

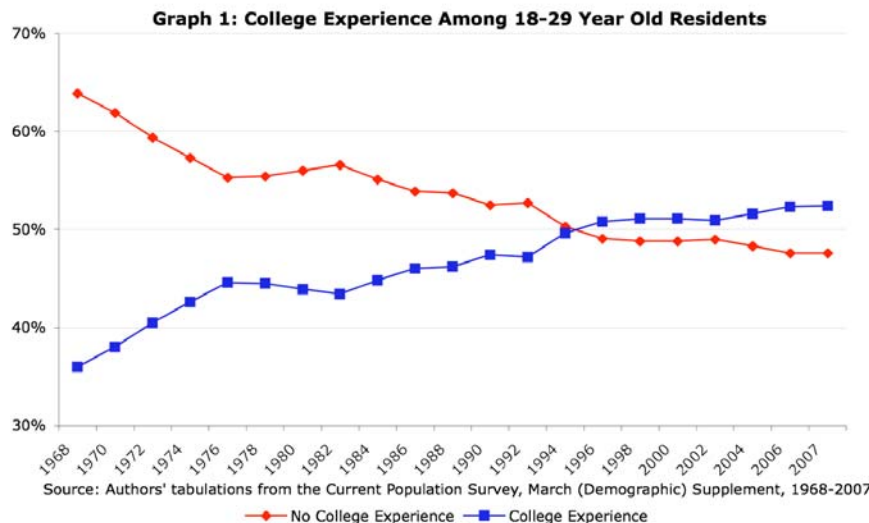
## Youth Demographics - Youth with No College Experience

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This fact sheet focuses on demographic trends of young people in the United States who have no college experience, for the years between 1968 and 2007.

In the United States, the number of young people between the ages of 18 and 29 who have no experience with college roughly equals the number of young people with college experience.<sup>2</sup> We define college attendance broadly, to include even one semester at a community college or technical school. In 2007, 48% of people between the ages of 18 and 29 had no college experience. There are more youth today with college experience than there were in the late 1960's. See Graph 1.

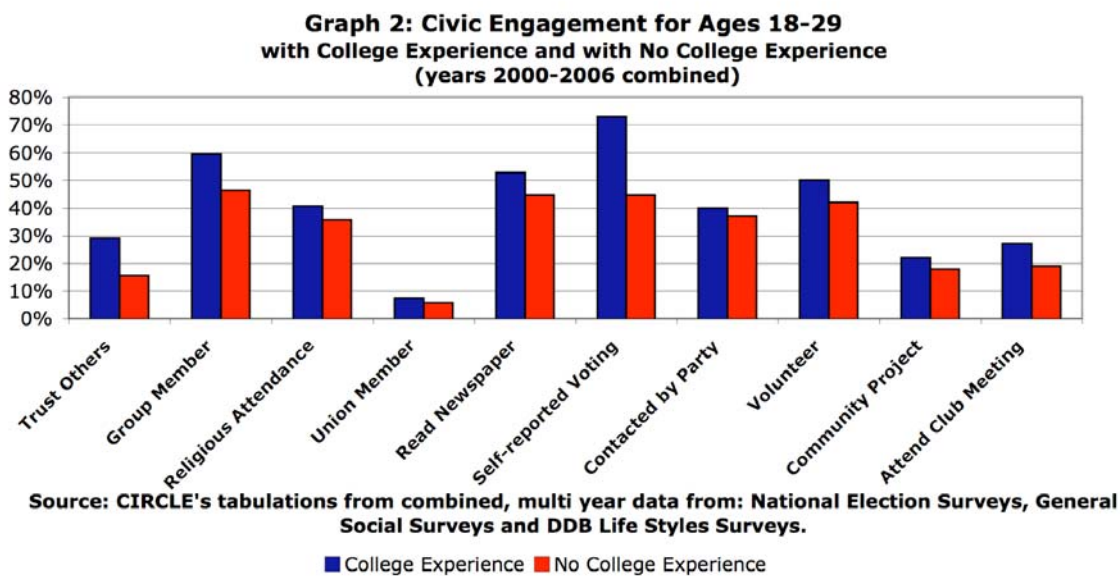


Youth with no college experience consistently demonstrate lower rates of civic engagement than their peers with college experience.<sup>3</sup> The recent 2008 election provides an example of this gap. In the Presidential primaries and caucuses, young people who had college experience were 18 percentage points more likely to vote

