

June 10, 2014

The greatest mistake in the Bergdahl trade was elevating the Taliban. We start with some items to remind us of the true nature of these antediluvian misogynists. [The Spectator, UK](#) witnesses a stoning.

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*Over in Pakistan last week, the stoning to death of Farzana Parveen, married and pregnant, wasn't the result of a formal legal indictment even though it was taking place in the open space in front of the High Court in Lahore, that most sophisticated of Pakistan's cities. It was done, it seems, mostly by her own family at the behest of her father, who regarded as adultery his daughter's marriage to a man other than the one he had chosen. Here the police didn't participate in the stone-throwing, but just stood and watched, together with a chance assembly of lawyers and passers-by.*

*The act of stoning, while not actually lawful in Pakistan, was done in what is called a 'climate of impunity' in the rigorous Islamic tradition of daughters marrying who they're told to, and in the light of the awareness of several hundred other such killings in Pakistan every year going unpunished.*

...

We go back a few years to a [NY Times](#) article on the 2012 reemergence of stoning in Afghanistan as the Taliban regained power. We can say this president made the world safe for women to be stoned again.

*KABUL, Afghanistan — The [Taliban](#) on Sunday ordered their first public executions by stoning since their fall from power nine years ago, killing a young couple who had eloped, according to Afghan officials and a witness.*

*The punishment was carried out by hundreds of the victims' neighbors in a village in northern Kunduz Province, according to Nadir Khan, 40, a local farmer and Taliban sympathizer, who was interviewed by telephone. Even family members were involved, both in the stoning and in tricking the couple into returning after they had fled.*

*Mr. Khan said that as a Taliban mullah prepared to read the judgment of a religious court, the lovers, a 25-year-old man named Khayyam and a 19-year-old woman named Siddiqa, defiantly confessed in public to their relationship. "They said, 'We love each other no matter what happens,'" Mr. Khan said.*

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*the country. In recent years, Taliban officials have sought to play down their bloody punishments of the past, as they concentrated on building up popular support. ...*

FrontPage posts on the poisoning of schoolgirls by the Taliban. This is another item from two years ago, but it is illustrative of fact we have known for a long time about the nature of these people. The president won't negotiate with Republicans. Perhaps he can only relate to men like his father.

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*The afflicted girls — all of whom suffered severe nausea, headaches, and dizziness — had become poisoned after drinking contaminated water from jugs in their classrooms at their high school in Afghanistan's northern province of Takhar. Many of the students were taken to a local hospital where some were listed in critical condition.*

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*... Time magazine focused widespread indignation on Afghanistan recently by putting on its cover a picture of an 18-year-old woman from Oruzgan Province whose nose and ears were cut off by her Taliban husband after she had fled her child marriage to him.*

*Amnesty International condemned the latest stonings, calling them the first such executions since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. "The Taliban and other insurgent groups are growing increasingly brutal in their abuses against Afghans," said Sam Zarifi, an Amnesty International official.*

Time for a look at last week's job report. James Pethokoukis is first.

*... Thanks to 217,000 net new jobs created in May, US employment is now at an all-time peak. All the 9 million jobs lost during the Great Recession have been recovered. ...*

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*More context: the share of adult Americans with any sort of job — what I like to call the employment rate — was 58.9% last month vs. a prerecession peak of 63.4%. And as the Wall Street Journal notes, "Since the economy emerged from recession five years ago, wage gains have barely managed to keep ahead of inflation." ...*

The economics editor from Nate Silver's blog, [FiveThirtyEight](#), has ten charts. *Six-and-a-half years after the Great Recession began — and five years after it officially ended — the U.S. has finally surpassed its precrisis employment peak. But the job market is far from fully healed.*

*U.S. employers added 217,000 jobs in May, bringing total non-farm employment to 138.5 million — 113,000 more than the 138.4 million jobs that existed in December 2007, the first month of the recession. It took 76 months to regain the nearly 9 million jobs lost in the recession, making this by far the slowest jobs recovery since World War II. (If any of this sounds familiar, you're right: Private-sector employment returned to its prerecession peak in March.)*

*Getting back to square one isn't much to celebrate, however. There are more than 6 million more working-age Americans today than when the recession began. Adjusting for population growth, we're still millions of jobs short of where we were 6½ years ago — and have seen hardly any jobs recovery. ...*

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**Spectator, UK**

**[Witness to a stoning](#)**

***A tipper truck dumped heaps of red sandstone for those without sin to fling at the women under their shrouds***

by Tom Stacey



Attending public executions, whether beheadings or stonings, is not my predilection, yet one does come across them in the course of life in Arabia and Pakistan. Beheading and stoning are the accepted penalties for a range of presumed offences in much of the Muslim world, and the all-male crowd — especially the old men — push and shove outside Riyadh's main mosque after Friday morning prayer for a better view of offenders losing their heads by the ceremonial sword. The seeping cadavers and their heads are left on the tarmac pour encourager les autres.

Further east, outside a much smaller mosque in the desert near Hofuf, the miscreants were two women making their living by harlotry, and hence adulterers, due to be judicially stoned after the amplified rant from the imam. The mosque had been selected as a venue I think because it had no concrete forecourt. It had therefore been possible to scoop mechanically two neat holes in the ground, each lined with an open-topped oil drum.

Let me quote from my notes. It was again a Friday, the holy day. 'There must have been 60 or 70 cars and a couple of hundred people, some perched on the car bonnets, and four or five police cars, blue and white, and a police van with a pulsing beacon beyond the crowd. A proclamation was now being read out, flat and deadly, the reader having difficulty with a name. The head and shoulders of one binte were already sticking out of one of the holes. Just then two policemen were lifting the other from where the van was and inserting her, carefully, into the other hole. She was trussed in some manner, arms down the side of her, in leg-irons probably.

'I couldn't spot where the first rock came from — maybe from the mutaween, the religious police, "upholders of virtue and stoppers of sin", identifiable by their beards. The uniformed police, lined up, were busy throwing rocks. A tipper truck had brought up a load of Type Two aggregate of red sandstone from the road-building being undertaken by my companion's construction company, and dumped in two heaps for those without sin to fling at the women under their shrouds. The targets could not of course duck down into their holes: they were too narrow.'

Well, that was and is the law out there, and the practice. Stoning for adultery was Moses' law too, but the Jews haven't practised it for a couple of millennia or so, as far as I know, just as we have given up burning our apostates. The merit of stoning, like the firing squad, is that one can't ascribe the killing to a given individual.

Over in Pakistan last week, the stoning to death of Farzana Parveen, married and pregnant, wasn't the result of a formal legal indictment even though it was taking place in the open space in front of the High Court in Lahore, that most sophisticated of Pakistan's cities. It was done, it seems, mostly by her own family at the behest of her father, who regarded as adultery his daughter's marriage to a man other than the one he had chosen. Here the police didn't participate in the stone-throwing, but just stood and watched, together with a chance assembly of lawyers and passers-by.

The act of stoning, while not actually lawful in Pakistan, was done in what is called a 'climate of impunity' in the rigorous Islamic tradition of daughters marrying who they're told to, and in the light of the awareness of several hundred other such killings in Pakistan every year going unpunished.

This time, however, someone took a smartphone clip of what was going on; the wide world saw it, and gulped. After a pause of days, and international outcry, the Prime Minister of Pakistan sniffed his disapproval, and one or two family members have since been taken into custody.

But in truth the western world's railings against honour killings, death sentences for apostates, murderous fatwas, clitorrectomy, Islamism in all its manifestations from al-Qa'eda to Boko Haram, are virtually nowhere echoed in the Islamic world itself. Good citizens of Muslim allegiance and vaguely moderating organisations like the Muslim Council of Britain are called in to the media microphones to distance 'true' Islam from the categories of barbarism. But they are a tiny western-dwelling elite, living in a part of the world informed for a couple of thousand years by the values of Hellenism and Judaeo-Christianity. They are profoundly alien to the Muslim world.

