

The Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation is composed of young people born between 1977 and 1997.¹ Of the 75 million 12-29 year olds in the United States today, there are 41.9 million 18-29 year olds.² This large generation of potential voters is ethnically diverse, well-educated, and civically engaged. Given increasing turnout rates among these citizens in recent presidential and midterm elections, “Millennials” are bound to have a serious impact on electoral politics. This factsheet summarizes work conducted on the Millennial Generation by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Young Voter Strategies, leading organizations studying youth civic engagement.

Table 1: Resident Youth Population Estimates, in Millions

	Ages 18-25	Ages 15-25	Ages 18-19	Ages 20-21	Ages 22-25	Ages 0-17
1994	29.4	40.1	6.9	6.9	15.5	69.8
1996	29.1	40.6	7.2	6.9	15.0	71.1
1998	28.7	40.6	7.6	7.2	13.9	71.7
2000	30.0	42.1	8.1	7.7	14.3	72.3
2002	31.0	43.1	7.9	8.1	14.9	72.6
2004	31.7	44.6	7.5	8.3	16.0	70.0
2006	32.1	45.4	7.6	8.0	16.5	73.9

Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. “Youth Demographics.” Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 2.

Table 2: Resident Adult (18 and older) Population Share

	Ages 18-25	Ages 18-19	Ages 20-21	Ages 22-25
1994	15.50%	3.60%	3.60%	8.20%
1996	15.10%	3.70%	3.60%	7.80%
1998	14.60%	3.80%	3.70%	7.00%
2000	14.90%	4.00%	3.80%	7.10%
2002	14.80%	3.80%	3.90%	7.10%
2004	14.80%	3.50%	3.90%	7.40%
2006	14.70%	3.50%	3.70%	7.50%

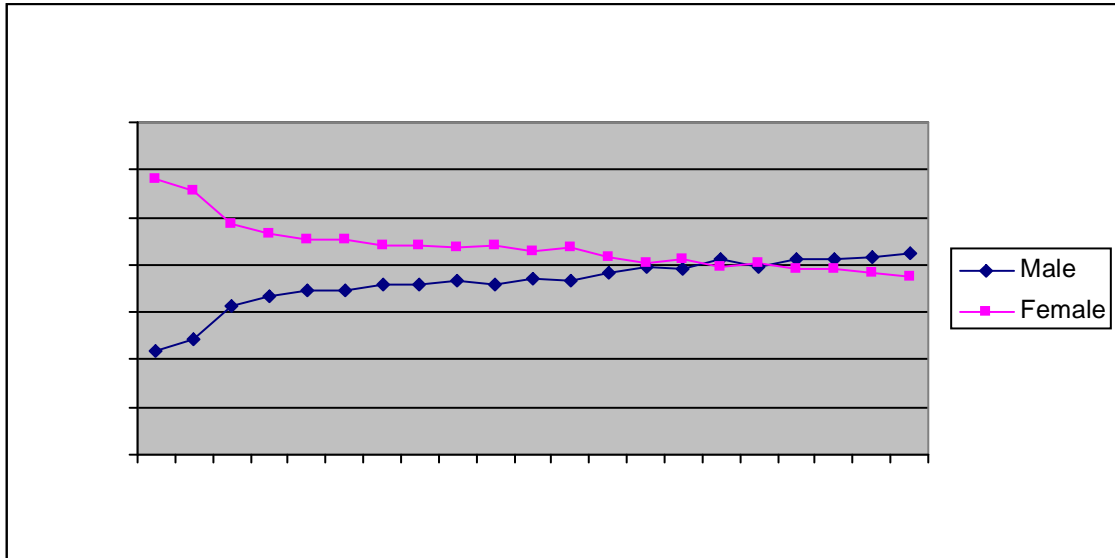
Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. “Youth Demographics.” CIRCLE, <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 2.

¹ “Background on the Millennial Generation”. February 2007. Young Voter Strategies, <http://www.youngvoterstrategies.com>, p. 1.

² U.S. Census Bureau Population Projects 2000 to 2050, available at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/usproj2000-2050.xls>; “Background on the Millennial Generation”. February 2007. Young Voter Strategies, <http://www.youngvoterstrategies.com>, p. 3.

As demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2, 18-25 year old United States residents represented 14.7% of the population (32.1 million people) in 2006. The number of young people has steadily increased since 1994, but this group's share of the population has decreased slightly.

FIGURE 1:



Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. "Youth Demographics." CIRCLE, <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 6.

