Civic Engagement
and the Changing Transition
to Adulthood

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Today's young adults are less engaged in civic and political activities than their predecessors were 30 years ago. One reason, we argue, is that other aspects of young adulthood have also changed dramatically. Traditionally, the "transition to adulthood" has been defined on the basis of five key experiences—leaving home, completing school, entering the workforce, getting married, and having children. All of these experiences now happen later in life than they did in the 1970s. As a result, it is not surprising that voting and other forms of engagement are also being delayed. The delay is nevertheless harmful because young adults lose political and civic influence and opportunities to develop skills and networks.

Even more alarming than the delay in young adult civic participation is a growing social-class divide between the college- and non-college educated—and especially between high school dropouts and those with college degrees. Dramatic changes in the "transition to adulthood" are again relevant. Most Americans do not form their own families or have stable careers during the third decade of their lives. For young adults with educational and economic advantages, the years of their 20s present opportunities for learning, exploration, and growth. For their peers with less education, the lack of stability between the ages of 18 and 30 prevents them from forming social networks and obtaining skills. This difference is reflected in measures of civic engagement.

Further, most opportunities for civic learning are reserved for students enrolled in school or college. Courses, extracurricular clubs, student media, and service-learning programs, for example, play important roles in developing individuals' civic skills, interests, knowledge, and commitments. The lack of institutional opportunities for those who are not students means that the voices and views of these young adults are not heard or addressed. These young adults come disproportionately from ethnic minority, poor, and new-immigrant backgrounds.

We link trends in civic participation to the changing nature of adult transitions, raise concerns about the social class divide in participation, and make suggestions about the contexts and ways in which civic opportunities might be addressed or nurtured.

(Dis)engaged Young Adults?

In a cover story, TIME Magazine proclaimed 2008 "The Year of the Youth Vote."[2] Many other national news magazines and papers have also written with excitement about voters under the age of 30. In states where data are available for both the 2008 and 2000 primaries, the youth turnout rate almost doubled.[3] In the three most recent general elections, the youth turnout also rose, which was a remarkable departure from the past.[4] Since the 1970s, the downward trend in youth voting had been interrupted only once before, in 1992. Today, young voters seem to be influencing the tenor and direction of national politics.

Most young people who voted in the 2008 primaries, however, were college students or college graduates—yet only half of Americans attend college before they turn 30. On "Super Tuesday" (February 5, 2008), when 14 states held primaries or caucuses, three million Americans under the age of 30 voted. Of those, about 2.4 million, or 79 percent, had at least some college experience. The rate of voter participation among young people who had attended college was three or four times that of those without college experience. Preliminary evidence from the 2008 general election suggests that again education was a powerful predictor of voting.

This striking disparity points to a deeper and broader problem. The data below are drawn from the ongoing National Election Surveys, General Social Surveys, and DDB Life Style Surveys. Figure 1 shows, for young adults with at least one year of college experience, the decline in several forms of civic engagement from the 1970s to the 2000s. (Several surveys that were taken in each decade are combined.[5]) Of the ten forms of civic engagement shown here, only one—volunteering—has increased in frequency.

Figure 1: Civic Engagement for Age 20-29, With at Least One Year of College
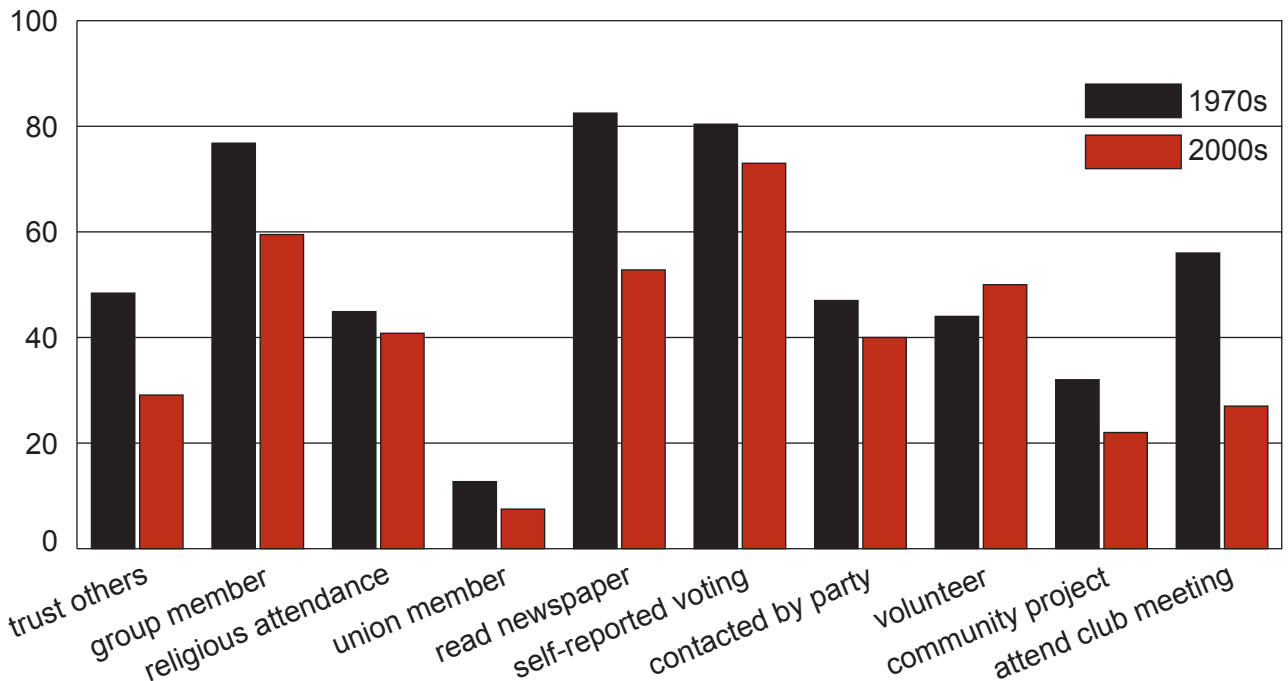
Figure 2 shows information on the same indicators of civic engagement, but this time for those with no college experience. (Again, several surveys taken in each decade are combined.[6]) Here, we find patterns similar to those in Figure 1: declines in every indicator except volunteering. But young adults with college experience were more engaged than their counterparts who had never attended college. For every indicator except union membership, the college-educated began this period ahead of the non-college-educated. For every indicator including union membership, the college-educated ended ahead.