than their counterparts with no college experience (25% and 7%, respectively).<sup>4</sup> In the general election 70% of young people who voted had at least some college experience.<sup>5</sup>

As Graph 2 shows, voting is just part of a bigger problem. Young people without college experience are less engaged in ten different ways compared to young people who have attended college.<sup>6</sup> Comparing non-college youth to full-time college students and people with bachelor's degrees would produce substantially bigger gaps.

A related inequality exists at the high school level across the country. In the United States young people in high school are more likely to have civic education opportunities if they are white, attend an affluent school, or are on a "college track".<sup>7</sup>



### Trends in Educational Attainment

Over the past 40 years, the number young people in the United States with no college experience has decreased by 16 percentage points from 64% in 1968 to 48% in 2007. See Table 1.

	Youth With No College Experience	Youth With College Experience
1968	64%	36%
1970	62%	38%
1972	59%	41%
1974	57%	43%
1976	55%	45%
1978	55%	45%
1980	56%	44%

1982	57%	43%
1984	55%	45%
1986	54%	46%
1988	54%	46%
1990	53%	47%
1992	53%	47%
1994	50%	50%
1996	49%	51%
1998	49%	51%
2000	49%	51%
2002	49%	51%
2004	48%	52%
2006	48%	52%
2007	48%	52%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Supplement, 1968-2007

### High School Education

In 2007, just under two-thirds (63%) of youth with no college experience had a high school degree or the equivalent. See Table 2.

**Table 2: High School Education Among Youth With No College Experience (2007)**

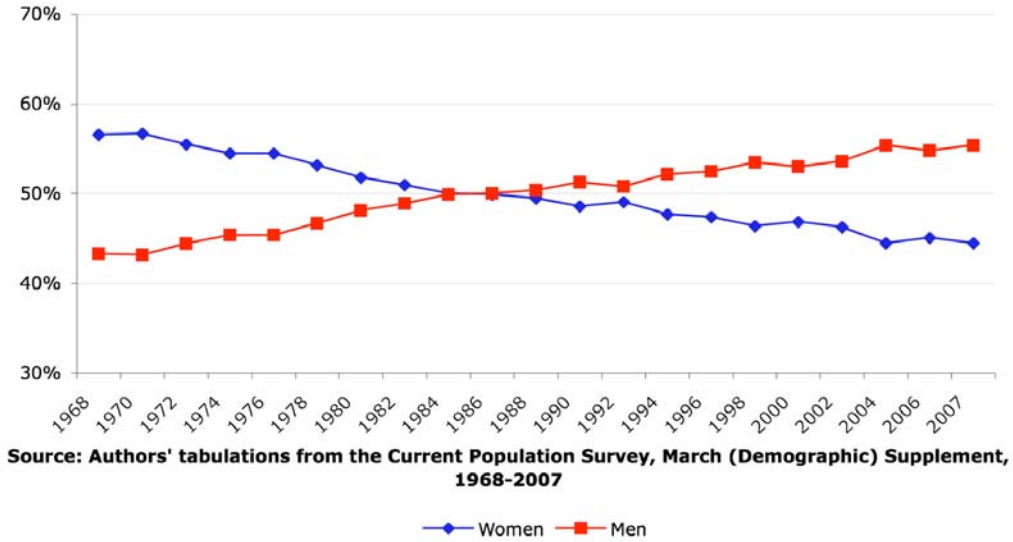
High School Degree or the Equivalent	63%
Less Than High School Degree	37%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Supplement, 2007

### Gender Distribution

In 2007, men made up 55% of the youth in the United States with no college experience, making men less likely than women to have college experience on the whole. This has been a major change since the 1960's, when more than half of young women had no college experience. See Graph 3.