Out there, no hierarchies exist beyond the (Shiite) ayatollahs of Iran to speak for 'Islam'. There are no essentially spiritual leaders acknowledged, no popes or Canterbury archbishops, moderators, orthodox patriarchs and the like to speak comparably for the bodies of Muslim adherents, or collectively guide them. For there is today no perceptible yeast of contemporary Islamic theology, no debate, and hence no effective mechanism of change and evolution so as to allow this religion to play a coherent part in the world as it is today. Debate is not allowed, and has not been allowed for centuries.

The phenomenon of Islam, meaning submission, deriving from Bedouin-adapted half-heard Hebrew stories, spread its rule by sword and skill with astonishing rapidity across the southern Mediterranean littoral and Levant, from southern Spain to Baghdad, from the 7th century ad. It was at that time tolerant and inclusive of the cultures and faiths it overran, and rich in ideas, techniques, art and learning. But Islam was undermined in the Islamic Caliphate in Baghdad when the tolerant, outreaching mutazilim regime under the caliph al-Mamun was swept aside by the Hanbali diehards and their fellow-travellers. This was as early as the 9th century. By 848 ad, progressive Islam was doomed.

Today in its heartland, Sufism is outlawed together with satellite dishes; women are deemed created too inadequate to drive a car; rote-parroting of the Koran is the route to understanding eternal truth; and the Creator of the Universe is deemed to judge righteousness by what a person eats or drinks. You do not think for yourself. Obscurantism rules.

Islam knows it is under siege by an unconquerable and incomprehensible prevailing global zeitgeist. When Islam burns churches in Alexandria, Baghdad, or Pakistan, it is because it fears them.

Here is my cue to declare that among my dearest friends I number certain Muslims. But either they are Sufis, with whom I share soul, or we stick to the secular in our range of thought. Secularity or spiritual insight may prove the ultimate keys.

When I picked up that sight on screen of Farzana's death by stoning on 27 May, my mind went at once to the martyrdom by the same method of Stephen, celebrated in the Christian calendar, at the hands of diehard Jewry for proclaiming their recently crucified countryman, Jesus, the Messiah. That mob then laid their coats at the feet of a young zealot named Saul, who approved the killing.

Saul was to become that Paul to whom we owe so much and who was himself to be martyred. And I venture that the greater world's reconciliation with Islam will be achieved in truth only by that same route taken by the figure at the scene of St Stephen's death: by love, example, eternal patience, and I daresay conversion and the grace of God.

**NY Times**

## **In Bold Display, Taliban Order Stoning Deaths**

by Rod Nordland

KABUL, Afghanistan — The [Taliban](#) on Sunday ordered their first public executions by stoning since their fall from power nine years ago, killing a young couple who had eloped, according to Afghan officials and a witness.

The punishment was carried out by hundreds of the victims' neighbors in a village in northern Kunduz Province, according to Nadir Khan, 40, a local farmer and Taliban sympathizer, who was interviewed by telephone. Even family members were involved, both in the stoning and in tricking the couple into returning after they had fled.

Mr. Khan said that as a Taliban mullah prepared to read the judgment of a religious court, the lovers, a 25-year-old man named Khayyam and a 19-year-old woman named Siddiqa, defiantly confessed in public to their relationship. "They said, 'We love each other no matter what happens,'" Mr. Khan said.

The executions were the latest in a series of cases where the Taliban have imposed their harsh version of Shariah law for social crimes, reminiscent of their behavior during their decade of ruling the country. In recent years, Taliban officials have sought to play down their bloody punishments of the past, as they concentrated on building up popular support.

"We see it as a sign of a new confidence on the part of the Taliban in the application of their rules, like they did in the '90s," said Nader Nadery, a senior commissioner on [the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission](#). "We do see it as a trend. They're showing more strength in recent months, not just in attacks, but including their own way of implementing laws, arbitrary and extrajudicial killings."

The stoning deaths, along with similarly brazen attacks in northern [Afghanistan](#), were also a sign of growing Taliban strength in parts of the country where, until recently, they had been weak or absent. In their home regions in southern Afghanistan, Mr. Nadery said, the Taliban have already been cracking down.

"We've seen a big increase in intimidation of women and more strict rules on women," he said.

Perhaps most worrisome were signs of support for the action from mainstream religious authorities in Afghanistan. The head of the Ulema Council in Kunduz Province, Mawlawi Abdul Yaqub, interviewed by telephone, said Monday that stoning to death was the appropriate punishment for an illegal sexual relationship, although he declined to give his view on this particular case. An Ulema Council is a body of Islamic clerics with religious authority in a region.

And less than a week earlier, the national Ulema Council brought together 350 religious scholars in a meeting with government religious officials, who issued a joint statement on Aug. 10 calling for more punishment under Shariah law, apparently referring to stoning, amputations and lashings.

Failure to carry out such "Islamic provisions," the council statement said, was hindering the peace process and encouraging crime.

The controversy could have implications for efforts by Afghan officials to reconcile with Taliban leaders and draw them into power-sharing talks.

Afghan officials, supported by Western countries, have insisted that Taliban leaders would have to accept the Afghan Constitution, which guarantees women's rights, and not expect a return to Shariah law.

The stoning deaths were confirmed by Afghan officials in the area on Monday. Mahbubullah Sayedi, a spokesman for the Kunduz governor's office, condemned the executions, and said there was ample provision in Afghan law for prosecuting someone if they were accused of adultery or other social crimes.

"We have courts here, and we can solve such cases through our judicial organizations," he said. "This act is against human rights and against our national Constitution."

The couple eloped when the man was unable to persuade family members to allow him to marry the young woman. She was engaged to marry a relative of her lover, but was unwilling to do so, according to Mr. Khan.

Mohammed Ayub, the governor of nearby Imam Sahib district, also confirmed the stoning deaths, which took place in the local bazaar in Mullah Quli village, in Archi district, a remote corner of Kunduz Province close to Tajikistan.

The couple eloped to Kunar Province, in eastern Afghanistan, staying with distant relatives, but family members persuaded them to return to their village, promising to allow them to marry. (Afghan men are legally allowed to marry up to four wives). Once back in Kunduz, however, they were seized by the Taliban, who convened local mullahs from surrounding villages for a religious court.

After the Taliban proclaimed the sentence, Siddiqa, dressed in the head-to-toe Afghan [burqa](#), and Khayyam, who had a wife and two young children, were encircled by the male-only crowd in the bazaar. Taliban activists began stoning them first, then villagers joined in until they killed first Siddiqa and then Khayyam, Mr. Khan said. No women were allowed to attend, he said.

Mr. Khan estimated that about 200 villagers participated in the executions, including Khayyam's father and brother, and Siddiqa's brother, as well as other relatives, with a larger crowd of onlookers who did not take part.

"People were very happy seeing this," Mr. Khan maintained, saying the crowd was festive and cheered during the stoning. The couple, he said, "did a bad thing."

A spokesman for the Taliban, Zabiullah Mujahid, praised the action. "We have heard about this report," he said, interviewed by cellphone. "But let me tell you that according to Shariah law, if someone commits a crime like that, we have our courts and we deal with such crimes based on Islamic law."

Mr. Nadery, from the human rights commission, pointed to a string of recent such cases of summary justice by the Taliban. In northwestern Badghis Province on Aug. 8, [a 41-year-old widow](#), who was made pregnant by a man she said promised to marry her, was convicted of fornication by a Taliban court. She was given 200 lashes with a whip and then shot to death, according to Col. Abdul Jabar, a provincial police official, who said the killing was ordered by the local Taliban commander, Mullah Yousef, in Qadis district.



President [Hamid Karzai](#)'s spokesman, Waheed Omer, said: ““President Karzai was deeply saddened and grieved when he heard that news. Nine years ago and we still see the Taliban doing events like that in Badghis.”

[Time](#) magazine focused widespread indignation on Afghanistan recently by putting on its cover a picture of an 18-year-old woman from Oruzgan Province whose nose and ears were cut off by her Taliban husband after she had fled her child marriage to him.

[Amnesty International](#) condemned the latest stonings, calling them the first such executions since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. “The Taliban and other insurgent groups are growing increasingly brutal in their abuses against Afghans,” said Sam Zarifi, an [Amnesty International](#) official.

