

# Future employment prospects bleak

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Europe's young people are facing a bleak future with a fragmented and precarious labour market that is only just beginning to be appreciated in the West, according to a paper to be presented this Thursday to the European Sociological Association's conference in Turin.

Current high levels of youth unemployment are often seen as temporary, with post-[recession](#) growth expected to lead to an upturn in the number of jobs and a fall in unemployment. Professor Andy Furlong from the University of Glasgow argues that grounds for optimism about jobs for [young people](#) are, at best, shaky, with the future most likely to be marked by precarious forms of working.

The paper argues that there is good evidence to suggest that many of the conditions currently faced by young people are not temporary but reveal 'emerging contours of the post-recession economy of late modernity'. Professor Furlong argues that the trend towards non-standard forms of working, such as zero hours contracts, predate the recession and shows that future growth in the [labour market](#) is predicted to occur in [occupations](#) where precarious forms of working are most common.

Furlong also argues that employers will resist any pressure to abandon a highly profitable employment model that provides them with great flexibility and helps them sidestep traditional worker rights.

Professor Andy Furlong said "The statistics are frightening when you look across Western Europe. Spain has one of the most educated youth populations in Europe and so it's not a question of supply – but one of

demand. It is doubtful that the issues facing young people in Europe will be better for the next generation following this one and so the outlook is bleak for the foreseeable future."

Unemployment figures are frighteningly high. In Spain youth unemployment currently stands at 55.7%, in Greece 58.4%, in Italy 37.8%. Even in the north of Europe, [youth unemployment](#) is a real cause for concern: in the UK, standing at 21.1% and in Sweden at 24.5% (Money Week, 2013). Yet unemployment is a very selective measure which fails to capture the number of young people, estimated at 30%, who are forced to work fewer hours than they wish.

'Young people, the economic crisis and its aftermath: temporary episode or new reality?' argues that the situation faced by young people today is not explained by a temporary downturn in demand: the evidence points towards a future in which job insecurity becomes a defining feature of life for young people in the new economy.

**More information:** [andyfurlong.com/Resources.php](http://andyfurlong.com/Resources.php)

Provided by University of Glasgow

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