**Graph 3: Gender Among Youth With No College Experience**

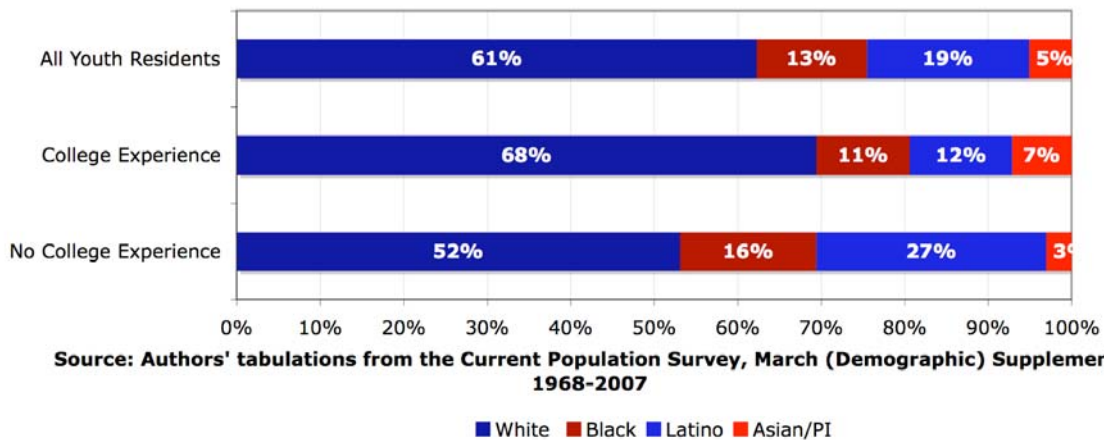


**Racial and Ethnic Composition of Youth with No College Experience**

Young people with no college experience were more likely than the national youth population to be Latino or Black in 2007 and less likely to be White or Asian. See Graph 4.

White youth made up 61% of youth residents in the U.S., but 52% of youth with no college experience. In 2007, Latino youth made up 19% of the overall youth resident population, but 27% of youth with no college experience.

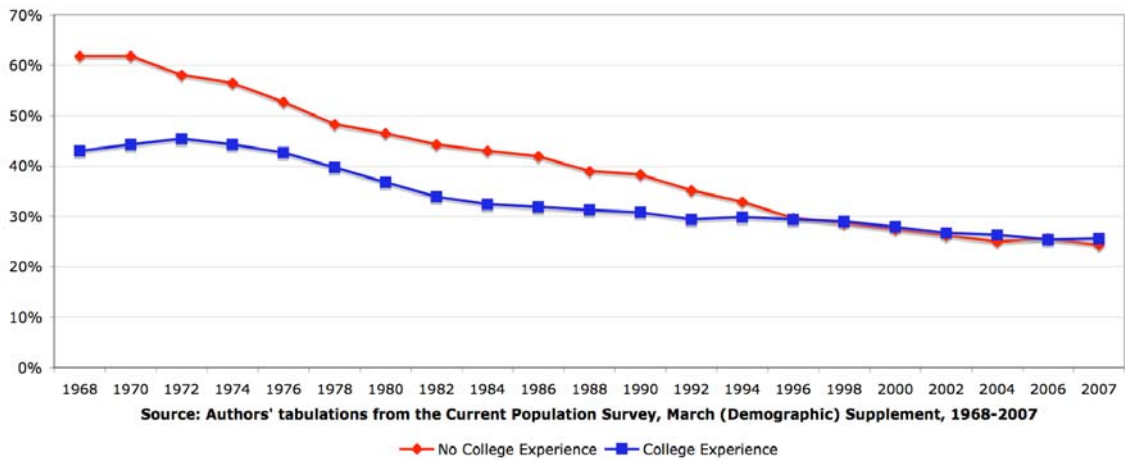
**Graph 4: College Experience by Race/Ethnicity**