## Frontpage

### [The Taliban's Poisoning of Afghan Schoolgirls](#)

by Frank Crimi

In a recent effort to prevent their attendance at school, the Taliban [poisoned](#) nearly 150 Afghan schoolgirls, marking just the latest atrocity in a litany of barbaric acts the Islamist terror group continues to inflict upon the women and girls of Afghanistan.

The afflicted girls — all of whom suffered severe nausea, headaches, and dizziness — had become [poisoned](#) after drinking contaminated water from jugs in their classrooms at their high school in Afghanistan's northern province of Takhar. Many of the students were taken to a local hospital where some were listed in critical condition.

Fearing retribution, some school officials were initially reluctant to assign blame to any particular group for the chemical attack, with one simply [saying](#), “This is either the work of those who are against girls' education or irresponsible armed individuals.”

However, Afghan police investigators were somewhat more [conclusive](#) stating that they “strongly suspected” a water supply truck at the girls' school had been poisoned by Taliban insurgents as “an intentional act to poison schoolgirls.”

Of course, it doesn't take too much investigative legwork to confirm Taliban culpability in crafting such a heinous plot given the terror group's historical fondness for using poison on Afghan schoolgirls.

Specifically, Afghan Education Ministry officials have stated that the Taliban was behind at least 17 poison-gas attacks on girls' schools in Afghanistan in 2010, six of which took place in the Afghan capital of Kabul.

Those 2010 attacks [included](#) poison spray being used on four girls' schools in Kanduz, attacks which hospitalized over fifty teenage girls; a gas [poisoning](#) of a girls' high school in Kabul which required the hospitalization of 46 students and nine teachers; and a poison spray [attack](#) on a girls' school in the northern province of Sar-e-Pul that hospitalized 20 students.

Now, the latest chemical poisoning in Takhar comes only weeks after Afghan President Hamid Karzai at a ceremony marking the start of Afghanistan's school year had [urged](#) insurgent Islamist



groups not to attack teachers and school children, saying that the country could only develop through the “spread of education.”

For Afghan girls, those educational opportunities have been growing significantly since the ouster of the Taliban from power in 2001 under whose rule women and girls were banned from going to school on the grounds that it was un-Islamic.

Instead, the Taliban subjected Afghan women to a terrifying Sharia nightmare that, among other things, forbade them from working outside the home or even leaving their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative. Failure to abide by these restrictions [resulted](#) in public whippings, beatings or stoning.

However, once freed from the Taliban yoke, the enactment of a national Afghan campaign to expand educational opportunities for women has driven school [enrollment](#) from several thousand girls in 2002 to more than 2.7 million girls in 2011.

As Farooq Wardak, Afghanistan’s Education Minister, has [noted](#), “During the Taliban era the percentage of girls of the one million students that we had was 0 percent. The percentage of female teachers was 0 percent. Today 38 percent of our students and 30 percent of our teachers are female.”

Not surprisingly, those educational successes have also coincided with a decade of some remarkable progress made by Afghan women in other spheres, including the rise of women’s advocacy groups; election to government office; and training as military pilots and Olympic athletes.

Unfortunately, their incremental educational gains are being violently jeopardized by an unrelenting Taliban campaign of terror, a campaign which has subjected Afghan females to acid attacks and shootings; the destruction of their schools through arson, rocket and mortar attacks; and the killing of their teachers.

Examples of that campaign of violence includes ten Taliban fighters [arrested](#) for squirting [acid](#) onto 15 girls who were walking to school in the province of Kandahar, an assault which caused severe burns and disfigurement to many of the girls; Taliban gunmen beheading the headmaster of a girls’ school in Kabul; and insurgents [destroying](#) over 240 girls’ schools throughout the country.

Of course, it should be noted that while the Taliban are the most overtly lethal opponents of educational opportunities for Afghan women, they have been abetted in their efforts by the nodding assistance of Muslim men in the region who more often than not treat women little better than livestock.

As Farooq Wardak has [acknowledged](#), historical opposition to schooling for girls extends beyond the Taliban to the “deepest pockets” of Afghan society, a patriarchal society that remains heavily stacked against Afghan women and girls.

For example, Afghan females are subjected to the widespread and socially accepted practice of forced child marriage; honor killings; and the traditional Afghan practice known as “baad,” whereupon women are given away to pay family debts or settle disputes.

Not unexpectedly, the result of these and other abuses has made Afghanistan one of the world’s most dangerous and unforgiving places for women, where the life expectancy of an Afghan woman

is just 44 years, where 31 percent suffer from physical violence and another 30 percent suffer from psychological trauma.

Now, a sustained terror campaign by the Taliban against their burgeoning educational aspirations threatens to add to those nightmarish woes.

More disturbingly, it also comes as US, Afghan government officials and the Taliban have been engaged for several months in an effort to initiate peace talks that could lead to the Islamists playing a role in the Afghan government once the American-led Coalition forces completely withdraw from the country by the end of 2014.

While the Taliban suspended the peace talks in March and instead have reignited a spring offensive — highlighted by well-orchestrated attacks on Kabul and three provincial capitals in eastern Afghanistan — the haunting specter of its potential return to power is cause for fear among Afghan women.

As Manizha Naderi, who heads the civil rights group Women for Afghan Women recently [said](#), “If there are negotiations with the Taliban, women’s rights will be the first to go, and women will be forced to stay at home all over again,” adding, “Dark days are in Afghanistan’s future.”

Unfortunately for Afghan schoolgirls, those dark days are already here.

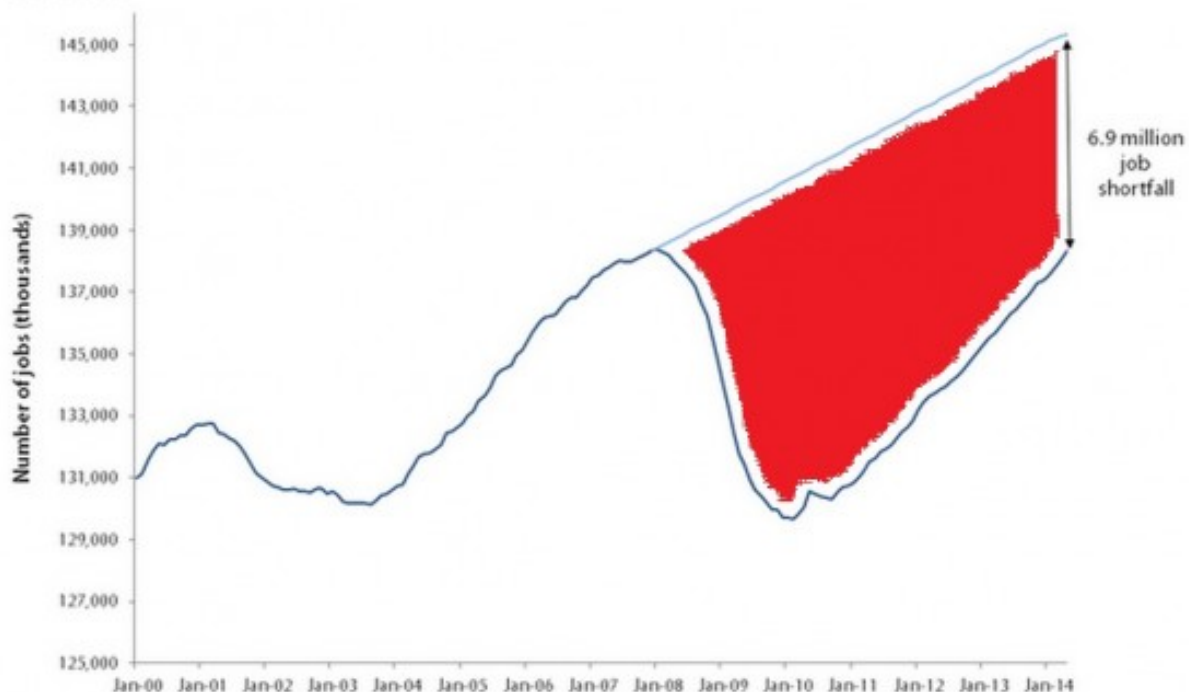
## American.com

### [May Jobs report | America’s leftovers: 7 million missing workers](#)

by James Pethokoukis

#### Recession has left a job shortfall of nearly 7million

Payroll employment and the number of jobs needed to keep up with the growth in the potential labor force, 2000–2014