Figure 1 shows that the male/female ratio of 18-25 year olds became equal in 1998 before the male population exceeded the female population for the first time in thirty years. In 2006, the male population exceeded the female population by one percentage point.

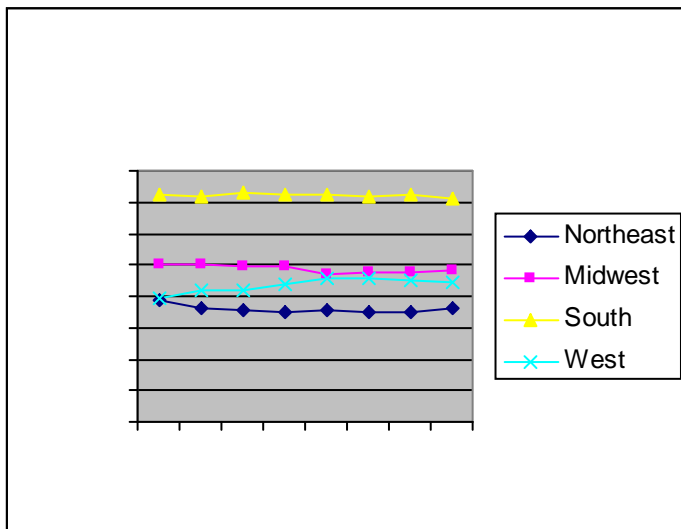
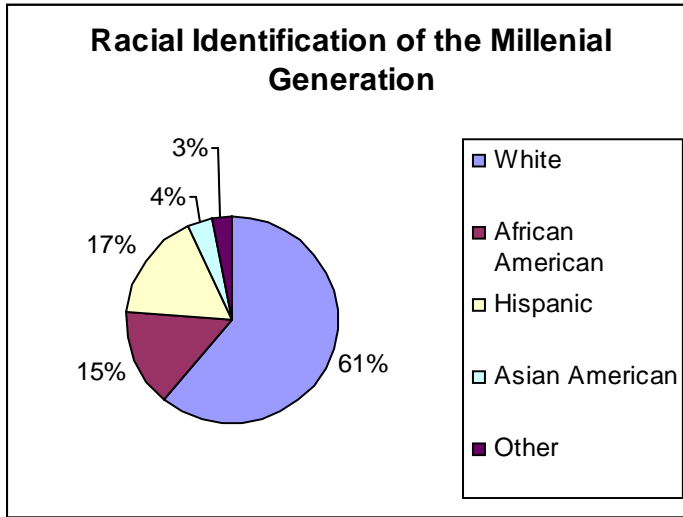


FIGURE 2:

As depicted in Figure 2, young people are not dispersed evenly across the country. Most young people live in the South and the number of young people living in the West is growing.

Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. "Youth Demographics." CIRCLE, <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 12.

FIGURE 3:



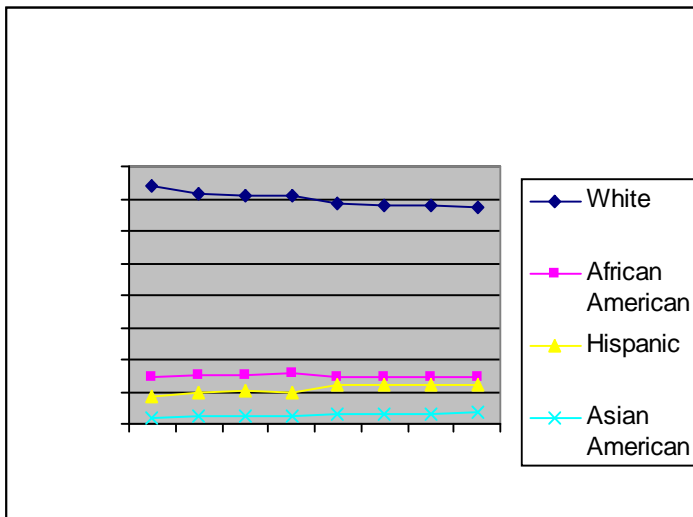
Source: "Background on the Millennial Generation." February 2007. Young Voter Strategies. <http://www.youngvoterstrategies.org>

Millennials are the most diverse generation in history:

- Approximately 33% of children under 18 are racial or ethnic minorities and about 20% of elementary and high school-age students are immigrants or children of immigrants, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.³

- In 2000, the U.S. Census found that about 6.8 million Americans indicate a mixed ethnic heritage (about 2.4% of the U.S. population). Nearly 46% of those are under age 18.⁴

FIGURE 4:



Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. "Youth Demographics." CIRCLE, <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 8.