## Marriage Rates

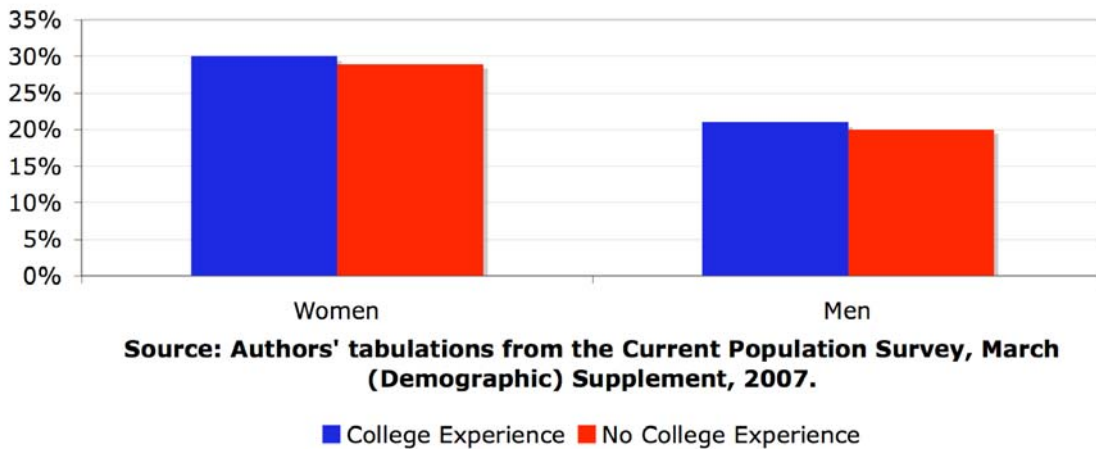
In 1968, youth with no college experience were almost 20 percentage points more likely to be married than their college-educated peers. Since 1968 the marriage rates among all youth have decreased to the point that marriage rates for youth with and without college experience are virtually the same (26% and 24%). See Graph 5.

**Graph 5: Marriage Rates by College Experience**



Young women, regardless of educational experience, are more likely to be married than young men. Young women who have no college experience are just as likely (29%) to be married as their college-educated peers (30%). The same relationship is true for men as 21% of young college educated men are married, while 20% of young men with no college experience are married. See Graph 6.

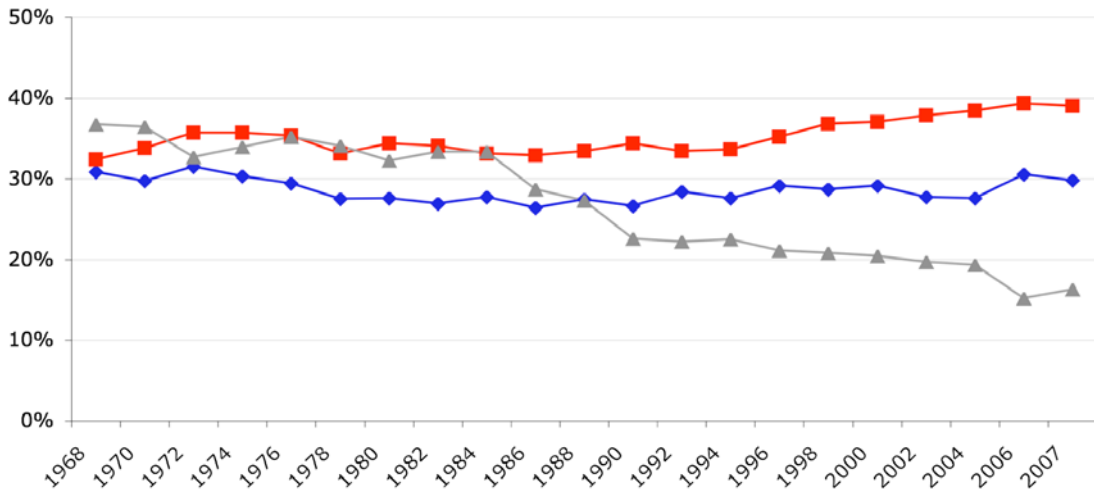
**Graph 6: Marriage Rate by Gender and College Experience (2007)**



