

OVERVIEW REPORT

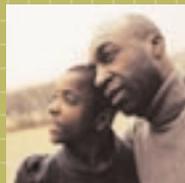
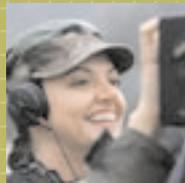
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Youth Poll 13 Report



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**JAMRS Report No. 2007-001
December 2007**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
YOUTH POLL WAVE 13 – June 2007**

OVERVIEW REPORT

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Executive Summary

The primary focus of the Youth Polls is to measure the likelihood of youth ages 16-21 to join the Military and to identify the sources of information that influence their decisions. For over three decades the Department of Defense (DoD) has been tracking youth propensity for enlistment in the Military. The DoD conducts these polls twice a year to measure youths' perceptions of the Military and propensity to enlist.

The June 2007 Youth Poll collected information during 20-minute telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 3,094 youth between the ages of 16 and 21. This report details the findings of the June 2007 Youth Poll.

Demographic Profile

The characteristics of the American youth population, the primary recruiting market of the Armed Services, are changing over time. Because these variables are related to propensity, changes in the demographic profile are of special interest to military recruiting officials. Gradual changes are occurring in the racial/ethnic composition of the population and the educational and career aspirations of youth. Almost all youth (88%) report they plan to continue schooling and obtain higher education of one form or another. The number of high school graduates and the number of youth completing some college is increasing steadily. However, as the number of high school graduates going on to college increases, the cost of a post-secondary education has increased dramatically.

The current economy also provides ample employment options for youth pursuing college as well as those who have stopped pursuing their education. Unemployment among young people aged 16-24 continues to hover around 10 percent. In constant dollars, following a period of declining earnings from 2001 to 2003, weekly earning for young men appear to be gradually increasing again.

Additionally, there has been a decrease in the proportion of veterans and veteran parents (who have proven to be positive influencers in the past). At the end of the Cold War, it was estimated that over 40 percent of fathers of 18 year-olds had served in the U.S. Armed Forces. As of 2006, this proportion dropped to only about 20% for youth age 16-21.

Enlistment Propensity

Propensity is defined in the Youth Poll as the percent of youth who say they are "definitely" or "probably" likely to serve in the Military. This propensity measure has been shown to be a valid indicator of enlistment behavior. For most youth, propensity for military service is general (i.e., not tied to only one specific Military Service). Most youth who are interested in military service cite interest in two or more Services.

Executive Summary

(continued)

Propensity is related to several demographic characteristics. Generally, propensity:

- Is higher for men than women;
- Declines with age;
- Declines with increasing educational attainment;
- Is higher for unemployed than employed youth;
- Is highest among Hispanics;
- Varies by region: propensity is relatively high in the Pacific, Mountain, and West South Central regions and lowest in the New England region.

Looking back at data collected as part of the Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS), which was conducted until 1999, young men's propensity for military service rose during the Cold War, dropped following Operation Desert Storm, and declined through 2001. Beginning in 2001, propensity among young men appeared to be on the incline. However, starting in 2004, propensity began to trend downward again. In June 2006, substantial declines in propensity occurred. Propensity in June 2007 has remained low.

It is important to note that these generalizations pertain to propensity for general military service and do not entirely hold for specific racial and ethnic groups or for the different active duty Services, Reserve Components or the National Guard.

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OVERVIEW REPORT

The primary goal of the Youth Poll is to provide regular tracking of propensity - the likelihood that youth will join the Military. Section One covers the approach and methodology used in the June 2007 Youth Poll to track propensity.



Section 1

Section 1. Introduction

Tracking youth's interest in military service – or propensity – has been a consistent effort by the Department of Defense (DoD) since the mid-1980s; the set of questions asked about youth's future plans have gone relatively unchanged since that time.

Under the current administration methodology, data is collected twice a year with fielding ending in June and December. “Topline” memoranda provide initial results to the Services and DoD leadership in approximately January and July, and complete data files are delivered shortly thereafter.

The Youth Polls and their predecessor, the Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS), have provided the Department with information on youth attitudes for over thirty years. Shortly after the termination of the military draft, DoD realized that, in order to compete with commercial and educational institutions for youth's attention, it needed ongoing information on youth attitudes, such as what is most important to youth and how they view military service. YATS was created in 1975 to address these needs. In 2001, changes were made to the YATS methodology so that the Department would have information more frequently and in a more actionable time frame.

Data collected from the Youth Polls have several important applications both within and outside of the Department. The information is used by each of the Services and by their advertising agencies. Data from the Youth Polls are also used by think tanks to evaluate youth and military recruiting issues. The Youth Polls are the primary measure of propensity for military service, a common benchmark of interest in future military service. This report is the primary vehicle for disseminating findings from the Youth Polls to non-military audiences.

Overview of the Report

This report provides two related perspectives on the current recruiting market: demographics of the youth population and propensity for military service.

Following this introductory chapter, the report explores demographic trends shaping the recruiting market. Chapter 2 describes the distribution of American youth with respect to gender, age, scholastic status, employment, geographic location and race/ethnicity.

Chapter 3 provides a description of current youth propensity, correlates of propensity and historical trends in propensity, first describing the Youth Poll propensity measures and their validity. Chapter 3 covers the relationship between propensity and a variety of youth characteristics – gender, age, school status, educational prospects, employment, employment prospects, race/ethnicity and geographic location. Finally, this chapter describes propensity trends from 2001 through June 2007. It also details trends for different racial/ethnic groups, for active and reserve service and for the specific Active Duty Services.

Methodology

The June 2007 Youth Poll data were collected between March 24, 2007 and June 3, 2007. The questionnaire was administered via computer-assisted telephone interviews. The sample size was 3,094 completed interviews.

The sample design for this survey was a stratified two-phase sample. In the first phase, telephone-equipped households were sampled from one of six strata using stratified random sampling. The strata definitions were set to facilitate over-sampling of minority populations while maintaining precision of the study estimates. In the second phase, a respondent was randomly sampled from within the household. Once contact was made, the households were screened for the target audience: individuals between the ages of 16 and 21 who had never served in the U.S. Armed Services and were not enrolled in a postsecondary Reserve Officers' Training Corps program. If more than one person in the household met these criteria, one of the eligible individuals was randomly selected to be the respondent.

On average, the survey took 24 minutes to complete. The data were weighted by gender, age, race/ethnicity and Census region to reflect the general population based on American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census.

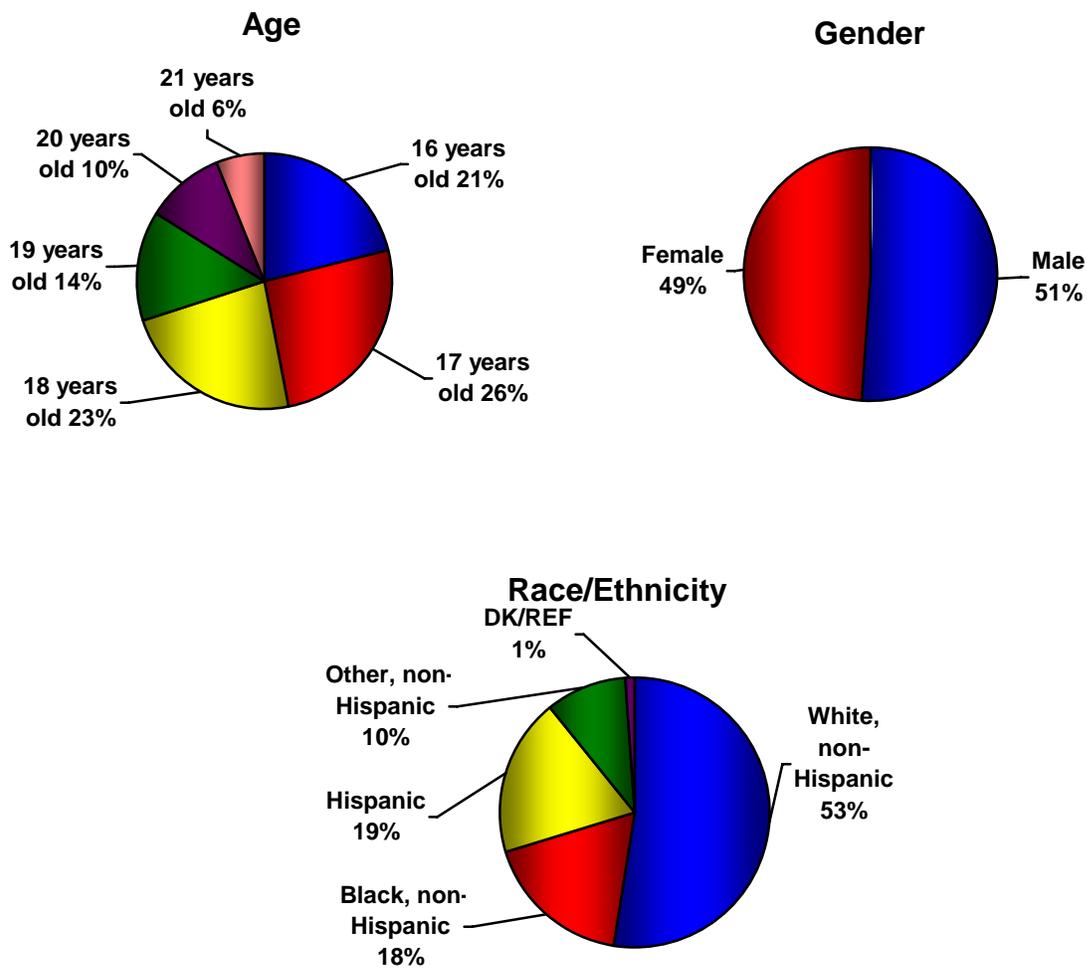
Naming Convention

This report refers to three racial/ethnic groups: Whites, Blacks and Hispanics. These names correspond to the group names used by the U.S. Census Bureau. These groups correspond to individuals who indicated they were White and Non-Hispanic, Black and Non-Hispanic or of Hispanic origin.

