

How have young people's experiences of unemployment changed since the 1980s?

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(Phys.org) —Research teams from the University of Glasgow and the University of Leicester aim to explore unemployment, insecurity and vulnerability among young people during two key periods of economic instability.

Researchers are investigating the experiences of unemployed young people during two of the worst periods for youth unemployment.

'The making of the 'precariat': unemployment, insecurity and work-poor young adults in harsh economic conditions' is a one-year research project which will examine youth unemployment in the mid-1980s and from 2009-11.

The project is being carried out by research teams from the School of Education at the University of Glasgow and the Centre for Labour Market Studies within the University of Leicester's School of Management, with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council.

The project will explore how unemployment, insecurity and [vulnerability](#) among 18-25 year-olds have changed between two key periods of [economic instability](#) in the UK.

In November 2011, youth unemployment hit the 1 million mark, according to figures from the Office for [National Statistics](#). This was a record high since comparable records began in 1992. This meant that

one in five young people were out of work.

Earlier data, calculated on a slightly different basis, suggested [youth unemployment](#) was even higher in the mid-1980s.

The project will look in detail at experiences of unemployment, [insecurity](#) and vulnerability among young people during these two periods.

Researchers will use one contemporary dataset, Understanding Society and two historical datasets from 1980s [research projects](#) *Young Adults in the Labour Market* (1983) and *The Changing Structure of Youth Labour Markets* (1986). Both historical [datasets](#) have never been reused and one never archived.

The researchers hope the *making of the 'precariat'* project will enhance our understanding of vulnerable, work-poor, young adults in order to provide new underpinnings for effective youth employment policies.

Professor Furlong, University of Glasgow, said: "This project will enable us to learn more about the new realities of the labour market for young adults, highlighting the ways in which people struggle to survive in a context of high unemployment and precarious opportunities."

Dr John Goodwin, University of Leicester, said: "The historic youth data we have, combined with data from Understanding Society, offers an unparalleled opportunity to explore the lived realities of vulnerable, work-poor, young adults over a thirty year period highlighting both the continuities and changes in young people's experience of employment and/or unemployment.

"Many think that the experiences of [young adults](#) today are somehow unique yet the data points to remarkable similarities in the contemporary

experiences and the experiences of young people who left work in the early and mid 1980s. They too were labelled a lost generation."

More information: ukyouthresearch.wordpress.com/

Provided by University of Glasgow

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