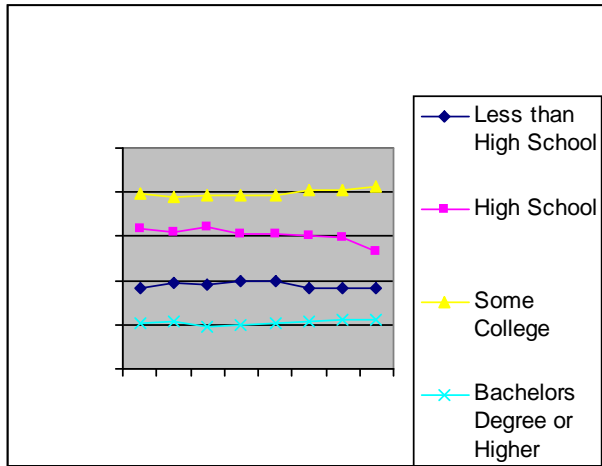
- Between 1968 and 2006, the number of citizens who identify as White dropped from about 88% to 67%. The number of citizens who identify as African American and Hispanic increased by 2.3 and 10.6 percentage points, respectively.⁵

³ "Background on the Millennial Generation." February 2007. Young Voter Strategies, <http://www.youngvoterstrategies.org>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Youth Demographics", CIRCLE.

FIGURE 5:



Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. "Youth Demographics." CIRCLE. <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 10.

High school degree attainment is high: 87 percent of 25-34 year olds have high school diplomas.⁶

Enrollment in post-secondary education is increasing:

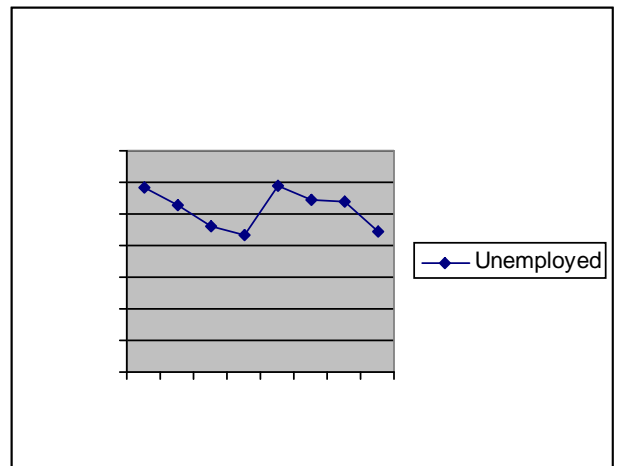
- Between 1970 and 2004, the school enrollment rate for 18-19 year olds jumped from 48 to 64 percent.⁷

- Between 1970 and 2004, the enrollment rate of adults ages 20-24 increased from 22 to 35 percent; from 8 to 13 percent for those ages 25-29; and from 4 to 7 percent for those ages 30-34.⁸

Minimum Wage: Young people were more likely than any other age group to support an increase in the minimum wage (74% of voters under 30 supported an increase compared to 66% of all voters).⁹

Unemployment: According to a 2003 government report, unemployment among young adults is 2-3 times higher than among adults overall. That year, the unemployment rate was 5.7 percent for all, but 9.6 percent for 20-24 year olds and 16.1 percent for 16-19 year olds.¹⁰

FIGURE 6:



Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. "Youth Demographics." CIRCLE. http://www.civicyouth.org/?page_id=154, p. 20.

⁶ 18 to 35 analysis of Census Bureau data, 2002. <http://www.18to35.org/policy/fact-jobs.html>; "Background on the Millennial Generation". February 2007. Young Voter Strategies, <http://www.youngvoterstrategies.org>.

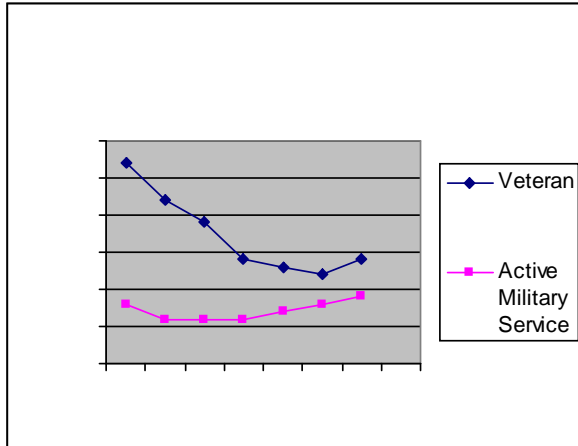
⁷ National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.edu.gov>; "Background on the Millennial Generation" February 2007. Young Voter Strategies, <http://www.youngvoterstrategies.org>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kirby, Emily Hoban and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. December 2006. "Young Voters in the 2006 Elections." CIRCLE, <http://www.civicyouth.org>.