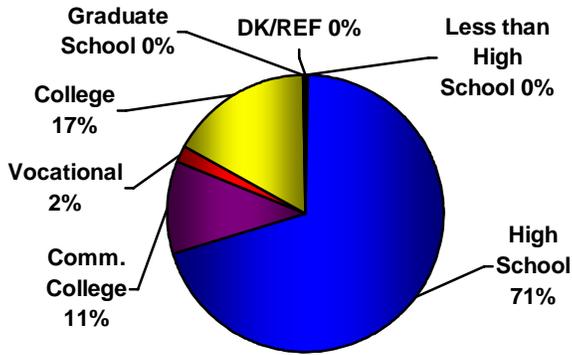
Respondent Profile

The June 2007 Poll was conducted via telephone using random digit dialing. The following charts display the demographic segments of the 3,094 survey respondents:

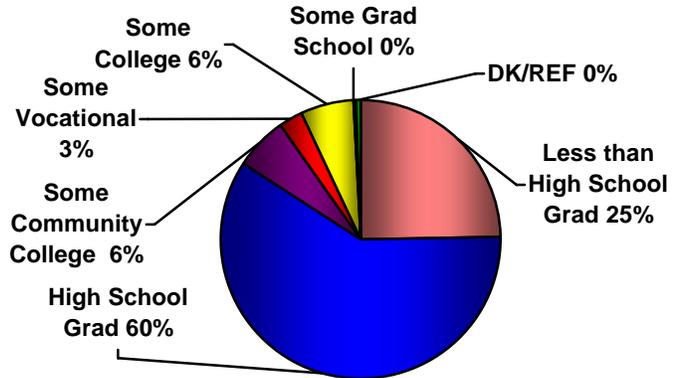
- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Education level (currently and previously enrolled)
- Average grades in high school
- Currently employed either full- or part-time
- Number of hours worked per week
- Geographic region
- Military family members



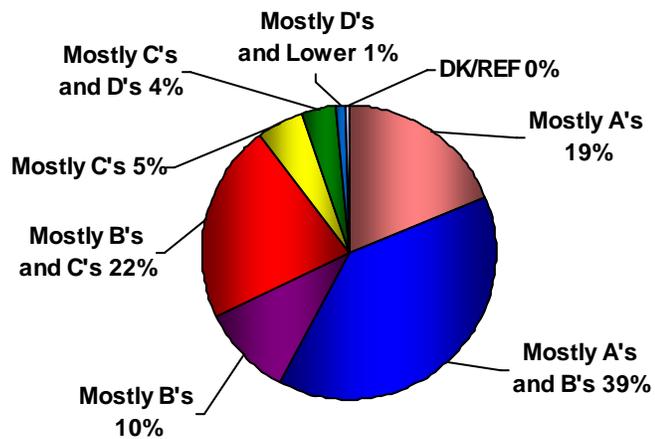
Current Education Level
(those currently enrolled)



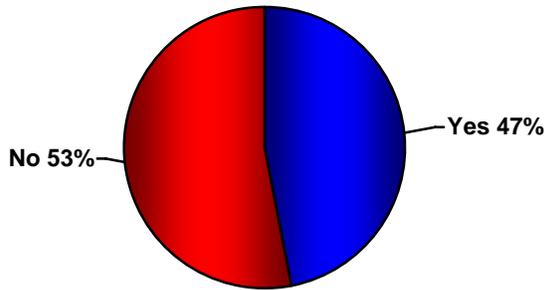
Highest Level of School Completed
(those not currently enrolled)



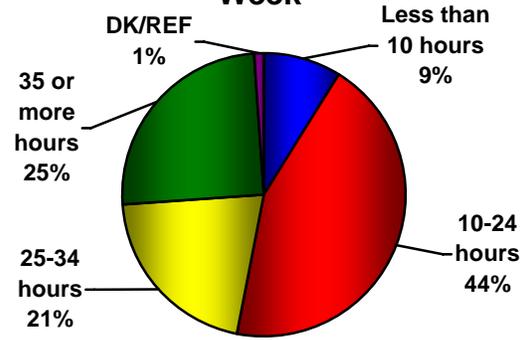
Average Grades in High School



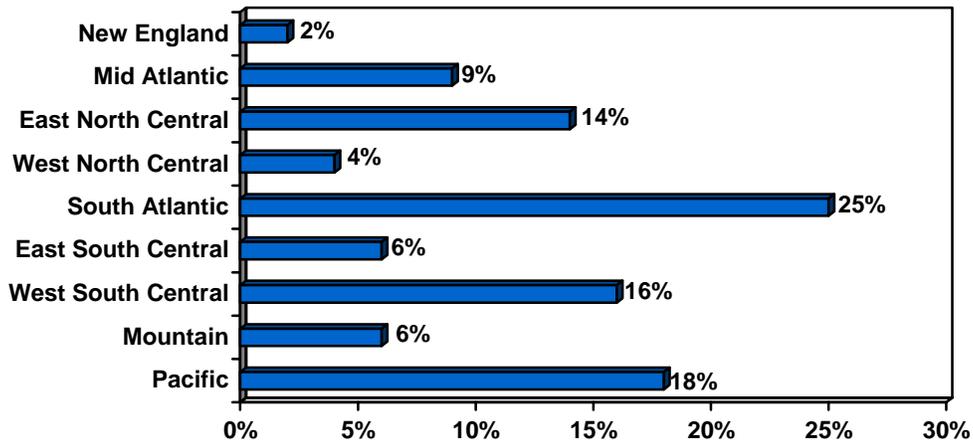
Currently Employed Either Full- or Part-Time



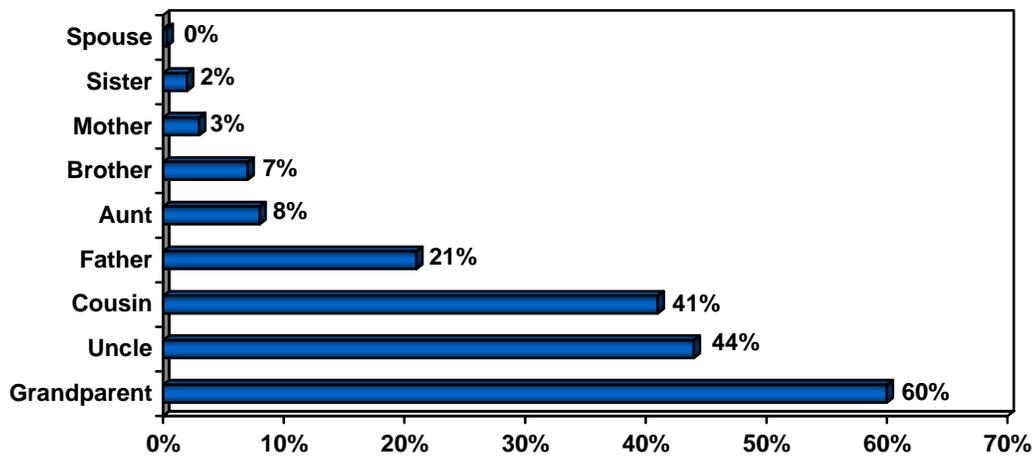
Number of Hours Worked per Week



Geographic Region



Military Family Members



OVERVIEW REPORT

Section Two provides an overview of demographic characteristics and trends in the youth population that are related to the recruiting challenge.



Section 2

Section 2: Youth Population Trends

Introduction

In recent years, the Armed Services have had increasing difficulty meeting recruitment needs. The Active Duty Services currently face the goal of enlisting approximately 200,000 youth per year. Adding the enlistment goals of the Reserve and National Guard Components brings this figure to over 300,000 youth per yearⁱ. More than 4 million youth becoming age eligible for military service each yearⁱⁱ suggests that the Services have sufficient numbers from which to recruit. However, many of the youth in America are not qualified for military service based on mental, physical or moral standards. Additionally, most youths' career plans and educational aspirations do not include military service. Together, these facts confirm that current recruiting goals are indeed formidable.

As military efforts in the Middle East continue, military recruiters face an uphill battle. Recruiting efforts and activities are under more scrutiny today than they have been in decades. Furthermore, the increasing importance of post-secondary education is leading growing numbers of youth to focus primarily on continuing their education after high school. President George W. Bush publicly echoed this reality when he declared that at least two years of college are needed to function effectively in today's work forceⁱⁱⁱ.

Unfortunately, most youth graduating from high school today do not seriously consider pursuing military service. This problem is reflected in military accession statistics. Although all of the Active Duty Services met their accession goals for fiscal years 2006^{iv} and 2007ⁱ, the Army fell just shy of its goal as recently as fiscal year 2005^v. Furthermore, in fiscal years 2005, 2006 and 2007, the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard fell short of their accession goals.

Making military recruiting even more challenging is the fact that more than half of the total youth population are reported to be ineligible for military service. Specifically, results from the June 2006 Youth Poll^{vi} show that 53 percent of youth ages 16-21 would be ineligible for military service due to medical, moral or legal reasons. The pool of potential recruits is reduced even further when considering only high-school graduates and youth who score in the upper half on military service aptitude tests.

To help combat these trends, the Services have incorporated a number of substantial changes in recruiting. For example, in 2006, the Army raised its maximum recruitment age from 35 to 42 and doubled its maximum cash enlistment bonus from \$20,000 to \$40,000^{vii}. In addition, the Army boosted recruiter strength from just over 5,100 active-duty and 955 reserve recruiters in 2004 to more than 6,300 active-duty and 1,700 reserve recruiters in fiscal year 2007^{viii}. Finally, the Army softened the restriction on recent marijuana use, put in place a high school equivalency program and removed the ban on childhood asthmatics for new enlisted recruits in 2006^{ix}.

While these changes have helped to lessen the impact that current economic, educational and attitudinal trends have had on enlisted accessions, military recruiters continue to face an up-hill battle. This chapter summarizes a number of trends in the youth population that are related to military recruiting.