## Metropolitan Status<sup>8</sup>

Youth with no college experience were much less likely to live in rural areas in 2007 (16%) than in 1968 (37%). However, today youth with no college experience are slightly more likely to live in rural areas than youth with college experience in 2007 (16% vs. 12%). Youth with no college experience were more likely to live in suburban areas in 2007 (39%) as compared to 1968 (32%). See Graph 7.

**Graph 7: Metropolitan Status Among Youth With No College Experience**



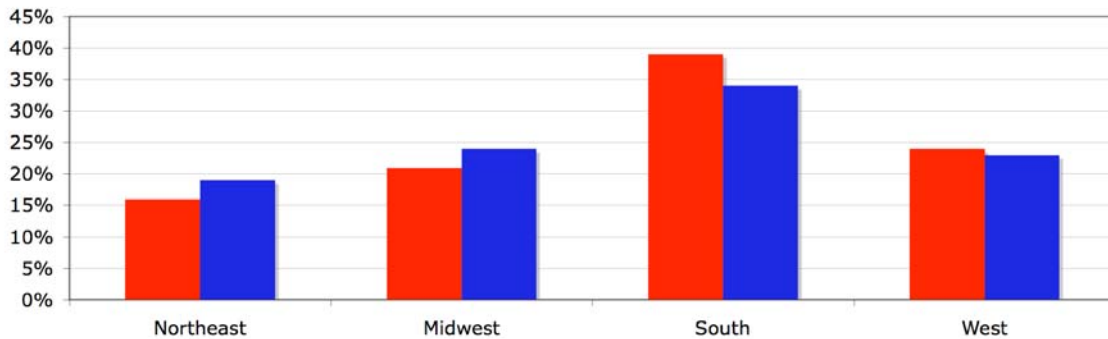
Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Supplement, 1968-2007. (Does not include the "Not Identified" category.)

—◆— Urban —■— Suburban —▲— Rural

## Distribution by Region of the Country

Young people in the South are more likely to have no college experience than young people in the West, Midwest or Northeast. Nearly four in ten young people without college experience live in the South. See Graph 8.