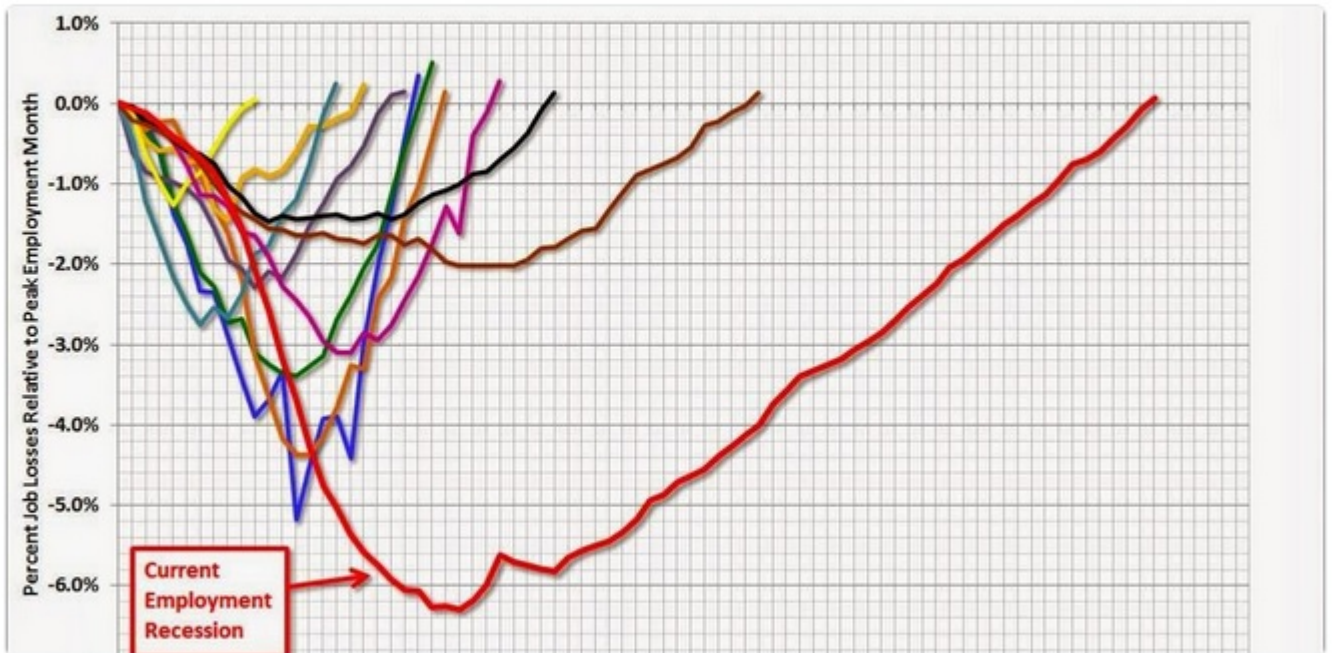


Thanks to 217,000 net new jobs created in May, US employment is now at an all-time peak. All the 9 million jobs lost during the Great Recession have been recovered. This news led [economist Justin Wolfers](#) to exuberantly tweet the following analysis and chart (show relative jobs losses vs. peak employment):



Justin Wolfers @JustinWolfers · 49m

We're back, baby.



182

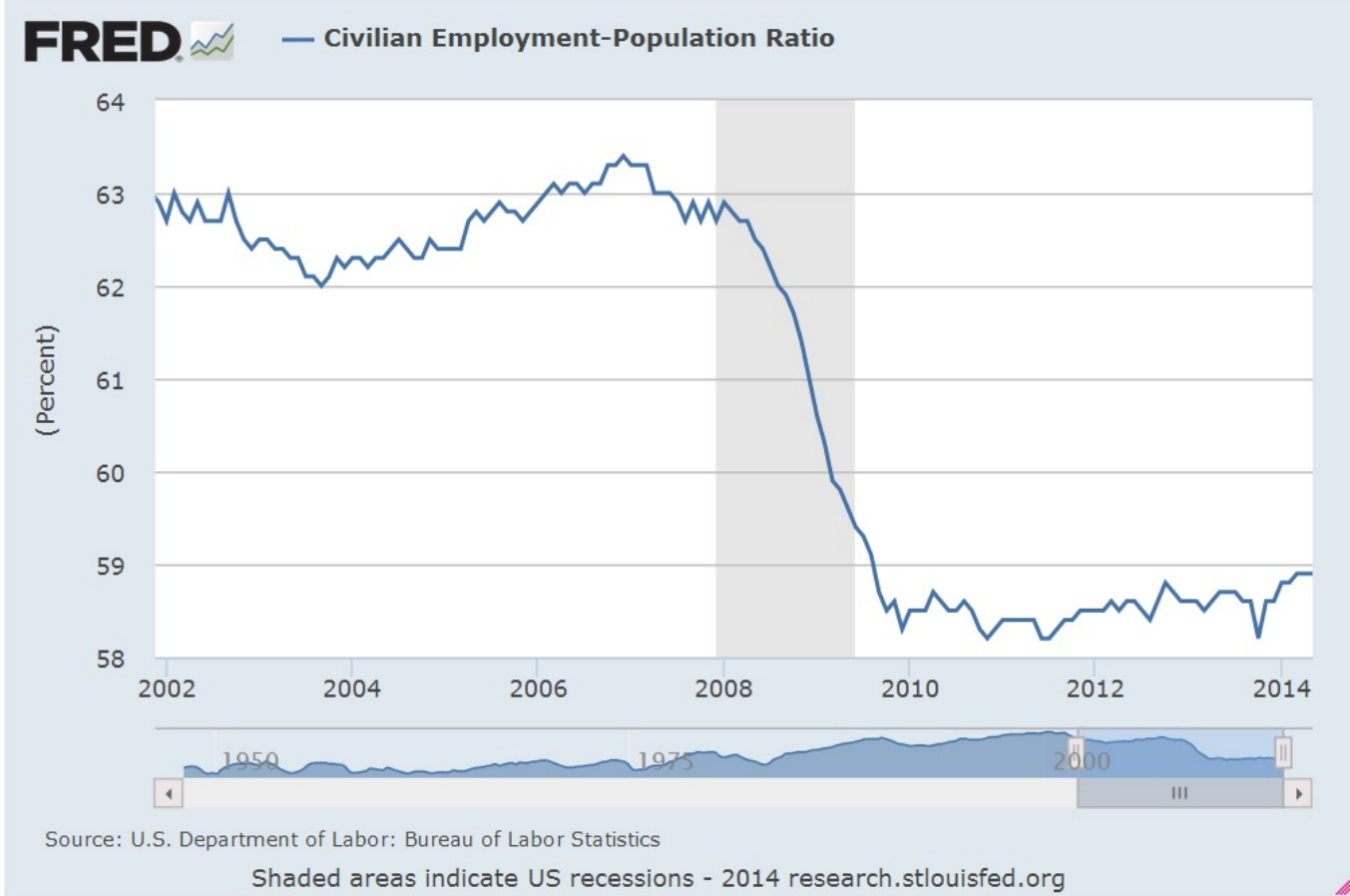
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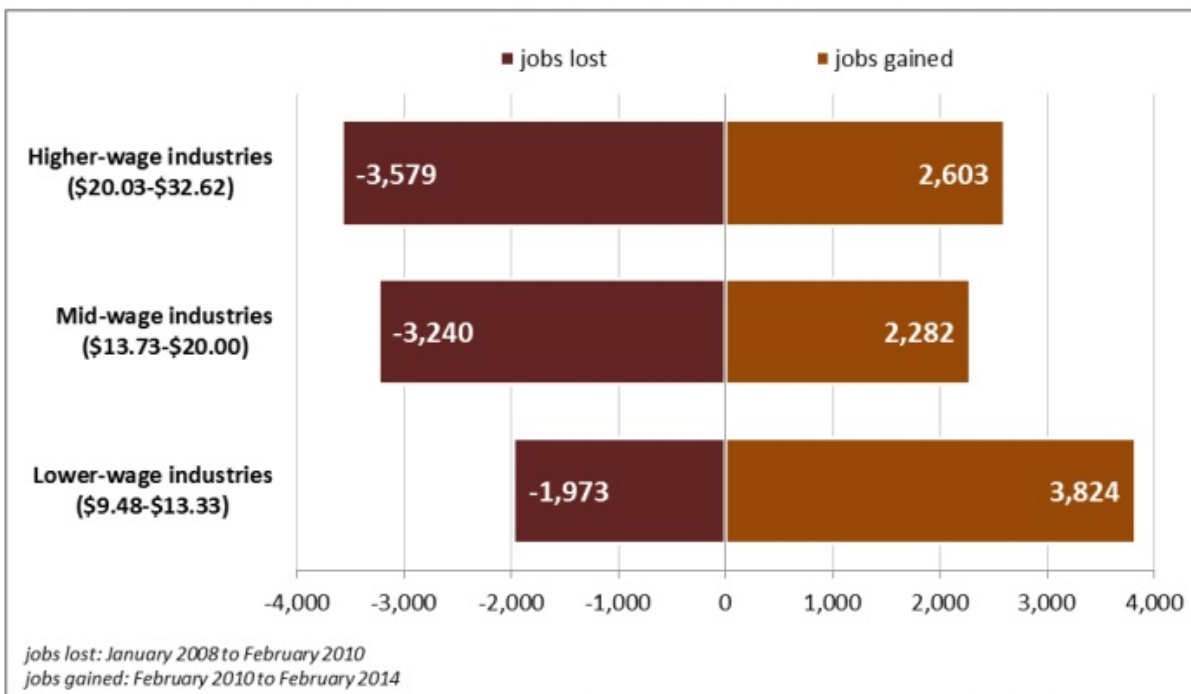
But while the milestone is certainly worth noting, its importance pales next to the current state of the “jobs gap.” The US economy now has 113,000 more jobs than in December 2007, but the working-age population today is 16 million larger. When you factor in population growth, [as the Economic Policy Institute has](#), you find the recession has left a remaining shortfall of nearly 7 million jobs or “missing workers.” (See chart at top).