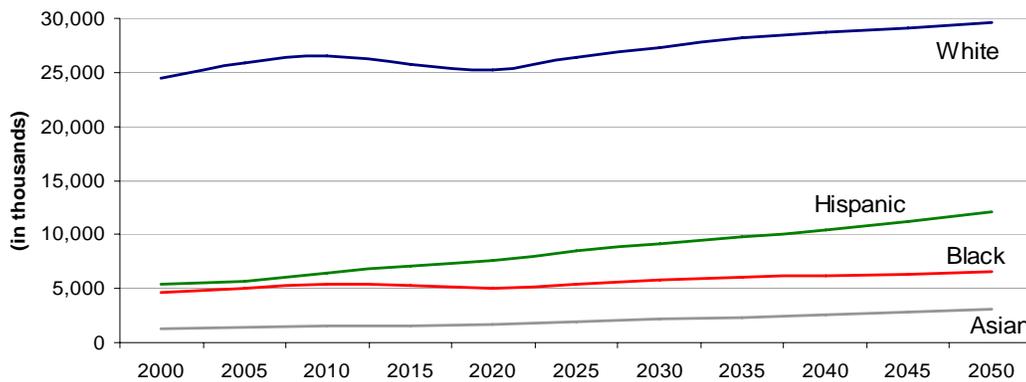
Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of demographic characteristics and trends in the youth population that may impact recruiting. This following section offers details on youth characteristics, such as education and employment, and shows how American youth are changing in ways that affect the Services' ability to meet recruiting goals.

Population Trends

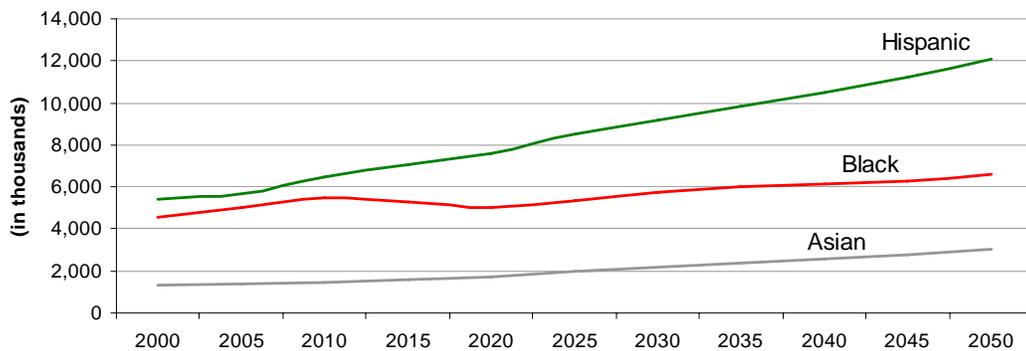
Youth who are 17-24 years old make up the majority of new entrants to the labor force, college and the Military. Figure 2-1 shows population trends for White, Black, Hispanic and Asian youth¹; these trends begin in 2000 and are projected through 2050^x. Figure 2-2 shows trends for Blacks, Hispanics and Asians only in order to provide a clearer picture of the trends for these minority groups. Figures 2-1 and 2-2 include both males and females. In general, about half of the youth population is male and half is female; population trends are essentially the same for both groups.

Figure 2-1. Population Trends, 17-24 Year-Olds



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: Census 2000 Population Projections

Figure 2-2. Population Trends, 17-24 Year-Old Blacks, Hispanics and Asians



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: Census 2000 Population Projections

¹ Census 2000 population projections do not encompass the full matrix of racial and Hispanic-origin categories. The racial/ethnic groups that are presented above include: (1) White alone, (2) Black alone, (3) Asian alone and (4) Hispanic origin.

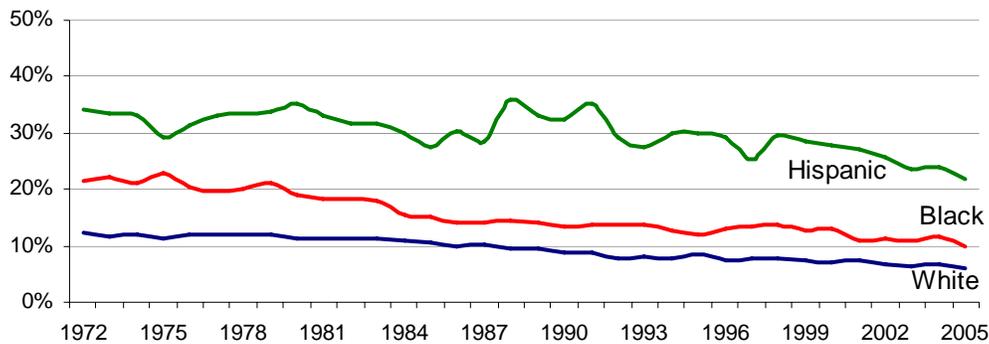
The size of the 17-24 age cohort was 32.9 million in the early 1980s and subsequently declined to less than 27.7 million during the mid 1990s. Since the 1990s this age group has steadily grown, increasing to 29.6 million in 2000 and to 33.1 million by July 2007. This represents an increase of about 1.2 percent per year from 2000 to 2007. This age cohort is expected to eclipse the 34 million mark in 2015. From 2007 to 2015 the largest increase in the youth population is expected to be among Hispanic youth, whose population is projected to increase by 19.3 percent (an average increase of 2.2 percent per year). Of additional interest is the expected increase among Asian youth. The Asian youth population is projected to increase by 12.5 percent from 2007 to 2015 (an average increase of 1.5 percent per year).

Education Trends

High School Dropout Rate

The percentage of high school dropouts² among 16- to 24-year-olds has decreased considerably over the past 35 years^{xi}. Most recently, from 1995 to 2005, the overall high school dropout rate declined from 12 percent to 9.4 percent. The dropout rate decreased significantly among Hispanic youth during this time period. However, Hispanic youth remain much more likely than Black or White youth to drop out of high school.

Figure 2-3. High School Dropout Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 16-24 Year-Olds



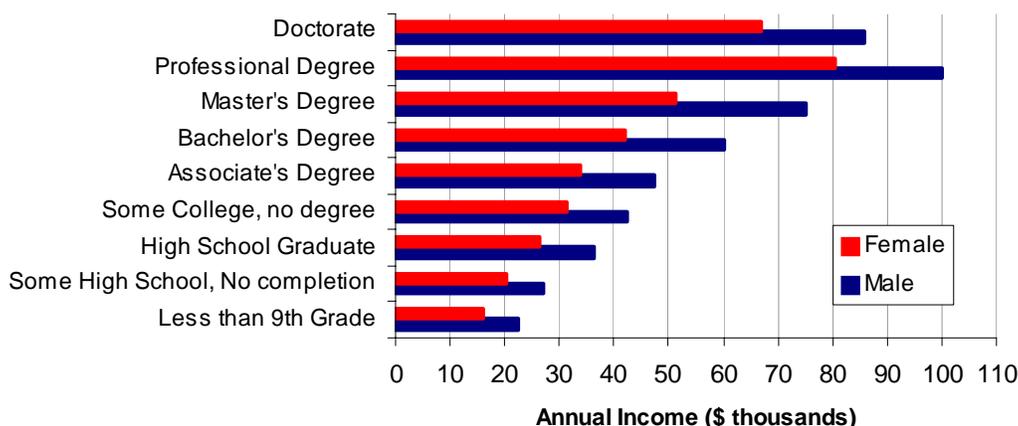
Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2006

² High school dropouts are defined as all persons who are neither enrolled in school nor recipients of a high school diploma. GED recipients are counted as having completed high school.

Educational Attainment and Earnings

Most youth aspire to continue their education after they graduate high school. In fact, the June 2007 Youth Poll results show that the vast majority, 88.4 percent, of youth ages 16-21 hope to pursue post-secondary education. The motivation for higher education is clear; more years of education typically result in higher salaries. In 2005, male full-time workers age 25 and older holding a bachelor's degree earned an average annual income of \$60,020 compared to an average annual income of \$36,302 earned by males with only a high school diploma^{xii}. Figure 2-4 shows the median income for men and women, 25 years old and over, by educational achievement.

Figure 2-4. Median Income of Full-Time Workers by Gender, 25 Years-Old and Over



Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2006

Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education

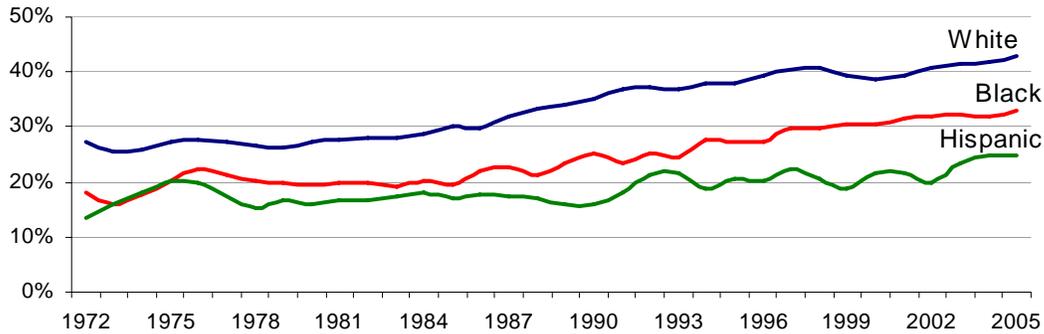
Between 1995 and 2005 the proportion of youth ages 18 to 24 enrolled in degree-granting institutions increased from 34.3 percent to 38.9 percent^{xiii}. Much of this growth was in female enrollment. From 1995 to 2005 the number of women enrolling in degree-granting institutions grew by 26.7 percent, while male enrollment grew by 17.6 percent^{xiv}. During the same time period, full-time enrollment rose by 32.8 percent, while part-time enrollment increased by only 9.1 percent.

Between October 2005 and October 2006, 65.8 percent of youth who graduated from high school were attending college the following fall semester^{xv}. The college enrollment rate of recent female high school graduates, 66 percent, was about the same as that of young men, 65.5 percent. Asians were considerably more likely than Whites, Blacks or Hispanics to be enrolled in college in the fall following their high school graduation. Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college, 92.3 percent were full-time students. Of these full-time students, 40.8 percent were in the labor force, either working or looking for work.