Figure 2: Civic Engagement for Age 20-29, With No College
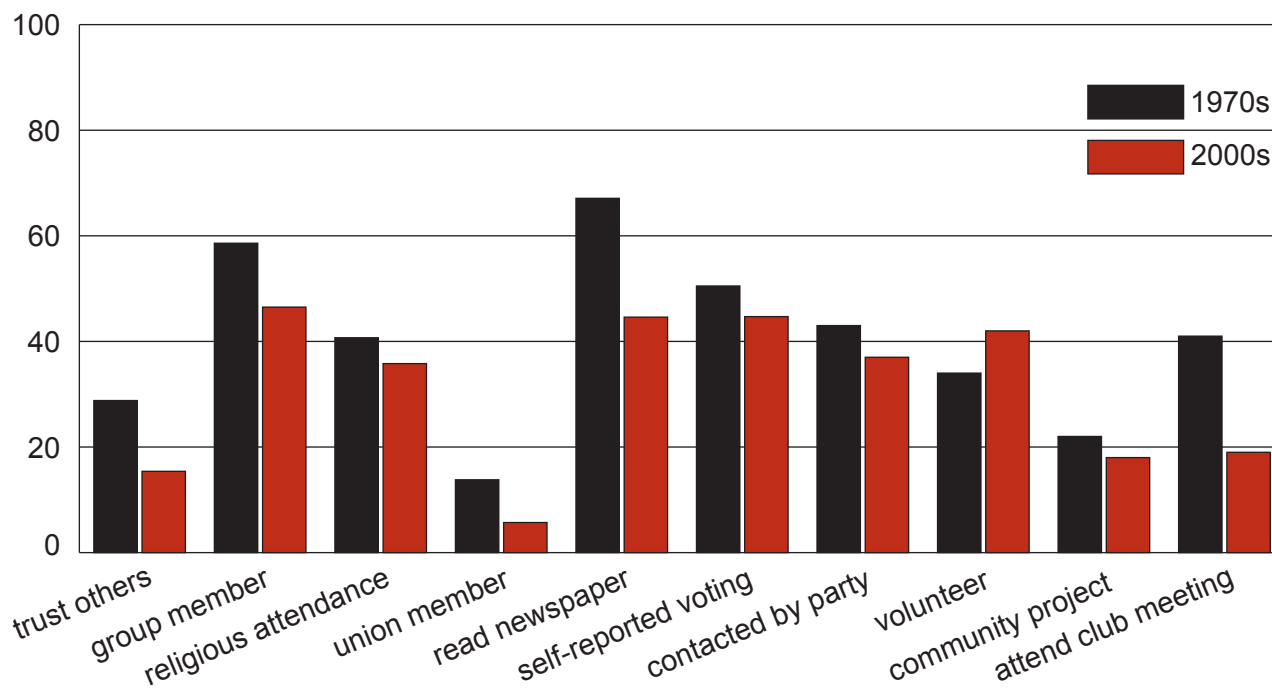
The difference in civic engagement between young adults with and without college experience has not grown appreciably. But the non-college group, having begun with lower levels of participation, has now reached a critically low point. For example, four out of five say they never attend any club meeting, when previously they participated in significant numbers. The non-college youth also are less likely than their counterparts with at least one year of college to be members of groups or attend religious services, all settings where they could gain civic skills and get recruited into civic action. Even volunteering, the one domain in which young adult participation has increased over time, shows a 10 percent gap between the college and non-college groups. And membership in unions, an institution that has historically galvanized the working class, has declined precipitously. In short, involvement has declined in all of the settings where young adults who do not go on to college might gain skills or get recruited into civic life. See figure 3 for a direct comparison between the college and non-college populations in the 2000-2006 period.