More context: the share of adult Americans with any sort of job — what I like to call the employment rate — was 58.9% last month vs. a prerecession peak of 63.4%. And as the Wall Street Journal notes, “Since the economy emerged from recession five years ago, wage gains have barely managed to keep ahead of inflation.”



And, of course, the mix of jobs during the recovery has meant middle-wage has been replaced by low wage:

**Net Change in Private Sector Employment (in thousands)**



Americans should be happy the economy is growing and adding jobs. A glacial recovery is better than nothing — or whatever you want to call what the eurozone is suffering through right now. But they shouldn't be satisfied or accept the "new normal" as the best that can reasonably be expected. Because it isn't. Government should be slashing business taxes, [removing barriers to startups](#), and [targeting special policies for the long-term jobless](#). And the Federal Reserve should be [clearly targeting total spending in the economy](#). America's workers deserve better, and as soon as possible.

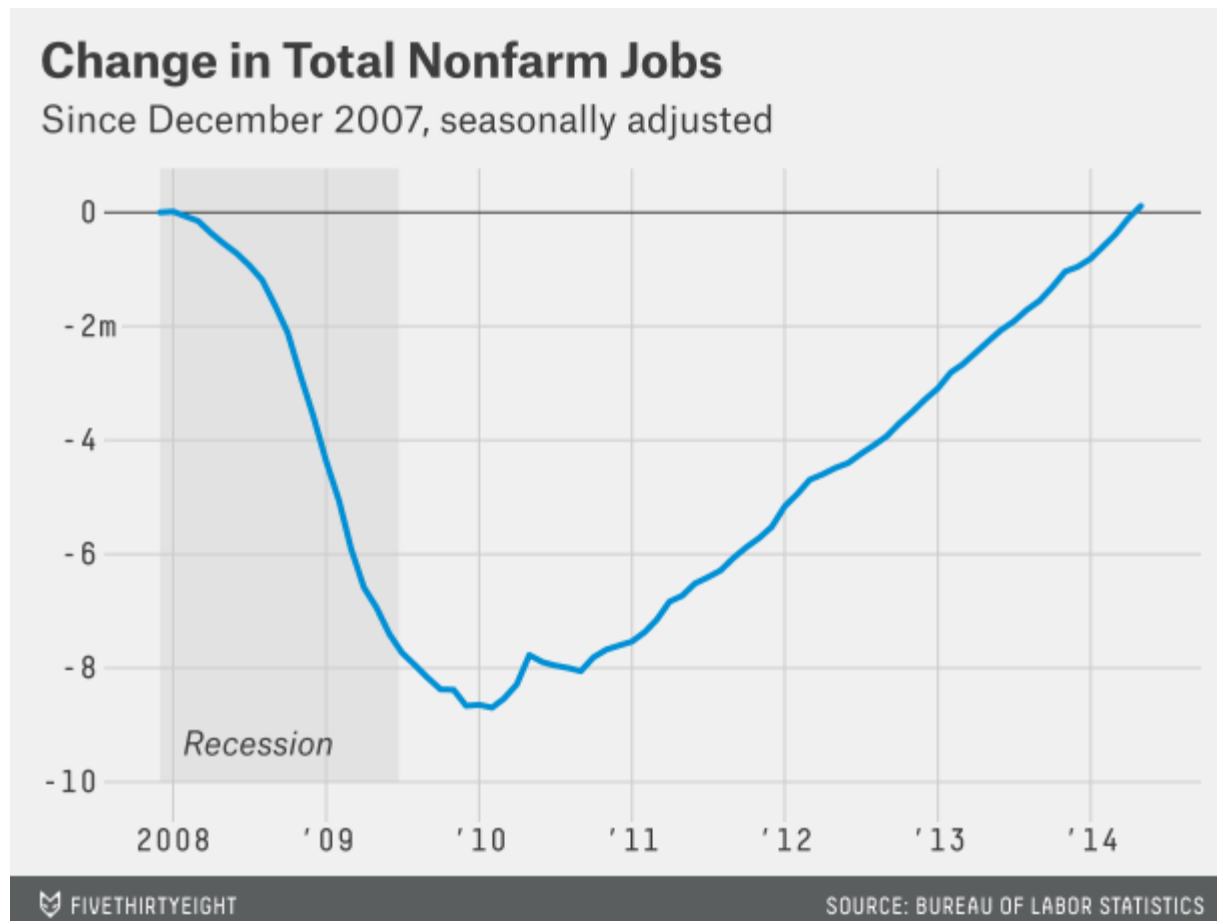
## Five Thirty Eight

### [The Job Market's Five-Year Recovery in 10 Charts](#)

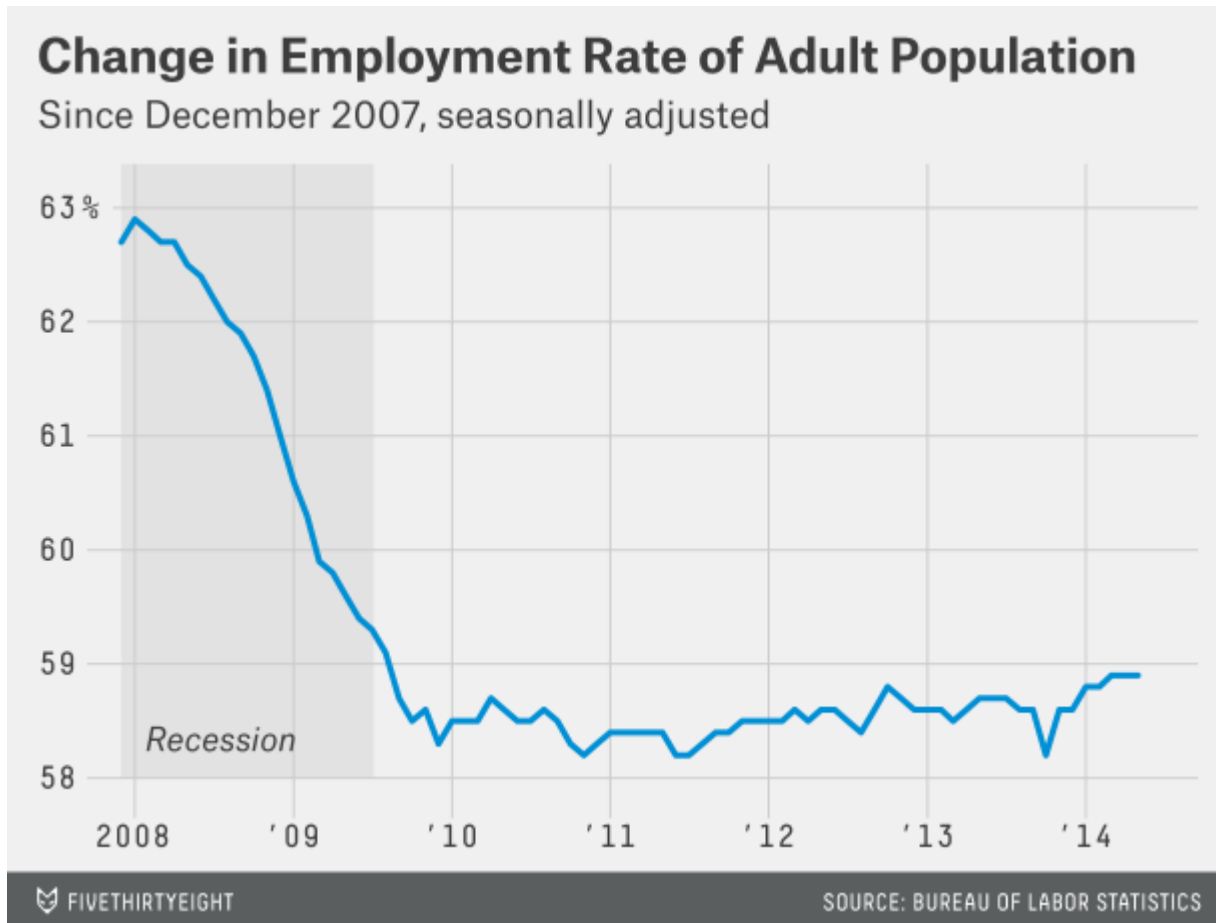
by Ben Casselman

Six-and-a-half years after the Great Recession began — and five years after it [officially](#) ended — the U.S. has finally surpassed its precrisis employment peak. But the job market is far from fully healed.