The proportion of minorities who are enrolled in degree-granting institutions has also been increasing^{xviii}. In 1995, 27.5 percent of Black and 20.7 percent of Hispanic youth ages 18-24 were enrolled in college. These proportions have risen to 33.1 percent of Black and 24.8 percent of Hispanic youth in 2005. While the proportion of Hispanic youth enrolled in college has

shown strong growth over the past ten years, the proportion of Hispanic youth enrolled in college remain considerably less than the proportion of White or Black youth enrolled in degree-granting institutions. Figure 2-5 provides enrollment rates in degree granting institutions among 18-24 year olds.

Figure 2-5. Enrollment Rate in Degree Granting Institutions by Race/Ethnicity, 18-24 Year-Olds

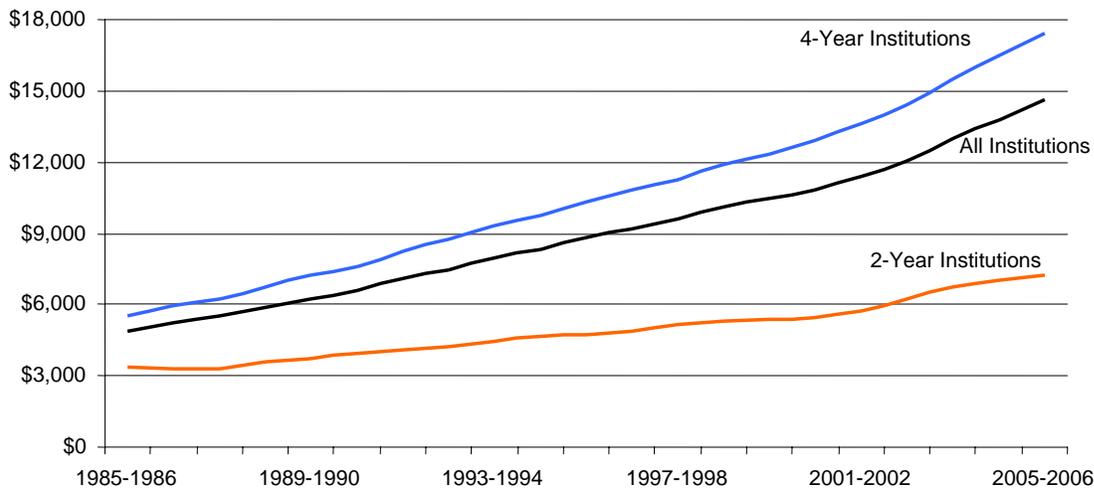


Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2006

Cost of Post-Secondary Education

Over the last twenty years the cost of a post-secondary education has increased considerably. Figure 2-6 displays the upward trend, adjusted for inflation, for college tuition, room and board^{xvi}. In 2005, the average cost was \$17,447 for 4-year institutions and \$7,231 for 2-year institutions. While inflation adjusted costs for 2-year institutions have increased by 53 percent since 1995, the tuition costs of 4-year institutions increased by 68.9 percent.

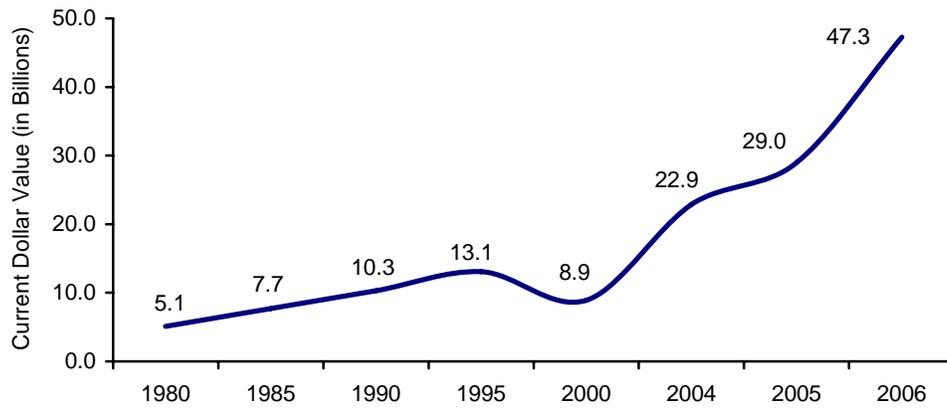
Figure 2-6. Average Undergraduate Tuition, Fees, Room and Board Paid by Full-Time Equivalent Students



Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2006

As postsecondary education costs have risen, students increasingly rely on a variety of economic resources to cover those costs. This has resulted in a greater percentage of youth relying on student loans to pay for post-secondary education compared to ten years ago. For example, in 1992, 32.3 percent of full-time undergraduates received student loans. By 2003, this percentage had risen to 49.9 percent^{xvii}. Further, in 2003, the average full-time college student borrowed approximately \$7,336 in student loans^{xviii}. Figure 2-7 shows how the Department of Education has increased federal funding in the form of financial assistance and educational loans from \$13.1 billion in 1995 to \$47.3 billion in 2006^{xix}.

Figure 2-7. Department of Education Budget for Student Financial Assistance and Educational Loans



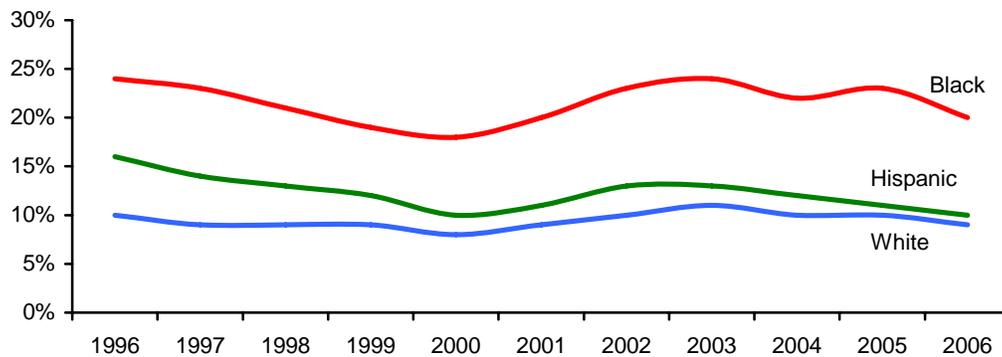
Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2006

Employment Trends

Unemployment

Generally, youth leaving high school are choosing from among three options: college, civilian employment or military service. As mentioned previously, most youth report that they would like to go to college. However, many youth are also interested in civilian employment. Figure 2-8 shows that unemployment among individuals aged 16-24 has remained relatively stable in the past ten years^{xx}. Unemployment increased slightly from 2000 to 2003, but has since been declining. Black youth ages 16 to 24 are considerably more likely to be unemployed compared to White or Hispanic youth.

Figure 2-8. Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 16- to 24-Year Olds

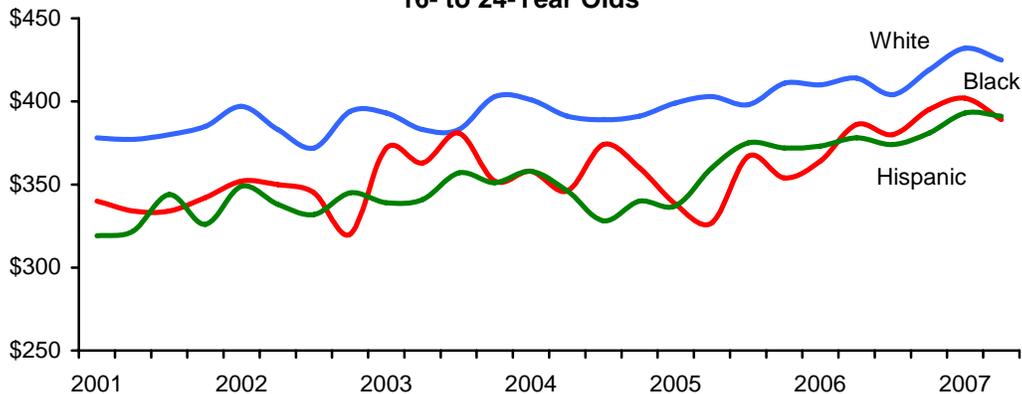


Source: U.S. Department of Labor: Current Population Survey

Earnings

Figure 2-9 shows the average weekly earnings of youth ages 16-24 that are employed full-time^{xx}. The earnings for the respondent's main job have been adjusted by the Consumer Price Index to reflect constant 2006 dollars. Median weekly earnings among young people ages 16 to 24 have been gradually increasing since 2001. However, Black and Hispanic youth have consistently earned lower weekly earnings than White youth.

Figure 2-9. Median Usual Weekly Earnings by Race/Ethnicity, 16- to 24-Year Olds

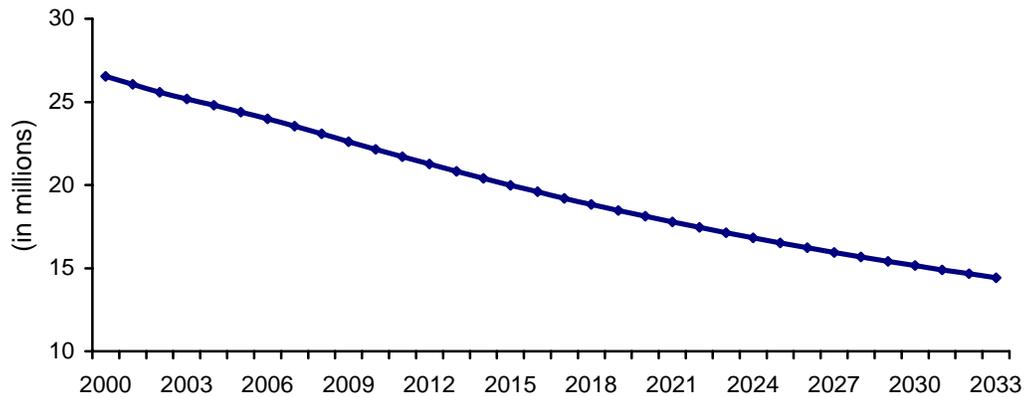


Source: U.S. Department of Labor: Current Population Survey

Veteran Population Trends

Another important factor in the declining interest in military service is the declining number of military veterans in the population. Studies by individual Services, including the Navy^{xxi}, have found that there is a link between knowing a veteran, particularly having a father who is a veteran, and enlistment behavior. However, the size of the veteran population has been steadily declining. In July 2007, there were approximately 21.7 million military veterans in the U.S. population, which was down from an estimated 26.4 million veterans in July 1995^{xxii}. As shown in Figure 2-10, the size of the veteran population is expected to continue to decline to around 14.4 million by 2033^{xxiii}.

