madrid**

Cet article mesure le processus de *désaffiliation* (Castel, 1995) chez les jeunes dans un quartier sensible de Madrid. L'étude des trajectoires de réussite et d'échec scolaires des enfants issus de l'immigration équatorienne, dominicaine et marocaine souligne les causes de cette problématique qui affecte divers pays européens et permet d'identifier les ressources pour les combattre. Ce cas d'étude identifie l'absence de capital humain (Bourdieu, 1970) des parents comme le facteur le plus déterminant de la désaffiliation. De plus, elle dévoile l'effet positif des réseaux ethniques uniquement quand ils sont porteurs du capital social nécessaire pour connecter les jeunes à de nouvelles opportunités. Ce capital social naît de la collaboration entre les structures intermédiaires (la famille, la communauté ethnique et les réseaux associatifs) qui se produit dans les nouveaux *espaces de participation*, créant un équilibre entre la *solidarité communautaire* et la *liberté individuelle* des jeunes.

**Jóvenes en tierra de nadie.
Hijos de inmigrantes en un barrio de la periferia de Madrid**

Este artículo analiza los nuevos procesos de *desafiliación* juvenil (Castel, 1995), tomando como caso de estudio un barrio desfavorecido de Madrid. El estudio de las trayectorias de éxito y fracaso educativo de jóvenes de origen ecuatoriano, dominicano, marroquí ahonda en las causas de esta problemática que afecta a varios países europeos y también permite identificar los recursos para combatirla. La investigación señala como elemento más determinante de la desafiliación la ausencia de capital humano de los padres (Bourdieu, 1970). Además, descubre que la vinculación con las redes étnicas es favorable siempre y cuando se combine con un capital social que conecte a los jóvenes con nuevas oportunidades. Este capital social emana de la colaboración entre las *estructuras intermedias* (la familia, la comunidad étnica y las redes asociativas) y se genera en nuevos *espacios de participación* que hacen posible el equilibrio entre la *solidaridad comunitaria* y la *libertad individual* de los jóvenes.