**Graph 8: Geographic Region by College Experience (2007)**

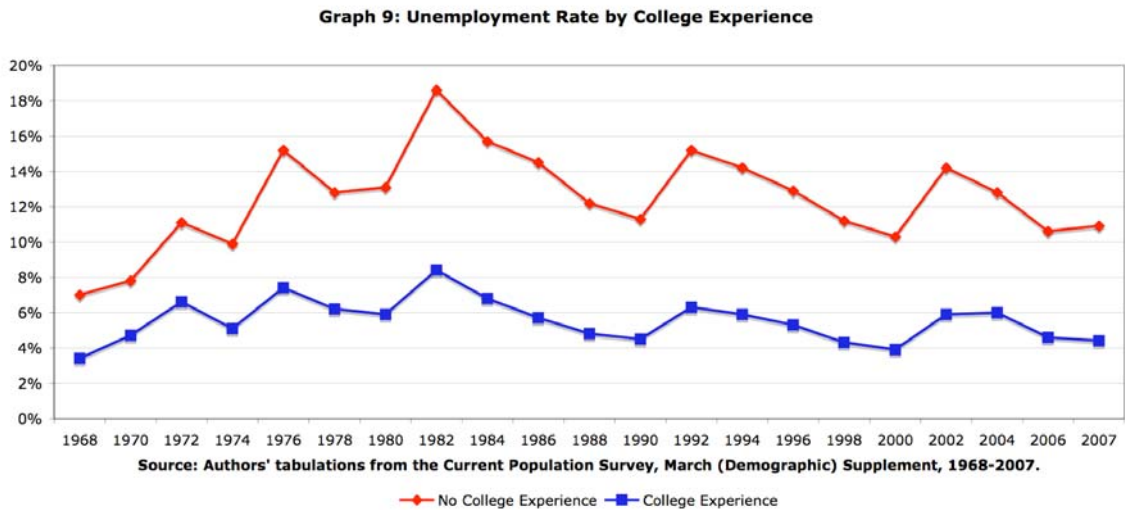


Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Supplement, 2007.

■ No College Experience ■ College Experience

## Unemployment Rates

The unemployment rate for youth with no college experience was more than double that of youth with college experience in 2007 (11% vs. 4%). See Graph 9. Unemployment rates peaked in 1982 amongst youth with no college experience at 19% and among youth with college experience at 8%.



This fact sheet uses Census data, which are available only through March 2008. At that time, the unemployment rate for 18-29s with no college experience was 13.6%. For 18-29s with some college, the unemployment rate was 4.5%. More recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows a spike in unemployment, connected to the current economic crisis. According to the BLS, the teen unemployment rate (for all Americans ages 16-19) had reached 21% in December 2008.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Youth Coordinator & Researcher and Research Associate, respectively. We thank Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, Emily Kirby, and Peter Levine for assistance and comments on earlier drafts of this fact sheet. All errors in fact or interpretation are our own.

<sup>2</sup> This fact sheet includes two mutually exclusive categories for educational status, for 18- to 29-year-old residents:

*Youth with College Experience* – refers to young people who are between the ages of 18 and 29 years old and have at least some college experience, are currently taking college classes or are enrolled in college, or have graduated from college. College in this case refers to 2-year and 4-year institutions, community colleges and trade and technical schools.

*Youth with No College Experience* – refers to young people who are between the ages of 18 and 29 years old and have not ever enrolled in or taken a course at a 2-year or 4-year institutions, community college or trade or technical school.

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<sup>3</sup> For more on differences between youth with and without college experience, see the fact sheet "College Attendance and Civic Engagement among 18 to 25 year olds" by Mark Hugo Lopez and Brent A. Elrod, from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

<sup>4</sup> For additional details on the youth vote in the 2008 Presidential primaries and caucuses, see these fact sheets: "The Youth Vote in the 2008 Super Tuesday States" and "The Youth Vote in the 2008 Primaries and Caucuses" from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

<sup>5</sup> For additional details on the youth vote in the 2008 election, see "Young Voters in the 2008 Presidential Election" from CIRCLE, Updated December 1, 2008. [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org).

<sup>6</sup> Available data from the period 2000-2006 are combined. "Trust" comes from the General Social Survey (GSS) in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006. "Group member" (belonging to at least one group) comes from the GSS in 2004 (only). "Religious attendance" (attending services at least monthly) comes from the GSS in 2002, 2004 and 2006. "Union member" comes from the GSS 2002, 2004, and 2006. "Read newspaper" (at least once per week) comes from the GSS in from 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006. "Self-reported voting" and "contacted by party" comes from the American National Election Study in presidential election years of 2000 and 2004. "Volunteer," "working on a community project," and "attending club meeting" come from the DDB Life Styles Surveys of 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

<sup>7</sup> See CIRCLE Working Paper 59 by Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh "Democracy for Some: The Civic Opportunity Gap in High School", February 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Amounts in Graph 7 do not equal 100% because "Not Identified" category was not included.