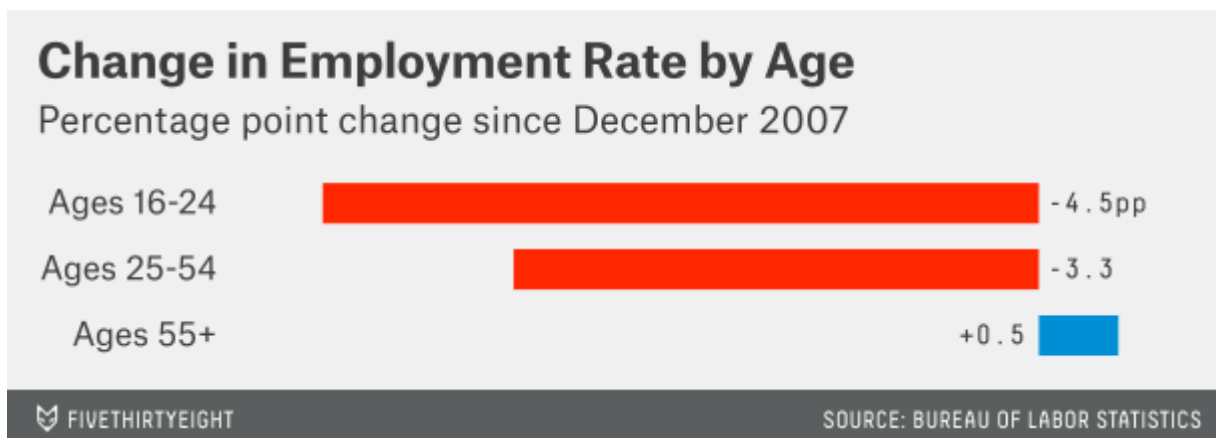
U.S. employers added 217,000 jobs in May, bringing total non-farm employment to 138.5 million — 113,000 more than the 138.4 million jobs that existed in December 2007, the first month of the recession. It took 76 months to regain the nearly 9 million jobs lost in the recession, making this [by far the slowest jobs recovery](#) since World War II.<sup>1</sup> (If any of this sounds familiar, you're right: Private-sector employment [returned to its prerecession peak](#) in March.)



Getting back to square one isn't much to celebrate, however. There are more than 6 million more working-age Americans<sup>2</sup> today than when the recession began. Adjusting for population growth, we're still [millions of jobs short](#) of where we were 6½ years ago — and have seen hardly any jobs recovery.<sup>3</sup>



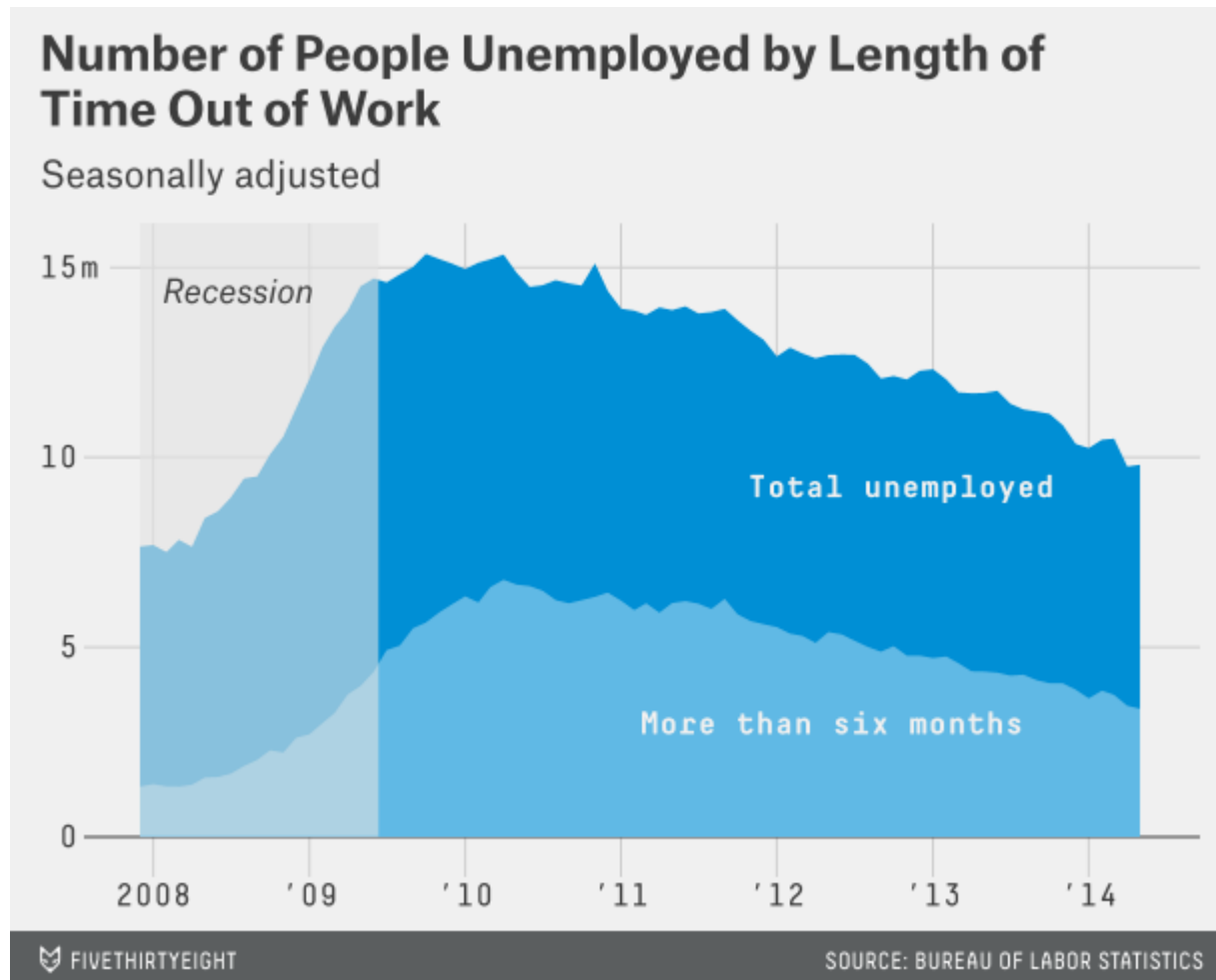
That chart makes things look worse than they are. The aging of the population would have [pushed down the overall employment rate](#) even without the recession. But even controlling for demographics, the trend has been grim. Young people have been hit especially hard, but so-call prime-age workers — those between ages 25 and 54 — have also seen a big drop in their rate of employment since the recession began. Older workers, meanwhile, have held onto jobs.<sup>4</sup>