Figure 2-10. Projected U.S. Veteran Population



Source: U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs: VetPop 2004

At the end of the Cold War, over 40 percent of fathers of 18 year-olds were veterans^{xxiv}. Data from the DoD Youth Polls indicates that this proportion has also been steadily decreasing; only 24.6 percent of young adults age 16-21 reported having a father with military experience in June 2003 and 20.1 percent in June 2007. The decreasing number of fathers who have served in the Military and the increasing number of parents who have gone to college contributes to today's recruiting challenges.

- ⁱ U.S. Department of Defense (2007). *DoD Announces Recruiting and Retention Numbers for FY 2007*. Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=11398>.
- ⁱⁱ U.S. Census Bureau (2007). *National Population Estimates for the 2000s*. Retrieved November 1, 2007, from http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/2006_nat_res.html.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Kelderman, E. (2004). *Bush Suggests New High School Tests*. Retrieved March 31, 2005, from <http://www.stateline.org/live/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=136&languageId=1&contentId=15764>.
- ^{iv} U.S. Department of Defense (2006). *DoD Announces Recruiting and Retention Numbers for FY 2006*. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=10057>.
- ^v U.S. Department of Defense (2005). *DoD Announces Recruiting and Retention Numbers for September*. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=8944>.
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OVERVIEW REPORT

Section Three describes the propensity measures, identifies propensity related factors, describes propensity for the specific Services and Reserve Components, and describes trends in propensity.



Section 3

Section 3. Enlistment Propensity for Military Service

Introduction

The DoD Youth Polls are best known for the information they provide on youth propensity for service in the Armed Forces. This chapter presents the most current estimates of propensity. For all measures of propensity referenced in this chapter, “propensity” is defined as the proportion of youth indicating that military service is a likely event in their future.

Chapter Overview

This chapter is divided into five sections:

1. **Propensity Measures:** This section explains the measures of propensity for Active Duty service and the measures of propensity for Reserve service that are included in the Youth Poll. It also describes research showing that propensity is correlated with enlistment behavior.
2. **Propensity Related Factors:** This section explains the relationship between propensity and several demographic factors, such as gender, age and race/ethnicity.
3. **Propensity for Specific Services:** This section presents the latest information on propensity for the individual Services. It also shows the overlap in propensity for different Services among youth who express propensity for multiple Services. Additionally, it demonstrates the correlation between propensity for Active Duty and propensity for the Reserves and the National Guard. Demographic differences in Service-specific propensity are also noted.
4. **Propensity Trends:** This section shows how propensity has changed over the past decade. It also displays distinct trends for general military propensity and unaided propensity, for Service-specific propensity, and for racial/ethnic groups.
5. **Summary:** This section provides a concise overview of Chapter 3.

Propensity Measures

The same questions have been used to measure youth propensity since the first YATS survey conducted in 1975. Prior to any mention of military service by the interviewer, respondents are asked an open-ended question about their future plans:

“Now let’s talk about your plans (after you get out of high school/for the next few years). What do you think you might be doing?”

The most common responses include going to school, working and entering the Military. Respondents are encouraged to indicate all of the things they might be doing, and those who reference military service in general, or one of the Services specifically, are counted as demonstrating an “unaided propensity” for military service. The reference is considered to be “unaided” because the topic of military service is first mentioned by the respondent, and not by the interviewer.

After the open-ended question about future plans, each respondent is asked:

“Now I’d like to ask you how likely it is that you will be serving in the Military in the next few years. Would you say definitely, probably, probably not or definitely not?”

and

“How likely is it that you will be serving on active duty in the [Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard]?”

The general military question is asked prior to asking specifically about each individual Service. The order of the questions changes from one respondent to the next to eliminate any order effect. Those who say they will “definitely” or “probably” be serving on active duty are counted as having propensity for the Service named. Propensity for a specific Service is reported as the percent of respondents who indicate propensity for that Service. “Active composite propensity” is defined as the proportion of respondents who indicate propensity for at least one of the four active DoD Services¹: Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force.

The Youth Polls also include similar questions about potential service in the Reserves and the National Guard:

“How likely is it that you will be serving in the [Reserves, National Guard]? Would you say definitely, probably, probably not or definitely not?”

These questions have followed immediately after the questions about active duty since 1990. In order to avoid question order effects, half of the respondents are randomly selected to be asked first about potential service in the Reserves and then about potential service in the National Guard; the other half of respondents are asked about potential service in the National Guard first. “Reserve composite propensity” is defined as the proportion of respondents who indicate they will “definitely” or “probably” serve in either the Reserves or the National Guard.

Research has shown that these propensity measures are valid measures of enlistment behavior. A study conducted by RANDⁱ found that high-quality youth who offered an unaided mention of plans to enlist were seven times more likely to actually enlist than those who said they will “probably not” or “definitely not” serve. Those who, in response to a direct question about the Military, said they will “definitely” or “probably” serve were three times more likely to actually enlist than those who said they will “probably not” or “definitely not” serve. Previous research by RANDⁱⁱ and by Brice Stone and colleaguesⁱⁱⁱ found similar results.

Propensity-Related Factors

Youth Poll results demonstrate that propensity for military service is related to a number of demographic variables. These relationships have been fairly stable over a number of years. The following section describes the relationship between several of these factors and propensity.

¹ Except in wartime, the Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Gender and Age

The proportion of youth propensed for military service decreases as age increases from 16 years old to 21 years old. Figures 3-1 and 3-2 show this pattern for unaided military propensity, general military propensity and composite Reserve propensity for the May 2004 to June 2007 Polls.

Figure 3-1. Relationship Between Propensity and Age Among Males

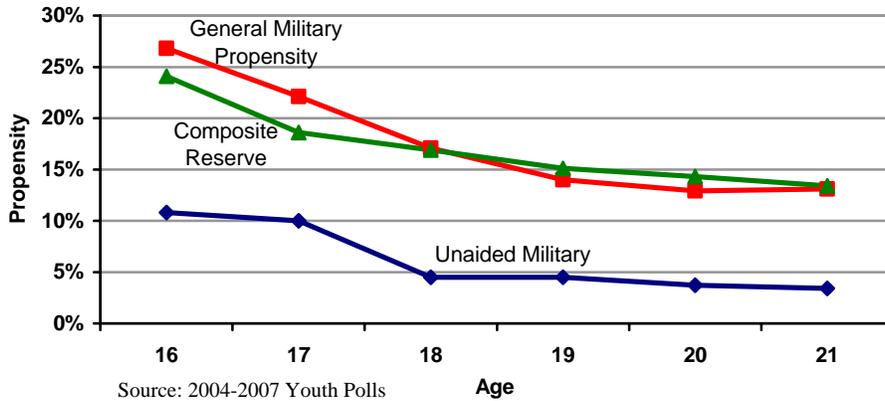
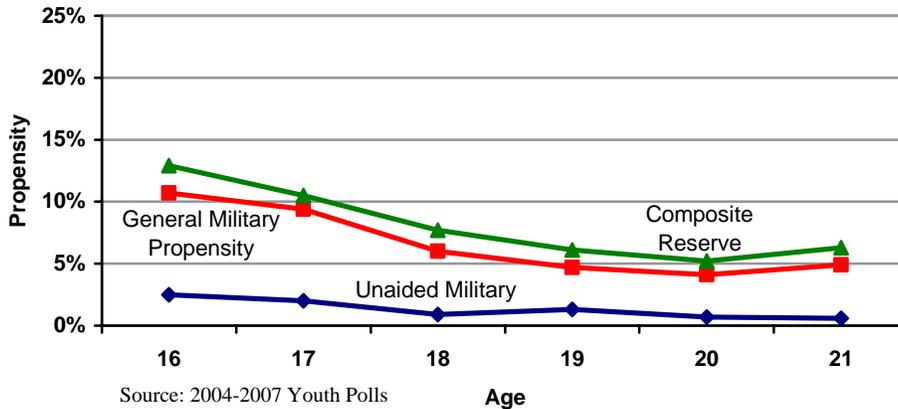


Figure 3-2. Relationship Between Propensity and Age Among Females



As shown in Figures 3-1 and 3-2, propensity declines rather dramatically with age: 16-17 year-olds are about twice as likely to be propensed as are 20-21 year olds. The majority of this drop occurs as youth age from 16 years old to 18 years old. At all ages, general military propensity and composite Reserve propensity are at similar levels, while unaided military propensity is considerably lower. Additionally, at all ages, propensity is lower among females than among males. Research from YATS suggests that this is to be expected. In-depth interviews with young women found that many young women place a high value on maintaining close relationships with their family and friends and tend to be more reluctant than young men to break these ties by joining the Military^{iv}.

Scholastic Status

Propensity has also been found to vary by scholastic status. Propensity generally decreases with each additional year of education. Specifically, high school students are more likely than college students to indicate propensity for military service. Among youth who are not currently enrolled, general military propensity and composite Reserve propensity is higher among those who have dropped out of high school or who have finished high school, but have not pursued post-secondary education than it is among college students.

Table 3-1. Propensity by Education, Gender

Education Level	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve
Students						
Less than 11 th Grade	12	30	26	3	13	16
H.S. Juniors	11	25	21	2	9	11
H.S. Seniors	6	16	15	1	7	8
Vo-Tech & 2-Yr College	2	12	14	0	4	6
4-Year College						
Freshmen	2	10	10	1	3	5
Sophomores	1	7	8	0	3	3
Juniors	1	3	4	0	1	2
Seniors or higher	2	7	7	1	3	2
Non-Students						
H.S. Dropouts ²	6	31	30	1	10	17
H.S. Grads (no college)	6	17	18	1	8	8
Some College or more	5	10	13	1	5	5

Source: 2004 - 2007 Youth Polls

Employment Status

Propensity also varies by employment status. As Table 3-2 shows between May 2004 and June 2007 youth, regardless of current educational status, who are unemployed are more likely than those who are employed to be propensed for military service. General military propensity and composite Reserve propensity are higher among youth who are neither students nor employed.