**Figure 3: Civic Engagement for Age 20-29,
College Experience and No College Experience**
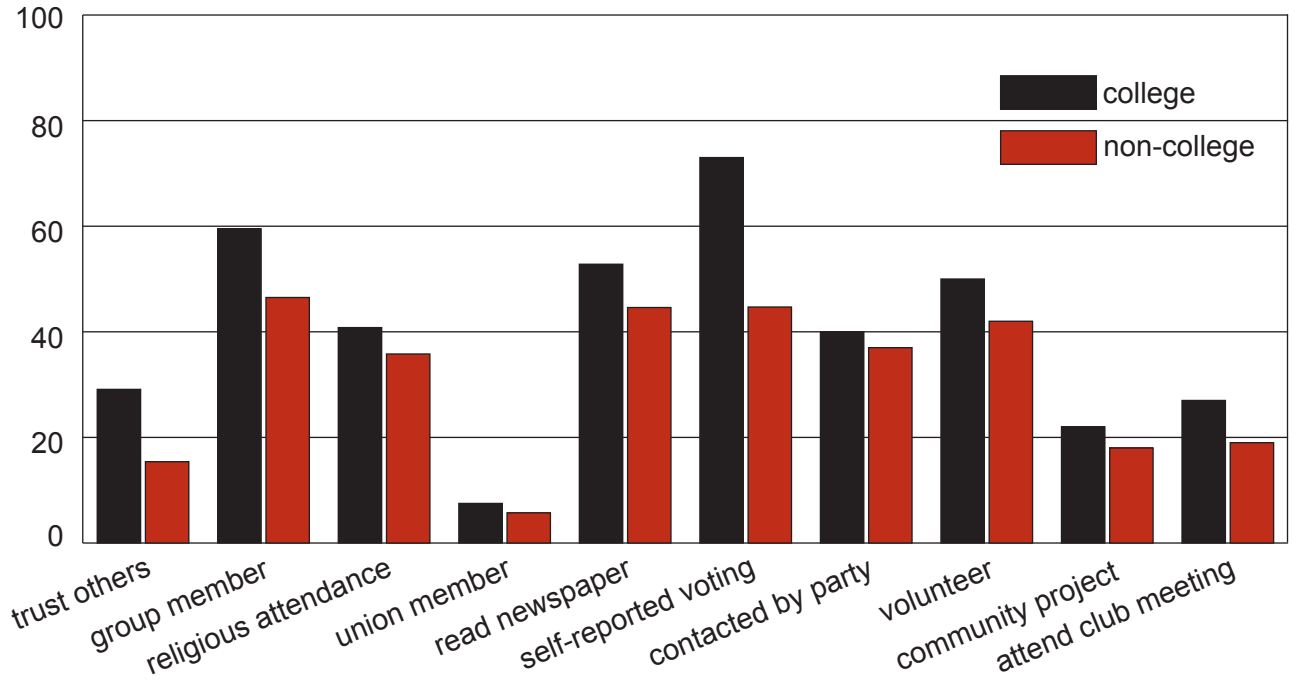
The graphs shown so far divide the young adult population into two large groups (those with and without any college experience), but there are bigger gaps in civic engagement between those with no high school diplomas, at one end of the spectrum, and those with bachelors or advanced degrees, at the other.

Unequal Opportunities before Age 20

To some extent, the gap in civic engagement between youth with and without college experience can be explained by opportunities and resources in childhood and adolescence. College-bound youth more often have had advantages in many domains of life—including parents who have financial and social resources; home environments that reinforce academic skills and participation in community organizations; peers who are incorporated into mainstream institutions; neighborhoods that are safe and rich with opportunities; and schools that have strong programming, teachers, counselors, and parent participation.

These and related factors not only better position students for academic success, but also for civic engagement. For example, Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh find that access to opportunities for learning about politics and citizenship are highly unequal.[7] Within schools, students who are white, who come from more privileged backgrounds, and who expect to attend college are more likely than other students to experience effective civic education. At the same time, there are differences in opportunities among schools: those with more privileged student bodies offer more opportunities to their students. Thus, an individual student's socio-economic status (SES) and

the average SES of his or her school both independently predict the likelihood that the student will study the Constitution, take part in role-playing or mock trials in social studies class, or experience voluntary service. It is crucial to provide equal opportunities for civic learning in schools, especially for those students who are not college-bound or who are in schools that do not emphasize civic matters.

The Changing Nature of the Life in the 20s

The decline in civic engagement is not only produced by circumstances and opportunities in childhood and adolescence. It is also a by-product of the fact that the third decade of life now looks much different than it once did. Entry into adulthood has become more ambiguous and occurs in a less uniform and more gradual and complex fashion.[8] Social timetables that were widely observed a half century ago no longer apply. It is simply not possible for most young people to achieve economic and psychological autonomy as early as they once did. Traditionally, the transition to adulthood has been defined on the basis of five key experiences—leaving home, completing school, entering the workforce, getting married, and having children. On those five markers alone, the last few decades have brought enormous change.

These changes are particularly striking for young adults who have some college experience versus those who have never attended college. During the period between 1968 and 2007, the proportion of young people with at least some college rose, but 43 percent of Americans in their 20s still had no college experience.[9] (See figure 4.)

### Figure 4: Rates of College Attendance for Ages 20-29
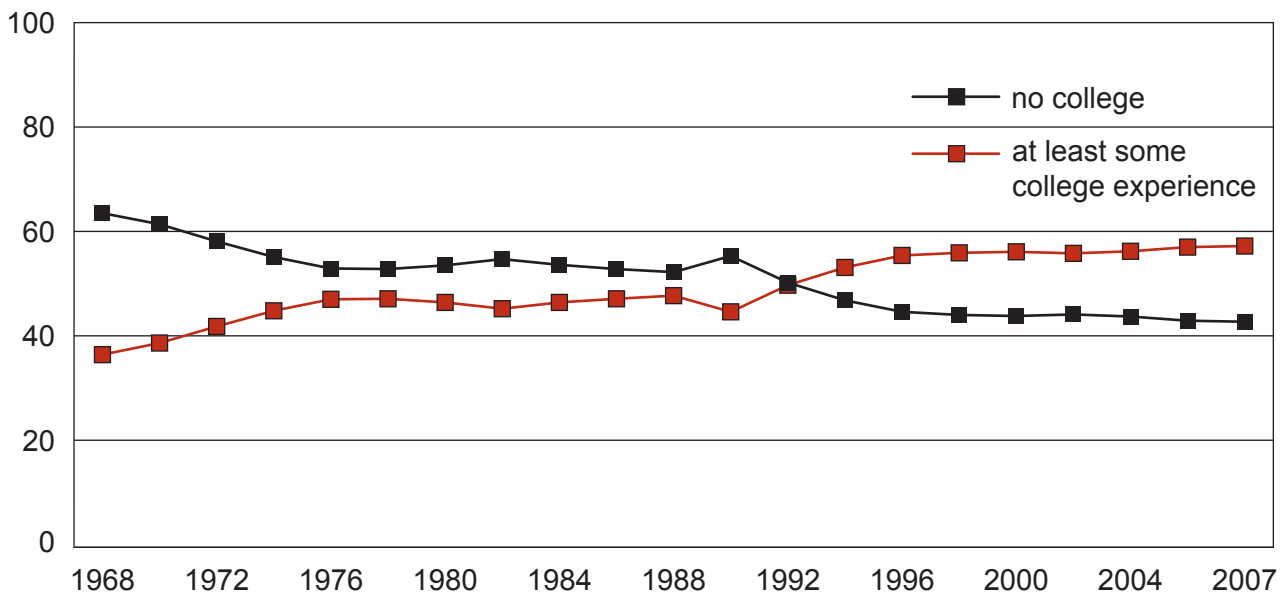
Note: Methodology was adjusted in 1994.