¹⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics, *The Employment Situation*, 2003. "Background on the Millennial Generation". February 2007. Young Voter Strategies, <http://www.youngvoterstrategies.org>.

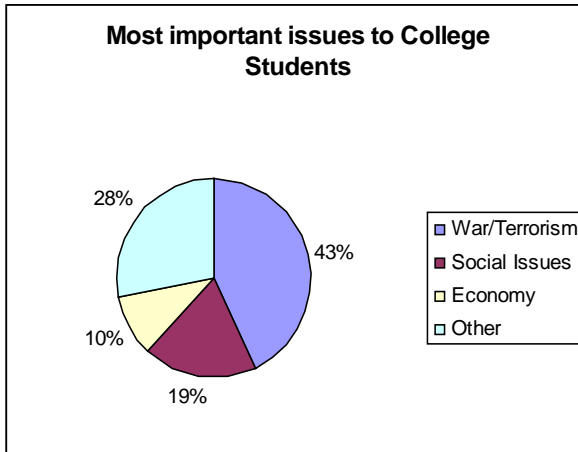
FIGURE 7:



Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. "Youth Demographics." CIRCLE. <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 20.

Figure 7 shows the number of young veterans dropping while the number of young people in active military service is increasing. Women have increased their participation in armed forces, and that the educational attainment of most young people serving in the military has risen.¹¹

FIGURE 8:

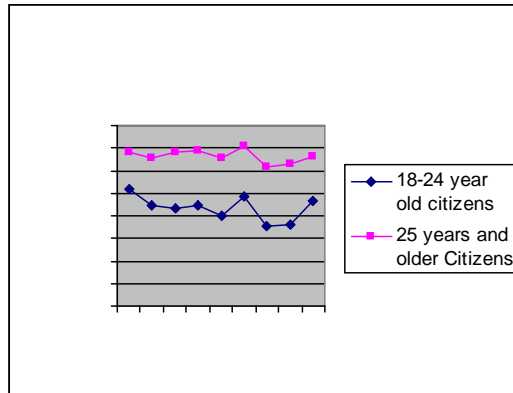


Source: 2006 Survey of College Students, Harvard University. "Background on the Millennial Generation". February 2007. Young Voter Strategies.

Figure 8 demonstrates that a plurality of young people is concerned about the Iraq war and terrorism. The economy and social issues also are issues of concern to college students.

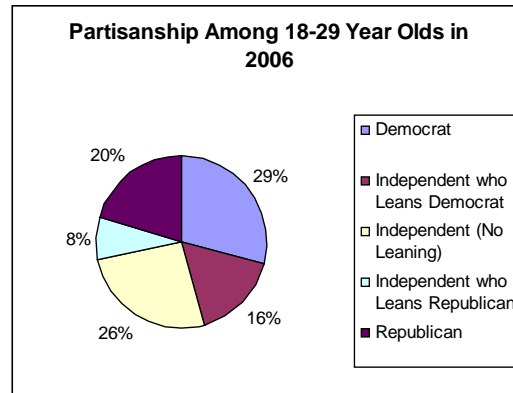
¹¹ Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. November 2006. "Youth Demographics." CIRCLE, pp. 15-16.

FIGURE 9:



Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo, Emily Kirby, and Jared Sagoff. July 2005. "The Youth Vote 2004." CIRCLE, <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p.2

FIGURE 10:



Source: Lopez, Mark Hugo. "Quick Facts About Young Voters: 2006." CIRCLE. <http://www.civicyouth.org>, p. 3.

By 2015, potential Millennial Voters ages 18-38 will become one-third of the US electorate:¹²

- 72% of young Americans say they *follow what's going on* in government and public affairs at least some of the time.
- 67% have *confronted* someone who said something that they considered offensive, such as a racist or other prejudiced comment.
- 36% have *volunteered* within the last year.
- 35% participated in political discussions by trying to *persuade* other people about elections.
- 30% have *boycotted* a product because of the conditions under which it was made or the values of the company that made it. Roughly the same proportion has "buycotted" a product or bought it because they approved of the company's values.

26% of those ages 20 to 25 say that they "always" *vote*.¹³

¹² "Background on the Millennial Generation", Young Voter Strategies.

¹³ Lopez, Mark Hugo, et. al. October 2006. *2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Report*. CIRCLE, www.civicyouth.org.