Moreover, while employment has, at last, returned to precrisis levels, unemployment isn't even close. There are still nearly 10 million unemployed workers in the U.S., more than a third of whom



have been out of work for more than six months. The good news is that the ranks of the unemployed are no longer growing: Layoffs are [back to normal](#), and short-term unemployment has returned to its prerecession level. But long-term unemployment remains a crisis: There are 2 million more long-term jobseekers today than when the recession began. What's worse, their prospects have [hardly improved in the recovery](#): Barely one in 10 find jobs each month, and few of those jobs prove stable.

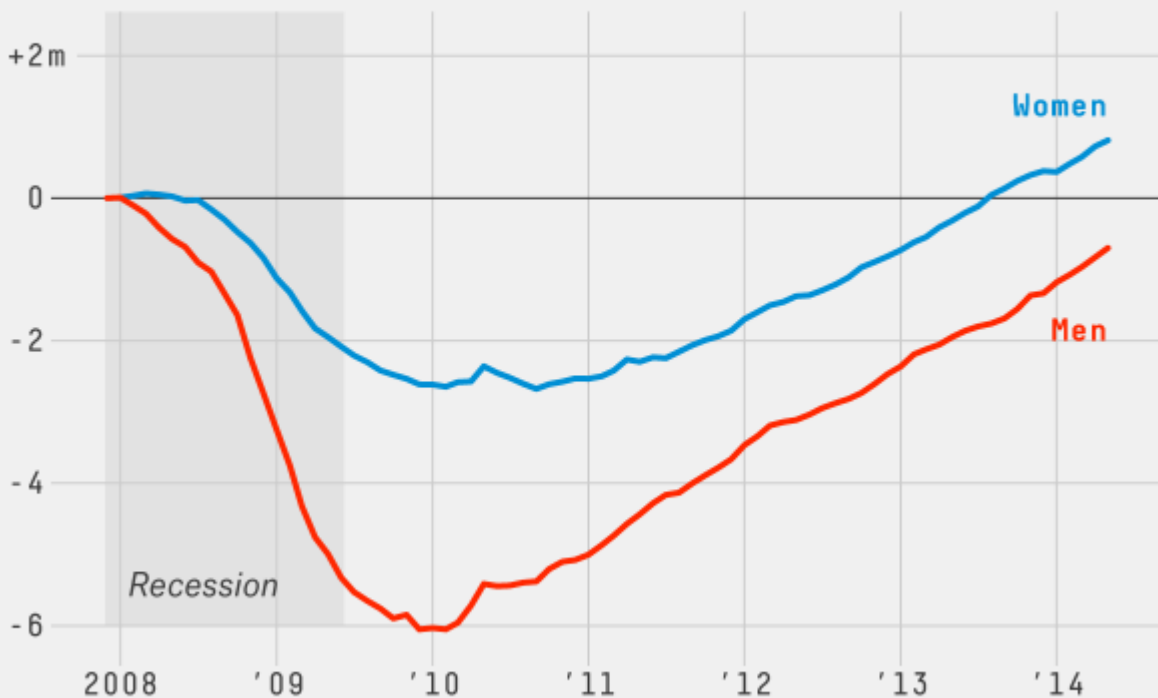


The recession and slow recovery have been harder on some groups than on others. Women fared better than men in terms of employment, in part because they were less likely to work in sectors such as construction and manufacturing that were particularly hard-hit in the downturn. Men have experienced a stronger rebound in the recovery, but only slightly. As a result, women returned to prerecession levels of employment last summer, while men remain hundreds of thousands of jobs in the hole.



## Change in Number of Jobs For Men And Women

Since December 2007, seasonally adjusted



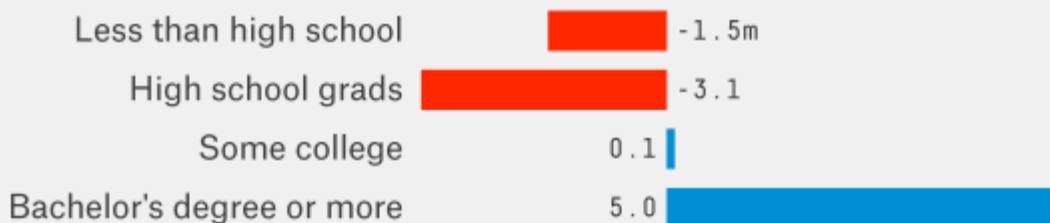
FIVETHIRTYEIGHT

SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Similarly, better-educated workers were less likely to lose their jobs in the recession and have regained them more quickly in the recovery. In fact, the least-educated workers didn't even start regaining jobs until late 2012.<sup>5</sup>

## Change in Number of People Employed by Education Level

Since December 2007, ages 25 and up



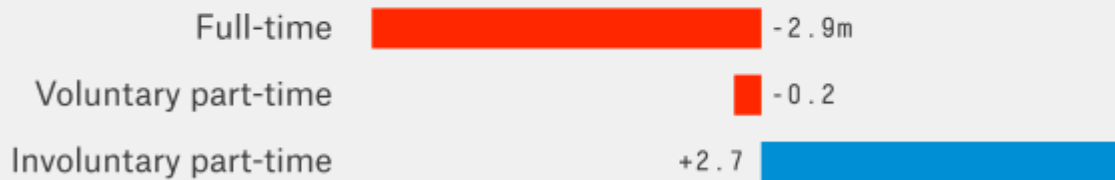
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SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Even those who do find jobs aren't necessarily finding good ones. More than 7 million Americans are stuck in part-time jobs because they can't find full-time work. Part-time employment has trended down in the recovery: Over the past year, full-time employment is up by 2.4 million, and part-time employment is down by 500,000. But part-time employment remains elevated by historical standards.