One traditional marker of the transition to adulthood is marriage. Figure 5, below, shows just how rapidly the percentages of ever-married people in their 20s have fallen. For the non-college group, the decline is steeper: fully 71 percent were married in 1968 but only 31 percent were married in 2007. [10]

**Figure 5: Marriage Rates for Ages 20-29**
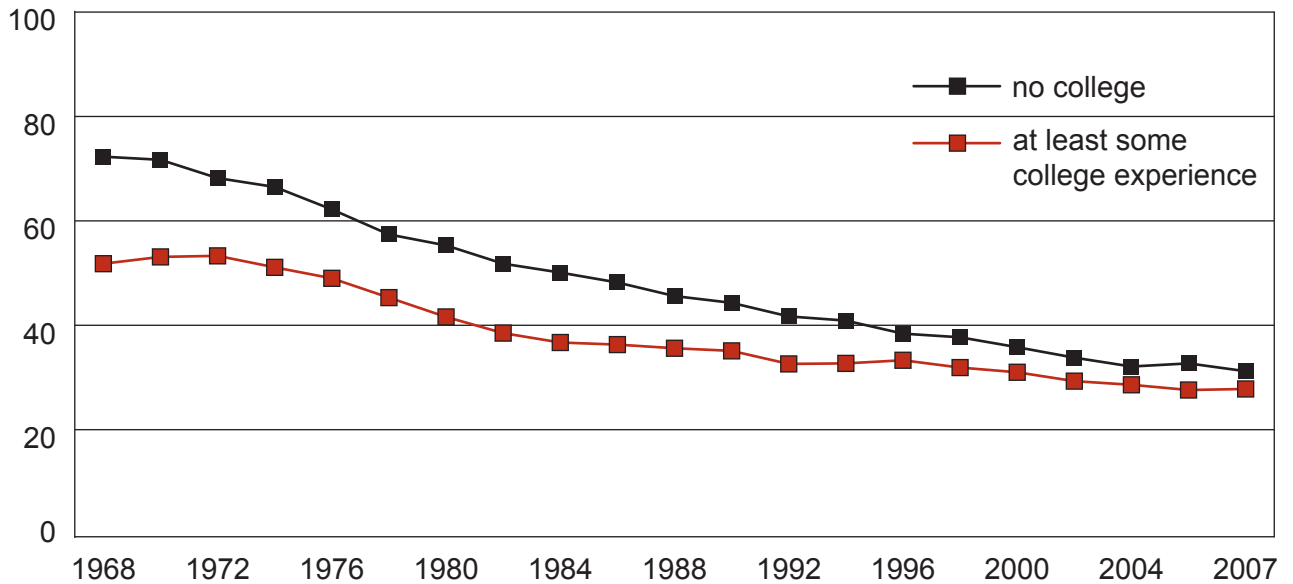
Another traditional marker of adulthood is finding work and becoming economically independent. Full-time, stable employment provides workers with resources, such as income, training, and insurance, and with opportunities to be recruited for civic and political activities. Education and training are now even more valuable than in the past because jobs are less permanent, work careers have become more fluid, and the economic returns to education have increased.[11] Many people in their 20s are unemployed or face job "churn": they hold positions for relatively short periods of time. This is more likely to be a problem for non-college-educated young people than for college graduates, some of whom may be deliberately trying different careers. "Churn" was already common for young adults in the 1970s. However, for men, the decade between age 30 and age 40 has changed substantially; job "churn" is now much more common.[12] This means that obtaining a lasting, full-time job—a traditional marker of full adulthood, at least for men—now lies far in the future or may not seem possible at all for Americans in their 20s.

If obtaining a stable job is delayed or never occurs, younger generations may be less likely to become stakeholders in local communities, owning property and sending their children to local schools. That could suppress political and civic engagement, or it could mean that the life cycle/local stakeholder model of political engagement will be outdated and that younger generations will get engaged in politics for causes or interest groups or via the internet—and likely more episodically.

As a result of these shifts, we must be worried about opportunities for the civic engagement of young people now and in the future. Adolescence and young adulthood have long been considered the period in which individuals develop attitudes and habits of civic participation that last for their lifetimes. Today, there is reason to believe that the formative period continues into the third decade of life. Because it takes longer today to launch careers, start families, and set down roots in communities, one wonders whether the civic lives of young adults are also on hold—and what risks these delays might bring to individuals and societies. Alternatively, the lengthening period of emerging adulthood may offer unique opportunities for civic engagement. Identity theorists have suggested that the early adult years are particularly important for finding purpose in life. If this is so, then having opportunities to wrangle with civic issues and engage with fellow citizens should have positive and cumulative effects on civic engagement later in life.

Figure 6 illustrates the delay in political engagement. It shows voting rates over the life course for four different cohorts, those who became eligible to vote in time for the presidential elections (respectively) of 1960, 1980, 1992, and 1996. The generation that came of age in 1960 voted at a higher rate from the beginning and had modestly rising rates over time—as if they were primed for engagement all along. Each successive generation has had a lower starting point, but each has also gotten substantially more engaged during their 20s and into their 30s—it has simply taken them longer to develop into active citizens. This interpretation is consistent with a political life-cycle model which holds that political engagement increases as one's life becomes stable, one forms a family, and sets down roots in a community. If those tasks are delayed for most young adults today, then their political engagement might also be delayed.