Table 3-2. Propensity by Employment, Gender

Employment	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve
Students						
Employed	6	15	14	1	5	6
Unemployed	8	20	18	2	8	11
Non-Students						
Employed	5	17	18	2	6	7
Unemployed	7	26	26	1	10	12

Source: 2004 - 2007 Youth Polls

² H.S. Dropouts include any non-student who did not complete high school.

Employment Prospects

Propensity for military service also is related to perceived income and employment prospects. To evaluate perceived income, youth are asked whether they would expect to earn more in the Military or in a civilian job over the next few years. As Table 3-3 shows, propensity is the highest among those who expect to earn more in the Military than in a civilian job.

Table 3-3. Propensity by Income Prospects in Military vs. Civilian Jobs, Gender

Expected relative earnings	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve
More in military job	12	32	26	3	12	15
Military/civilian same	6	18	19	1	6	8
More in civilian job	3	10	10	0	3	4

Source: 2004 - 2007 Youth Polls

To evaluate employment expectations, youth are asked how difficult they think it is to get a job in their community. As Table 3-4 shows, the more difficult youth believe it is to get a job in their community, the more likely they are to be propensed for military service.

Table 3-4. Propensity by Perceived Difficulty Getting a Civilian Job, Gender

Perceived difficulty in getting a job	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve
Almost impossible	9	26	25	2	10	10
Very difficult	7	21	20	2	8	10
Somewhat difficult	7	18	17	1	6	8
Not difficult	5	15	15	1	6	8

Source: 2004 - 2007 Youth Polls

Race/Ethnicity

Propensity is also found to vary by race and ethnicity. In past years, general military propensity for both males and females has typically been higher among Hispanic and Black youth than among White youth. Based on the data collected from May 2004 through June 2007, however, general military propensity is no higher among Black males than it has been among White males, see Table 3-5. Among both males and females, composite Reserve propensity has remained higher among Black and Hispanic youth than among White youth. Asian youth have also expressed higher propensity for Reserve service than White youth. Given the growth rate of the Asian population (see Chapter 2), this elevated propensity may be of interest to the recruiting community in coming years.

As noted earlier, educational achievement is related to both race and ethnicity (Chapter 2) and propensity (Table 3-1). As shown in Table 3-5, educational achievement alone does not explain differences in propensity between White youth and minority youth. For example, general military propensity and composite Reserve propensity of White high school juniors and seniors is considerably lower than that of Hispanic high school juniors and seniors. Furthermore, among

high school graduates who had not gone to college, composite Reserve propensity is considerably lower among White youth than Black and Hispanic youth.

Table 3-5. Propensity by Race and Ethnicity³, Gender

Race/Ethnicity⁴	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve
Total Population						
White	7	17	15	1	5	6
Black	5	17	21	2	10	14
Hispanic	6	26	27	2	13	15
Asian	5	16	18	1	8	10
HS Juniors and Seniors						
White	9	20	16	1	6	7
Black	5	18	23	3	12	17
Hispanic	8	30	30	3	15	16
HS Graduates, no college						
White	6	15	15	2	5	4
Black	8	21	21	0	9	13
Hispanic	5	22	25	1	16	16

Source: 2004 - 2007 Youth Polls

Gender Differences

The preceding tables demonstrate that fewer women than men are interested in military service. In any particular category (e.g., H.S. seniors or Hispanics), the propensity of women is lower than that of men. In general, the differences are proportional: the propensity of women is generally about half that of men. However, some salient exceptions include:

- General military propensity of female high school dropouts is about one-third that of male high school dropouts (Table 3-1).
- General military propensity of employed females is also about one-third that of male youth who are employed (Table 3-2).
- Relative to other race/ethnic groups, White female's propensity is especially low when compared to that of White males (Table 3- 5).

³ Estimates for race and ethnicity categories were based on all respondents who indicated they belong to a particular group. Respondents who indicated membership to multiple groups were counted as part of each group mentioned.

⁴ Separate estimates for Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Eskimos who were high school seniors or high school graduates were not included because of sample size restrictions (they represented significantly smaller portions of the population, and of the Youth Poll sample, than Blacks or Hispanics).

Geographic Region

Propensity for military service also varies by geographic region. Between May 2004 and June 2007, propensity for military service has been relatively high in the South Atlantic, Pacific, Mountain, and West South Central regions and relatively low in the New England region, as shown in Table 3-6. Reserve propensity among male youth rates in the Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Pacific, Mountain and West South Central regions appear to be largely driven by minority youth; as composite Reserve propensity in these regions are considerably lower among White male youth than among all racial/ethnic groups combined. Examination of general military propensity among females reveals that propensity is relatively high in the West South Central and Pacific regions and relatively low in the New England region.

Table 3-6. Propensity by Geographic Region⁵, Gender

Census Region	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve	Unaided Military	General Military	Composite Reserve
All Race/Ethnic Groups						
New England	4	12	13	1	4	5
West North Central	5	16	15	2	5	8
East North Central	5	15	16	1	6	8
Mid-Atlantic	6	16	17	1	6	8
East South Central	7	17	17	1	6	9
South Atlantic	8	20	18	2	7	9
Pacific	7	21	19	2	9	8
Mountain	8	22	21	1	5	8
West South Central	9	24	20	2	9	11
Whites Only						
New England	4	10	11	1	4	2
West North Central	5	15	12	1	4	6
East North Central	5	15	14	1	5	6
Mid-Atlantic	6	14	12	0	3	4
East South Central	7	15	16	1	5	6
South Atlantic	9	19	14	1	4	5
Pacific	7	18	15	2	6	3
Mountain	8	18	17	1	3	6
West South Central	10	22	15	2	4	7

Source: 2004 - 2007 Youth Polls

⁵ Census Regions are defined as follows: New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT); East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI); West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD); Mid-Atlantic (PA, NJ, NY); East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN); South Atlantic (DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, DC, WV); Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY); Pacific (CA, OR, WA, AK, HI); West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX).

Propensity for Specific Services

As mentioned earlier, Youth Poll respondents are asked how likely they were to serve on active duty in each of the Armed Services: the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard. Respondents are asked about each of the Services one at a time. The order in which the questions are asked is randomized so that question order effects do not impact responses.

Historically, propensity has been most closely monitored for 16-21 year-olds. This focus continues to be appropriate for evaluating the enlistment potential of the youth market – only about 1 in 4 enlisted active duty accessions are over 21 years old. However, the adjustment in enlistment standards for the Army has resulted in sizable increases in the proportion of older Army enlistees (see Table 3-7). In 2006, 7 percent of Army enlistees were at least 30 years old, while less than 2 percent of enlistees for all other Services were at least 30 years old.

Table 3-7. Cumulative Percentage of 2006 Enlistees by Age and Service

Age	Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard
17	4.7	2.9	5.7	2.7	3.1
18	25.0	32.7	44.7	31.2	22.4
19	41.9	55.6	67.0	54.9	40.4
20	54.1	69.7	78.7	70.8	54.2
21	63.0	78.3	85.6	81.0	64.7
22	70.2	84.2	90.1	87.8	73.7
23	76.2	88.5	93.2	92.3	80.3
24	80.8	91.8	95.5	95.2	85.8
25	84.4	94.0	97.0	97.2	90.5
26	87.3	95.4	98.0	98.5	94.2
27	89.6	96.5	98.7	99.5	96.8
28	91.5	97.4	99.2	99.7	98.4
29	93.0	98.1	99.5	99.8	99.0
30+	100	100	100	100	100

Source: FY06 Active Duty Accessions, Defense Manpower Data Center

Service Specific Propensity

Table 3-8 shows the propensity for each Armed Service, the National Guard, and the Reserves in June 2007. For all Services/Components, males are more likely than females to be propensed.

Table 3-8. Propensity: Active Duty and National Guard/Reserves by Gender

Service	Men (%)	Women (%)
Army	8	3
Navy	7	3
Marine Corps	7	2
Air Force	10	5
Coast Guard	7	3
National Guard	7	4
Reserves	11	4

Source: June 2007 Youth Poll

Propensity for Multiple Services

Results from the June 2007 Youth Poll also demonstrated that the majority of youth who are propensed are not propensed for only one Service. Table 3-9 shows the proportion of youth who indicated they were propensed for a particular Service and for at least one additional Service in June 2007. Youth who were interested in the Air Force were the most likely to be interested solely in joining that Service.

Table 3-9. Percentage of Propensed Youth Indicating Propensity for Multiple Active Duty Services by Gender

Service	Men (%)	Women (%)
Army	71	68
Navy	78	79
Marine Corps	71	75
Air Force	61	54
Coast Guard	77	69

Source: June 2007 Youth Poll

It is worth noting that trends in multiple service propensity have changed since 1999. That is, in June 2007 fewer females who were propensed for a specific Service also indicated they were interested in other Services than did in 1999, see Table 3-10. Similarly, fewer males who were propensed for the Army or Air Force indicated that they were also interested in other Services in June 2007 than did 1999. One possible explanation for this shift in preference is that the current military activities and media coverage of these events has resulted in increasing proportions of propensed youth who are interested in one specific branch.

Table 3-10. Percentage of Propensed Youth Indicating Propensity for Multiple Active Duty Services by Gender: 1999

Service	Men (%)	Women (%)
Army	76	74
Navy	78	71
Marine Corps	73	89
Air Force	72	66
Coast Guard	80	79

Source: 1999 YATS

Propensity for National Guard and Reserves

There was also considerable overlap between propensity for active duty and propensity for either the National Guard or the Reserves in June 2007. As Table 3-11 indicates, approximately 75 percent of the youth who were propensed for the National Guard or the Reserves were also propensed for at least one active duty Service. Of those youth propensed for the Reserves, about 40 percent indicated they were also propensed for the National Guard. Of those youth propensed for the National Guard, just over half indicated they were also propensed for the Reserves.