## Change in Number of People Employed by Usual Hours Worked

Since December 2007



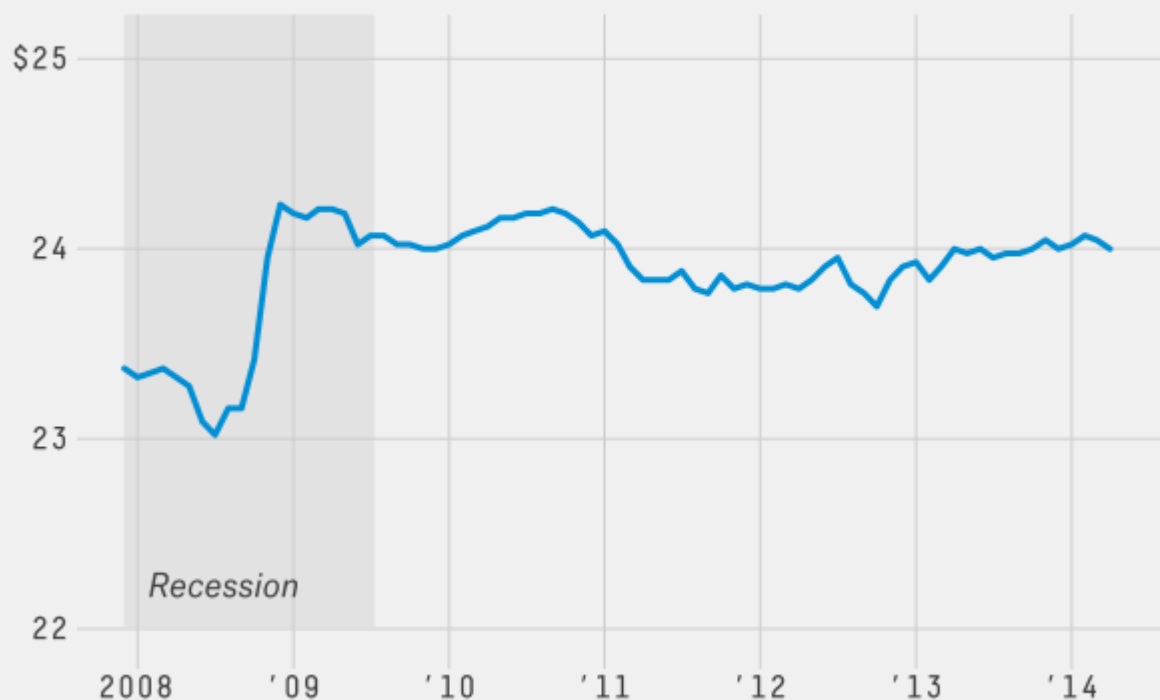
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SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Earnings, meanwhile, have been stagnant. In fact, after adjusting for inflation, average hourly wages are lower now than when the recession ended. Weekly wages haven't done much better, in part because companies aren't increasing employees' hours.<sup>6</sup>

## Average Hourly Earnings

Adjusted for inflation



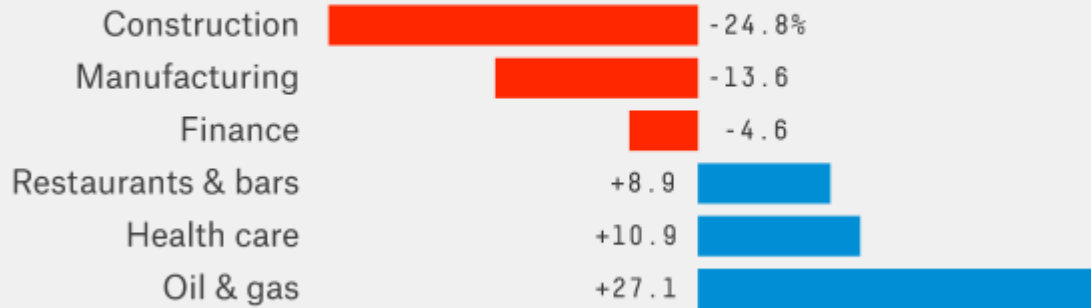
FIVETHIRTYEIGHT

SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

One reason that wages and hours have been so slow to rebound is that many of the jobs that have been added in recent years have been in industries like retail and food-service, which employ lots of part-timers and low-wage workers. Meanwhile, [industries that provide middle-class jobs](#), such as construction and manufacturing, have been slow to recover. There are exceptions. Health care has been a consistent driver of job growth in both the recession and recovery. The oil and gas sector has seen huge gains due to the fracking boom, although it makes up only a tiny fraction of overall employment.

## Change in Employment by Selected Industry

Since December 2007



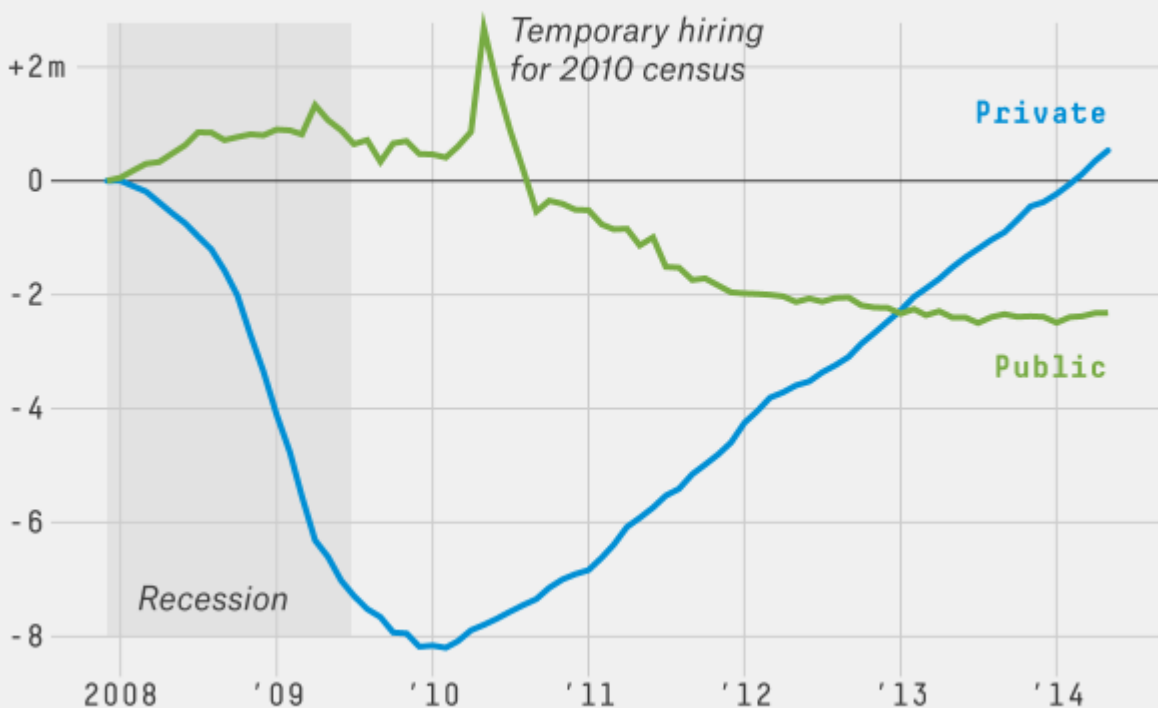
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SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

One reason the recovery has been so weak is that the government, which added jobs in the recession, cut them during the recovery, even as the private sector was struggling to gain momentum. The private sector has added nearly 200,000 jobs per month on average over the past three years, but the government has cut more than 7,000 jobs per month over the same period.

## Change in Public vs. Private Employment

Since December 2007, seasonally adjusted



FIVETHIRTYEIGHT

SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

### Footnotes

1. Payrolls actually rose by 15,000 in January 2008 before beginning their long swoon. The 76-month count is based on that peak. For the rest of this article, I will compare employment

- and other indicators to their level in December 2007, the official start of the recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research. [^](#)
2. Defined in this case as Americans between ages 16 and 64. [^](#)
  3. A technical note: As regular readers know, most U.S. jobs data comes from two separate surveys, one of households (the [Current Population Survey](#), known as the “household survey”) and one of businesses (the [Current Employment Statistics](#) program, or “establishment survey”). The two surveys measure employment slightly differently. The larger, generally more reliable establishment survey counts actual jobs, while the smaller household survey counts people who *have* jobs. So a person who has two jobs counts as one employed person in the household survey, but as two jobs in the establishment survey. The establishment survey also excludes certain types of jobs (agricultural jobs, domestic work and certain kinds of self-employment) that are included in the household survey. The overall trends, however, match closely over the long term. [^](#)
  4. Older Americans are still much less likely to work than their younger counterparts. They’re just working longer than they used to. [^](#)
  5. This dynamic is partly due to the increasing education of the U.S. workforce: There are simply fewer high-school dropouts today than there were six years ago, while the number of college graduates has grown. But those trends don’t come close to accounting for the entire disparity in post-recession employment. [^](#)
  6. The odd spike in wages in late 2008 is due to the fact that inflation briefly turned negative — that is, prices fell — which makes inflation-adjusted wages jump higher. At the same time, many of the people who lost their jobs, especially in the early stages of the recession, were low-wage workers; when people at the bottom of the earnings scale are laid off, it makes average wages for the remaining workers look higher. [^](#)

*Ben Casselman is FiveThirtyEight’s chief economics writer.*

The Taliban Stones Young Couple to Death  
Another Day in the 16th Century





If we make guns illegal, then nobody will get shot anymore. That's how we stopped everybody from doing drugs





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