Figure 6: Voting Turnout Over the Life Course

number of elections since one was eligible to vote
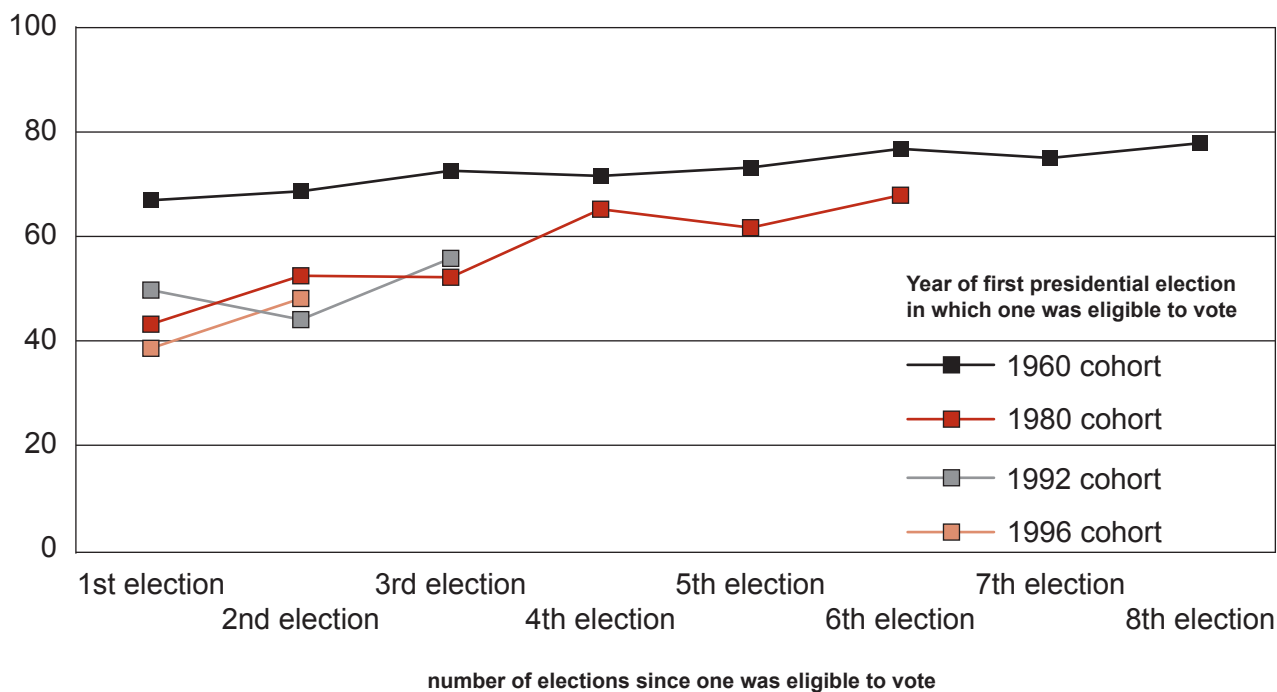
There are few large datasets that allow us to track the civic engagement of cohorts since the 1960s. We show turnout trends in figure 6 because federal data are consistently available for voting; other forms of civic engagement, such as volunteering or attention to news, may not follow the same pattern. (For example, attention to the news appears to have declined across successive cohorts because they do not have interest, not because they are delaying their consumption of news media until later in life. [13]) In any event, voting is a particularly important political act not only in its own right, but because it is highly correlated with many other forms of engagement. This further underscores the significance of our finding that story of decline in youth voting since the 1970s is mainly a story of delay rather than abandonment.

Although we should be concerned about the negative consequences of a delay in political socialization, we might also contemplate how the third decade of life might now offer unique developmental opportunities for young adults to learn about public issues and explore their civic identities. For example, more attention should be paid to programs in two- and four-year colleges that integrate civic opportunities with career training. Because the early adult years are a time when individuals are making decisions about the direction of their own lives and their roles in society, it is important that colleges provide students with ample opportunities to engage in community issues with fellow citizens.[14] In light of the class divide in civic participation, it seems especially imperative to create opportunities for civic engagement among non-college-bound youth after the high school years are over. For these working class and disadvantaged youth, there are few institutional settings for getting recruited into civic activity or for developing civic skills and habits. Opportunities to explore civic activity and identity clearly matter in high school and even earlier. But the 20s may now be the pivotal decade for providing civic opportunities and making civic commitments.

Young Adults Need Opportunities to Engage in Institutions

Institutions promote civic participation. They can do so directly, as when unions call on their members to vote; or indirectly, as when members of a Rotary Club or an NAACP chapter informally discuss community issues. Even the simple fact that institutions concentrate their members in one location facilitates civic engagement. For example, it is much easier for political campaigns to reach college students on campuses than to contact their peers who commute to college or who do not attend at all. This is one reason why the rate of being contacted by a party is three times higher among college youth than non-college youth.

Disconnected Youth

Unfortunately, young adults—especially those who are not college-bound—are less likely today than they were in the 1970s to be connected to a wide range of institutions, including churches, voluntary associations, unions, and political parties. The decline in the civic engagement of non-college youth must also be tied to this decline in institutional connections. A 2005 Kids Count/PRB/Child Trends Report presented some sobering statistics about the growing numbers of 18- to 24-year-olds who are disconnected from society and its institutions.[15] In 2002, one in six in this age group held no degree beyond high school, had no job, and was not enrolled in school. According to the report, the 3.8 million young people who were in this group represented an increase of 19 percent over the three prior years.