Table 3-11. Percentage of Youth Indicating Propensity for Both Active and Reserve Service and for Both Reserve and National Guard by Gender`

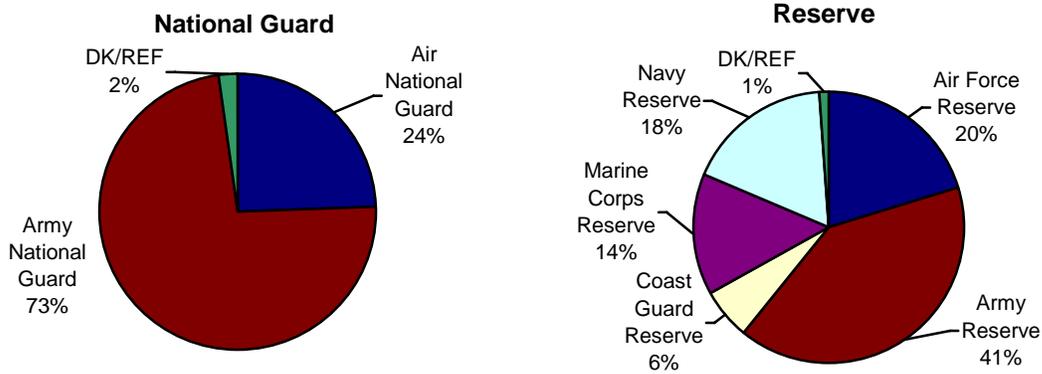
	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Active Duty	Other Reserve Component	Active Duty	Other Reserve Component
Reserves	77	36	76	42
National Guard	81	59	75	54

Source: 2004 – 2007 Youth Polls

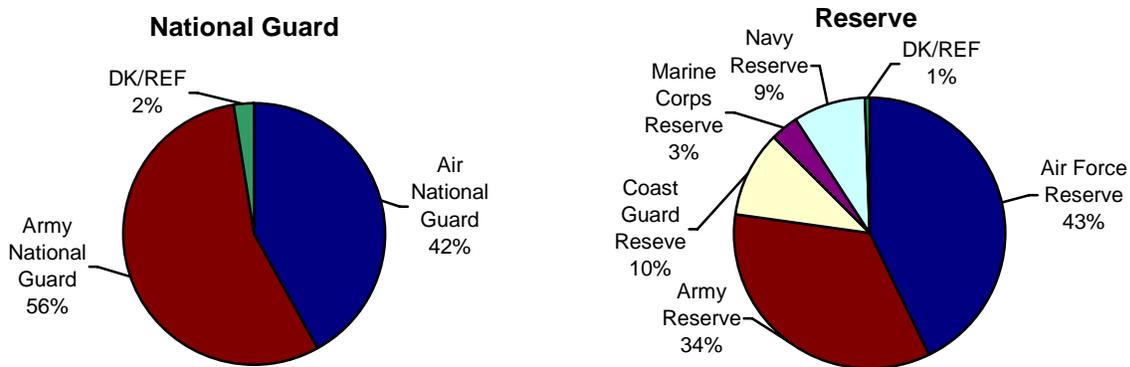
As part of the Youth Polls, respondents who indicate they will “definitely” or “probably” serve in the Reserves are asked in which branch (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard) they are likely to be serving. Similarly, those who indicate they may be serving in the National Guard are asked to indicate whether they are likely to serve in the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard. Figure 3-3 shows how youth responded to this follow-up question in June 2007.

Figure 3-3. National Guard and Reserve Propensity by Gender

Men



Women



Source: June 2007 Youth Poll

Service Comparisons

Propensity is often higher for some Services than for others. For example, youth are typically more likely to be propensed for the Air Force than the Marine Corps. In general, the factors influencing propensity are similar for all Services, as well as for the Reserves and National Guard. For example, Figures 3-1 and 3-2 show that unaided and general military propensity decreases as youth get older. The relationship between age and propensity for each of the individuals Services follows a similar pattern.

Trends in Propensity

Youth are less likely to be propensed for military service today than they were during the last years of the Cold War. Male propensity for military service rose immediately following the events of September 11th, reaching a high point in November 2001. Propensity then remained stable through November 2003. In May 2004, as the conventional War in Iraq ended but terrorism-related conflicts continued, propensity began to decline gradually among males. Propensity dropped precipitously in June 2006 and has remained low through June 2007. In general, propensity among females has remained relatively stable over the same time period. However, exact trends differ for unaided and general military propensity, by racial/ethnic group⁶ and by Service.

The figures in the following section show observed values of propensity for each fielding of the Youth Poll since 2001, as well as trend lines projected to December 2007⁷. The observed values include a small degree of sampling error. In the following charts, the sampling error is almost always less than 3 percentage points – often it is less than 2 percentage points. Thus, the propensity estimates shown for a particular year are typically within 2 percentage points of what would be found if every youth in America had been interviewed. For minority populations (particularly Black and Hispanic youth), the sampling error is larger because estimates are based on fewer observations. For minorities, sampling error is almost always less than 10 percentage points and is often less than 5 percentage points.

⁶ In this section, race and ethnicity categories are mutually exclusive (i.e., each respondent was only counted in one group). This was done to remain consistent with past trend lines reported by YATS and in the Youth Polls.

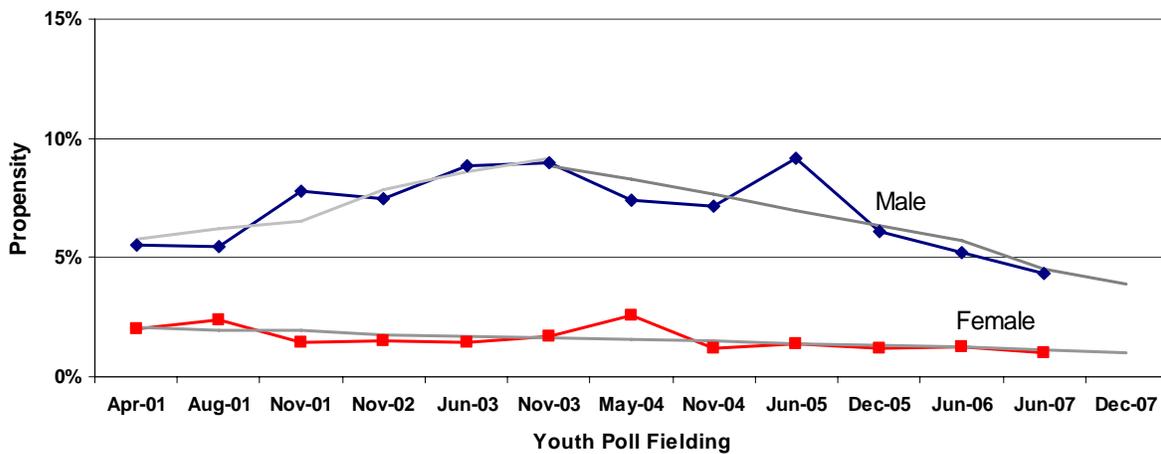
⁷ Generally, linear regression lines were fit to observed data for two periods: 2001 – 2003 and 2004 – 2005. In some instances, the 2004 – 2005 trend appeared to be a continuation of the 2001 – 2003 trend; in such cases, a single trend line was fit. These fitted trends lines are then projected for December 2007 to illustrate a continuing trend or departure from the trend. While the trend lines included fit the data reasonably well, the reader should note that other trend lines might also fit the data reasonably well. The notes below each figure explain the procedures used for the trend lines in the figure.

Unaided Military Propensity

Figure 3-4 shows trends in unaided propensity – the percentage of youth stating, without prompting from the interviewer, that military service was among their plans for the next few years. Since 2001, an average of 6.6 percent of males and 1.4 percent of females have volunteered that they expect to serve in the Military.

Unaided propensity has changed significantly in the past several years for males. From 2001 through 2003, unaided propensity for military service among males increased about 1.3 percentage points per year. Between 2003 and June 2007, it dropped at approximately the same rate. Although female propensity has shown some fluctuation, the long-term trend is relatively stable.

Figure 3-4. Unaided Military Propensity Trends



Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Nov 03. The second trend line for men is based on Nov 03 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.

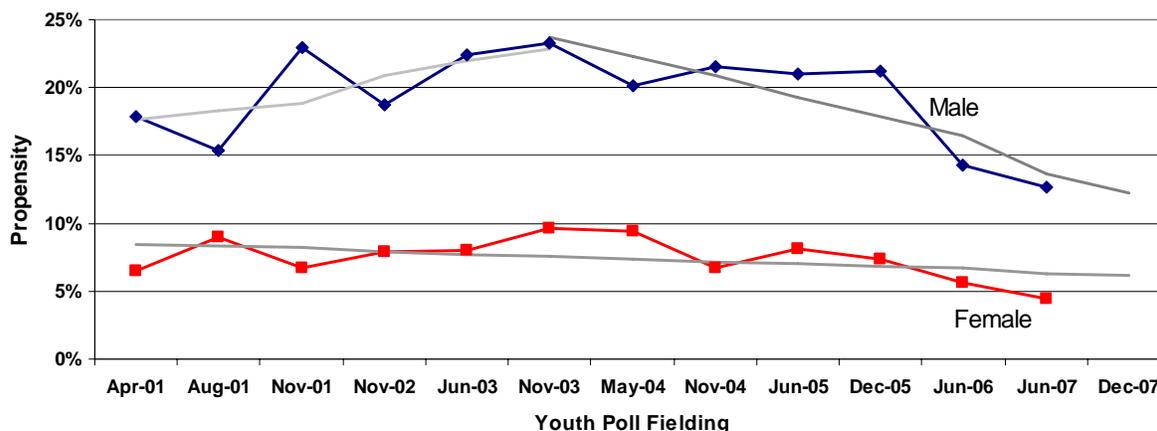
Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

General Military Propensity

Figure 3-5 shows trends in general military propensity – the percentage of youth responding that they will “definitely” or “probably” be serving in the Military in the next few years. General military propensity has changed significantly in the past several years. From 2001 through 2003, male propensity for military service increased about 1.8 percentage points per year. However, from May 2004 to June 2007 general military propensity among males has generally declined at a rate of approximately 2.4 percentage points a year. In June 2006, general military propensity experienced a significant decline and has declined again in June 2007.