Families are also now overburdened in supporting young people. Parents in particular provide significant and varied support to their children through their late 20s and into their early 30s. In the United States, expectations about independence and autonomy promote a "sink-or-swim" transition to adulthood, to use Cook and Furstenberg's phrase.[16] Young people who "swim" are often able to do so only because families provide significant material and emotional support. Indeed, young people from middle and upper class families receive very sizable financial and social support from parents well into their 30s.[17] This raises special concerns about the plight of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, whose skills and resources may be less adequate or relevant going into the transition, whose families may be more fragile or simply cannot afford to help their children, or those who have been attached to foster care, special education, or juvenile justice systems and are abruptly cut off from support when they reach 18 or 21.[18]

A social class divide in civic participation has existed for many generations. As Verba and his colleagues show, a major reason for this divide is that people with more years of education are more likely to be in settings (in workplaces, schools, community organizations) where (1) they accrue resources (knowledge about issues and the wherewithal to take action); (2) they are recruited (someone asks them to join an organization or invites them to a community meeting); and (3) there are normative pressures to participate in community affairs (because others around them are participating).[19] But the growing social class divide in civic participation in recent years is due in part to the loss of institutions where members of the working class get recruited into political action.

Earlier generations who went to work right after high school often had jobs in unionized industries, and many unions have a long history of recruiting members into politics and providing them with leadership education. But over the past three decades, there has been a precipitous decline in union membership and in industrial jobs. Consequently, the current generation of young people who do not go on to college have lost two contexts where they can accrue political knowledge and resources and where, by virtue of "being there," they have some chance of being invited to participate.

Institutional inequalities for civic engagement and learning begin in the formative (K-12) years and intensify in young adulthood. Whereas there are social class differences in the civic engagement and learning opportunities that schools and community based organizations offer to children and adolescents, precipitous declines in engagement are common after graduation from high school. In young adulthood it is more incumbent on individuals to identify those opportunities; and for those who do not go on to four-year colleges, there are fewer institutions where they can garner resources and get recruited.

Besides the family, college is the main institution that scaffolds young people as they make the transition to adulthood. Yet only 7 percent of students from the bottom quarter of the income distribution of high school sophomores will obtain a B.A. by the age of 26, compared to 60 percent of those from the top quarter of the income distribution.[20] For many, the sheer expense puts college out of reach. In the past 25 years, the average cost of tuition and fees has risen faster than personal income, consumer prices, and even health insurance. And Pell grants have not kept pace with college costs. When the Pell Grant was implemented, it covered 77 percent of the costs

of a four-year public college but today it covers only half that cost. Furthermore, in recent years universities have tried to increase their own competitive edge by attracting the "best and brightest" students and, as a result, have allocated a greater share of their scholarship aid to student merit rather than need. Consequently, college is even further out of the reach of high school graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Why Does All This Matter?

The expression of interests and opinions is essential to active citizenship. The voices of young people are needed for deliberative democracy. Since their adult lives are ahead of them, they tend to see issues from a different vantage point than that of older adults. There are also important differences among young people—by gender, race, or social class, for example. The expression of their views, whether through voting or other modes of engagement, is essential to ensuring the welfare of our society in the future. For example, because elderly Americans turn out in elections, Social Security and Medicare are always political priorities. When youth do turn out, elected officials also see them as a constituency. For example, after young Americans voted at increased rates in 2006, the newly elected House leadership introduced, as the fifth bill of the Congress, legislation to cut student loan interest rates. But issues of special importance to non-college young people are rarely mentioned in campaigns or Congress. For example, politicians hardly ever describe unemployment as a youth issue, even though the unemployment rate for ages 16-19 is 21 percent, compared to a rate of 5.9 percent for adults 20 and older.

Of course, voting is not the ultimate mode of civic engagement—a wide variety of modes of expression matter, and to a wide variety of ends. Voting correlates with other forms of civic engagement, such as following the news, joining organizations, and volunteering. When young people are not engaged in these ways, society misses their contributions: their ideas, energy, and social networks. Engaging in these ways is also good for young people themselves: it provides information, networks, opportunities, motivation, and support. Those who volunteer are substantially better off than those who do not. A dramatic example is the finding that belonging to voluntary associations in Chicago is associated with lower death rates, especially for African American men.[21]

What Must We Do?

All Americans are supposed to be equal as citizens: in courts, elections, and community affairs. The reality is deep inequality in rates of civic participation.

What can be done to incorporate those youth who do not go on to four-year colleges into the civic lives of their communities and nation? We suggest that attention be focused on the institutions where these young people congregate and on policies that could enhance their opportunities for educational and occupational attainment and civic engagement. Some of the settings where non-college youth can be found include the service sector, faith-based, and cultural clubs and organizations. Although a case could be made for investing in all of these areas, we highlight two that we think should top the list: community colleges and national service programs.

Community Colleges

Community colleges are the largest and fasting growing sector of higher education. The 1,158 public two-year colleges enroll 45 percent of all U.S. undergraduates. The American Association of Community Colleges reports that 10.4 million students are enrolled in community colleges.[22] These colleges are the higher education opportunity institution for marginalized groups. They are the most affordable (average annual tuition of $2,076), most accessible (there is a community college within a short distance of 90 percent of the population), and most egalitarian, serving more than half of all minority and first-generation college students. Rough estimates are that 80 percent of community college students are the first people in their families to attend college. Community colleges serve a diverse population, far more diverse than the student populations of four-year colleges. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, minority students account for 30 percent of the national community college enrollment. English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are typical in community colleges, reflecting the fact that many of their students are recent immigrants. Thus, community colleges are a key institutional setting for recruiting into political life members of groups who now participate at lower levels. Recent analyses of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) indicate that attending a community college brings an exponential increase in the likelihood that young African Americans will vote.[23]

National Service

March 31, 2008 marked the 75th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a New Deal program that established national service in the United States. The legacy of the CCC lives on in the Service and Conservation Corps. Today, 116 Service and Conservation Corps operate in 41 states and the District of Columbia. The Corps annually enroll approximately 23,000 young women and men. Like the CCC, the Service and Conservation Corps build and improve the nation's infrastructure by renovating public housing, conserve its public lands, and restore its environment by creating and staffing public parks. Recently, coalitions such as the Apollo Alliance (which links labor unions such as the United Steel Works with environmental groups, politicians, and Conservation Corps members) have formed to promote investment in "green-collar" jobs and training to address climate change and employ youth in environmentally friendly manual labor jobs.

Programs such as AmeriCorps that combine community service with opportunities for life skill development and an educational stipend appear to be effective policies for incorporating youth into the body politic. One recent study followed youth who served in the AmeriCorps State and National Programs. Eight years after enrollment, Corps members were more likely than non-members to have careers in public service. And, for those from disadvantaged and ethnic minority backgrounds, involvement in these programs has a long-term impact both on their employment and civic engagement.[24]

K-12 schools, along with colleges and universities, can help students become active citizens by providing courses on social studies and social science, service learning, extracurricular associations, student governments, and student news media. These opportunities are especially effective when they enable students to assume leadership roles in addressing community issues. Even before high school graduation, however, many students who are not

academically successful have missed these opportunities. If they stop education at high school, they miss the more advanced versions of courses and extracurricular activities offered in colleges and universities.

In addition to subsidizing higher education (which benefits only half of the population), the federal government provides some $223.5 billion for programs for "disadvantaged youth." A separate policy scan by CIRCLE finds that some of these 339 programs have civic education as a goal, but almost all have age limits of 18 or 21. For youth older than 21 who are not in college, there is hardly any government investment in civic learning. The exceptions are a few small but well-regarded programs like YouthBuild and Public Allies that are directed at non-college young people. Even some of these programs have eligibility requirements that exclude people in their 20s. Job Corps and YouthBuild have an age cutoff of 24. The Youth Service and Conservation Corps stop at age 25. Nonetheless, the long-term benefits in the employment and civic engagement of the disadvantaged and ethnic minority youth who participate in such community service programs makes this a venue worth more study and investment.

The Internet

The National Conference on Citizenship's 2008 Civic Health Index survey found gaps in civic engagement between young adults with and without college experience. However, there were smaller gaps in certain forms of online engagement. For example, 57 percent of young adults with college experience, and 52 percent of young adults without college experience, said that they had used social networking sites such as MySpace or Facebook to address social issues.[25] On six measures of online engagement, college youth were ahead of non-college youth, but these gaps were notably smaller than the gaps in traditional forms of engagement that were observed in the same survey.

Figure 7: Online Civic Engagement, ages 18-30
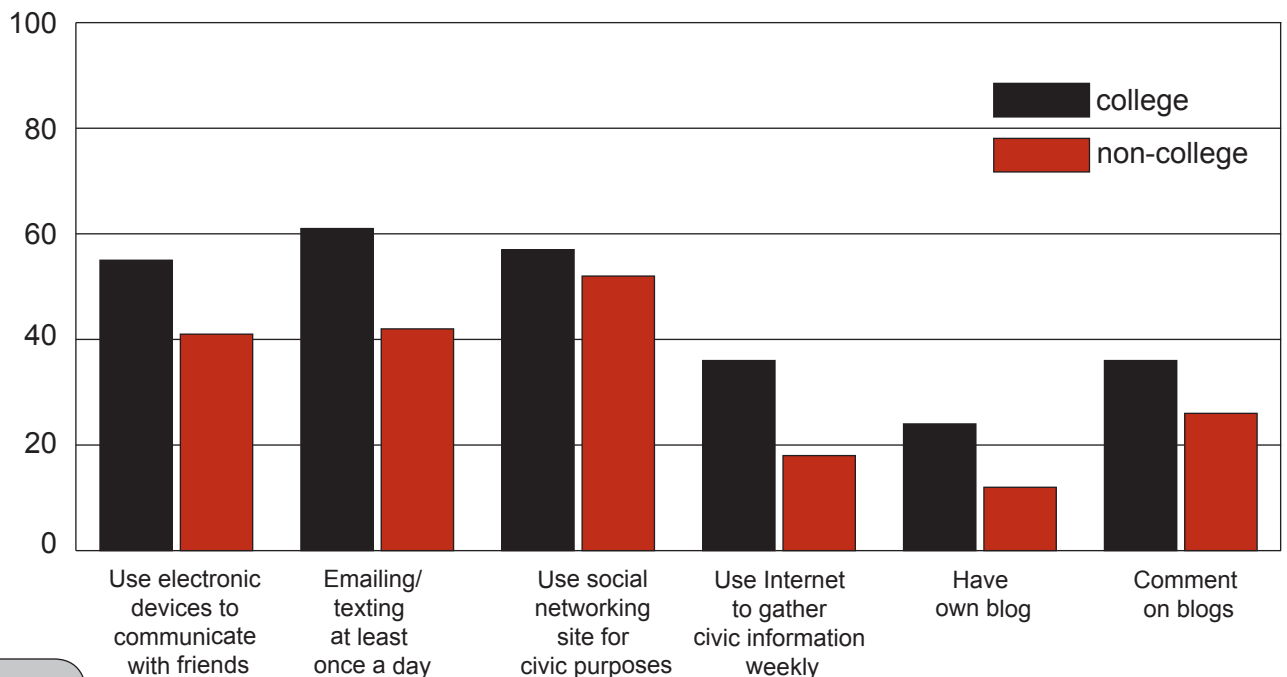
As long as individuals have access to the internet, they can find or create online social networks, regardless of their college background. In contrast, many traditional associations recruit and admit people who are already in mainstream institutions such as colleges.

Similarly, a recent study by Joseph Kahne, Ellen Middaugh, and Chris Evans found gender differences in the civic gaming experiences of teenagers, but no differences by race or family income. Furthermore, both the kinds of games teens play and where they play them (e.g., playing with others in the room) are significantly correlated with civic outcomes.[26] While this study focused on teenagers, it is also suggestive for young adults. At the very least, the internet and video games carry the potential to engage more young adults in civic activities. Software developers, educators, and public institutions should support pro-civic versions of these tools.

Conclusion

We have examined trends in young adult civic engagement in light of the lengthening transition to adulthood. It appears that recent cohorts have delayed, but not rejected, civic engagement. We suspect that, as members of these cohorts settle into roles and responsibilities of adulthood, they will be recruited into civic action and grow a stronger stake in the polity. Of greater concern, in our view, is the gulf in civic participation between those who go on to college and those who do not. Ethnic minorities and new immigrants (both of which comprise a growing proportion of the U.S. population), as well as young people from working-class backgrounds, are less likely to complete high school or attend college. It is imperative that opportunities be created in the institutional settings in which these young people exist so that these groups might be better incorporated into the body politic. Failing to do so is a disservice not only to our democratic ideals, but to the future of our society.

[1]   This paper emerged from a meeting convened at The Spencer Foundation on December 17-18, 2007. The participants were: Cathy Cohen (The University of Chicago); Susan Dauber (The Spencer Foundation); Robert T. Grimm (Corporation for National and Community Service); Sharon E. Jarvis (University of Texas at Austin); Joseph E. Kahne (Mills College); Aldon Morris (Northwestern University); Rob Reich (Stanford University); Laura Stoker (University of California, Berkeley); Patrick T. Terenzini (Pennsylvania State University); Roderick J. Watts (Georgia State University); and Lauren Young (The Spencer Foundation). These colleagues shaped our thinking, but we are solely responsible for this document. The meeting and the writing of this paper were supported by a grant from The Spencer Foundation. We thank Molly Trauten for detailed notes on the meeting.

[2]   TIME Magazine, January 31, 2008.

[3]   See Emily Hoban Kirby, Karlo Barrios Marcelo, Joshua Gillerman, and Samantha Linkins, "The Youth Vote in the 2008 Primaries and Caucuses," CIRCLE Fact Sheet, June 2008 (via www.civicyouth.org).

[4]   According to CIRCLE's analysis of Exit Poll data, the turnout of 18-29s rose by four percentage points in 2000 (relative to 1996), by another seven points in 2004, and by another four to five points in 2008, for a total increase of about 15-16 points.

[5]   Data sources for this figure are as follows: "Trust" comes from the General Social Survey (GSS) in 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1978, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006. "Group member" (belonging to at least one group) comes from the GSS in 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978 and 2004 (only). "Religious attendance" (attending services at least monthly) comes from the GSS in 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006. "Union member" comes from the GSS in 1973, 1976, 78, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006. "Read newspaper" (at least once per week) come from the GSS in 1972, 1975, 1977, 1978, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006. "Self-reported voting" and "contacted by party" comes from the American National Election Study in presidential election years of 1972, 1976, 2000, and 2004. "Volunteer," "working on a community project," and "attending club meeting" come from the DDB Life Styles Surveys of 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. Changes from the 1970s to 2000s are statistically significant (z statistic > 2) for all of these indicators except voting.

[6]   See note 5 for sources. Again, changes are statistically significant, except in the case of voting.

[7]   See Joseph E. Kahne and Ellen Middaugh, "Democracy for Some: The Civic Opportunity Gap in High School," in James Youniss and Peter Levine, eds., *Policies for Youth Civic Engagement*, Vanderbilt University Press (in press). They analyze a survey of more than 2,500 California high school seniors and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) Civic Education Study of 9th graders throughout the United States.

[8]   See Richard A. Settersten, Jr., Frank Furstenberg, and Ruben Rumbaut, eds., *On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[9]   Data source: Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Supplement, 1968-2007.

[10] Data source: Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Supplement, 1968-2007.

[11] See Richard A. Settersten, Jr. "Passages to Adulthood: Linking Demographic Change and Human Development." *European Journal of Population*, vol. 23, pp. 251-272 (August 2007).

[12] Henry S. Farber, "Is the Company Man an Anachronism? Trends in Long Term Employment in the U.S. Between 1973 and 2005," Network on Transitions to Adulthood Policy Brief, December 2006, Issue 38 (Philadelphia, PA: MacArthur Foundation Network on Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy).

[13] David T. Z. Mindich, *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 28-9.

[14] See Connie Flanagan, "Public Scholarship and Youth at the Transition to Adulthood." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, vol 105, pp. 41-50. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

[15] See Susan Jekielek and Brett Brown, *The Transition to Adulthood: Characteristics of Young Adults Ages 18–24 in America*. (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005). Available on-line at: www.prb.org/pdf05/TransitionToAdulthood.pdf

[16] See Thomas D. Cook and Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. "Explaining Aspects of the Transition to Adulthood in Italy, Sweden, Germany and the United States: A Cross-Disciplinary, Case Synthesis Approach," in Frank. F. Furstenberg, Jr. (Ed.), *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: Early Adulthood in Cross–National Perspective*, pp. 257-287 (London: Sage Publications, 2007).

[17] See Robert F. Schoeni and Karen E. Ross, "Material Assistance from Families During the Transition to Adulthood," in Richard A. Settersten Jr., Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. & Ruben G. Rumbaut, eds., *On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research, and Public Policy*, pp. 396-416. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[18] See D. Wayne Osgood, Michael M. Foster, Connie Flanagan, and Gretchen Ruth, eds., *On Your Own Without a Net: The Transition to Adulthood for Vulnerable Populations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

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