General military propensity among females has shown a similar trend to general military propensity among males – generally increasing from 2001 to 2003 and then decreasing from May 2004 through June 2007. While general military propensity among female youth did not experience any specific substantial decline during this time period, general military propensity in June 2007 was half of what it was in May 2004.

Figure 3-5. General Military Propensity Trends



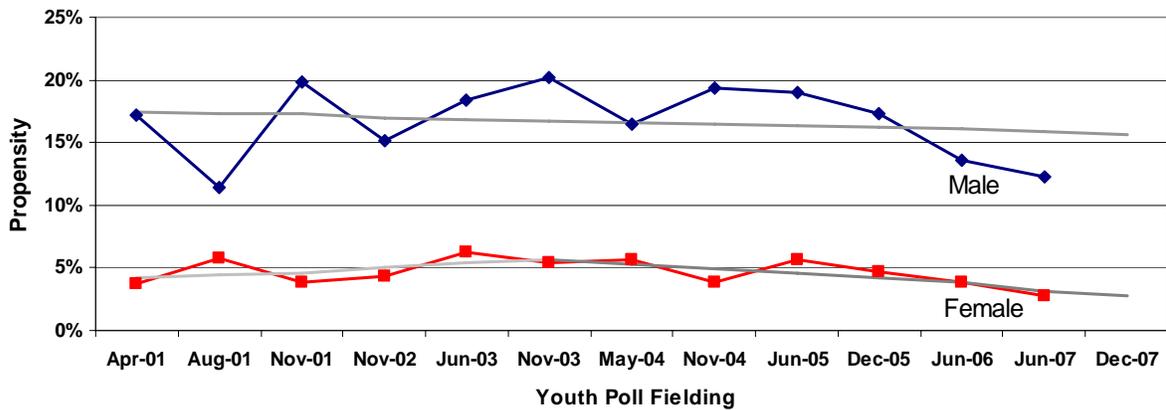
Note: The trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Nov 03. The second trend line for men are based on Nov 03 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-6 shows general military propensity trends among White youth. Given that approximately 70 percent of youth are White, it is not surprising that trends in propensity among White youth closely resemble trends among all youth. Among White males, propensity increased from 2001 through 2003, increasing an average of 1 percentage point per year. However, between May 2004 and June 2007 general military propensity among White males began to decline, with an average annual decrease of 1.2 percentage points.

After fluctuating slightly in 2001 and 2002, general military propensity among White females remained relatively stable from June 2003 to June 2005 with approximately five percent of White females reporting they would “definitely” or “probably” serve. However, general military propensity among White females has declined from June 2005 through June 2007, decreasing an average of 1.5 percentage points per year.

Figure 3-6. General Military Propensity Trends Among White Youth



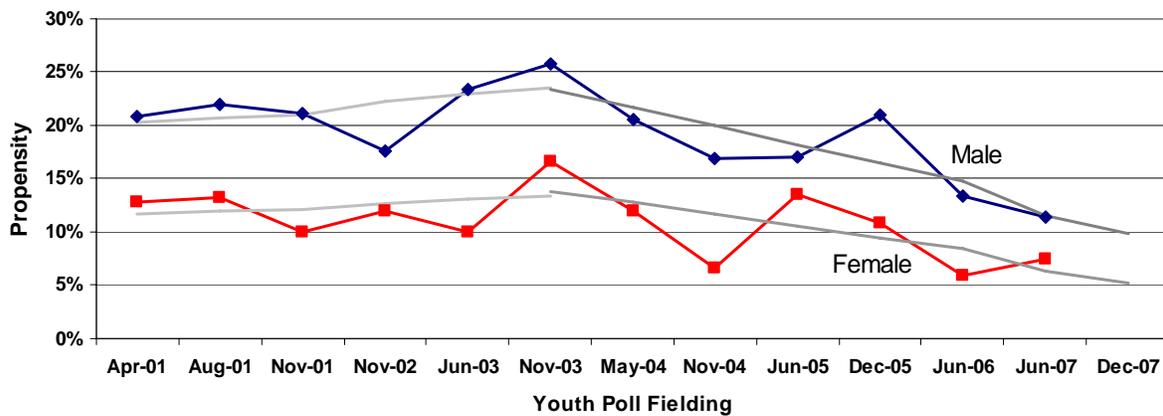
Note: The trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The first trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Nov 03. The second trend line for women are based on Nov 03 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-7 shows general military propensity trends among Black youth. In the early 2000s, propensity among Black males appeared to be rebounding from the declines experienced in the early 1990s during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. However, between November 2003 and June 2007 general military propensity among Black males declined at an average rate of 4.1 percentage points a year. In June 2006, general military propensity among Black males experienced a particularly large decline.

General military propensity among Black females remained relatively stable between 2001 and 2003. Following a similar trend to Black males, general military propensity among Black females declined between November 2003 and June 2007 at an average annual rate of 2.6 percentage points per year.

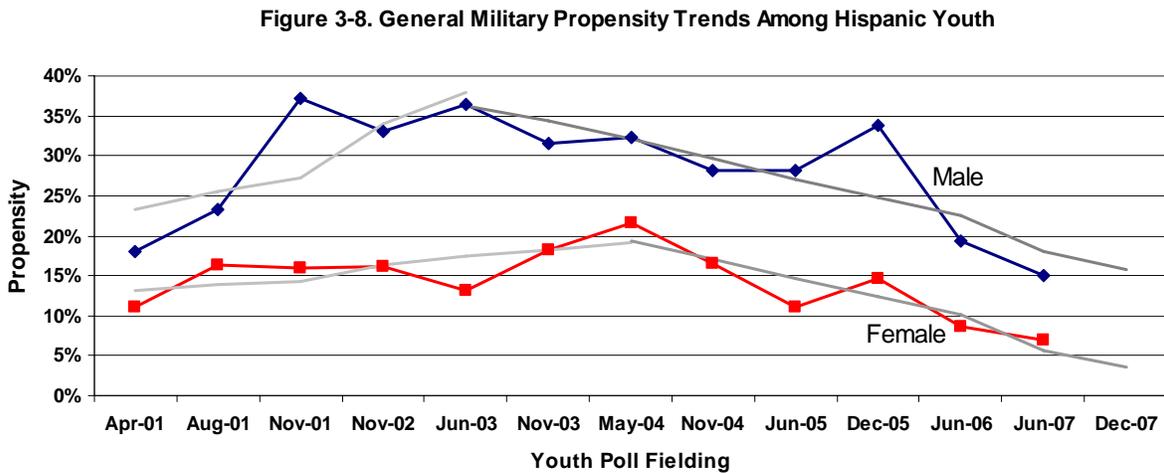
Figure 3-7. General Military Propensity Trends Among Black Youth



Note: The first trend lines for both men and women are based on Apr 01 – Nov 03. The second trend lines for both men and women are based on Nov 03 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.
Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-8 shows general military propensity trends among Hispanic youth. Among Hispanic males, general military propensity increased considerably from 2001 through June 2003 increasing at an average rate of 8.9 percentage points a year. However, from June 2003 to June 2007, general military propensity has decreased at an average annual rate of 5.2 percentage points.

Similar trends in general military propensity were seen among Hispanic females. General military propensity increased from 2001 through May 2004 increasing at an average annual rate of 3.5 percentage points. However, between May 2004 and June 2007, it sharply declined by an average of five percentage points per year.



Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Jun 03. The second trend line for men is based on Jun 03 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The first trend line for women is based on Apr 01 - May 04. The second trend line for women is based on May 04 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.
 Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

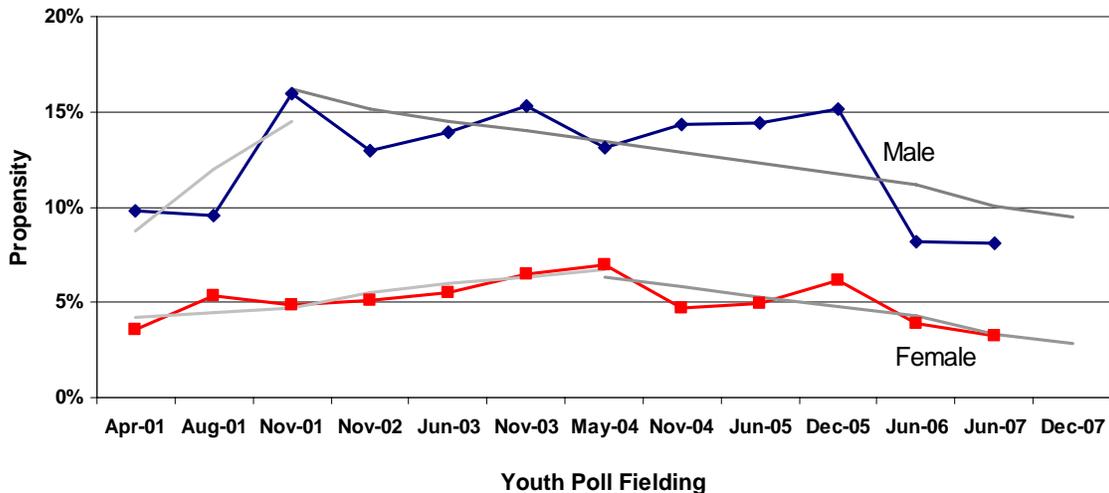
Service Specific Propensity

Figures 3-9 through 3-13 provide trends in propensity for each of the Military Services. These trends are generally similar to the trends observed for general military propensity.

Figure 3-9 shows trends in propensity for the Army. Army propensity among males increased substantially in 2001 and then stayed relatively stable through 2005. In June 2006, there was a significant decrease in Army propensity among males and it remained at this level through June 2007.

Propensity for service in the Army among females exhibits a similar pattern to general military propensity for female youth; propensity increased gradually into 2004 and then began a pattern of steady decline through June 2007.

Figure 3-9. Trends in Propensity for Service in the Army



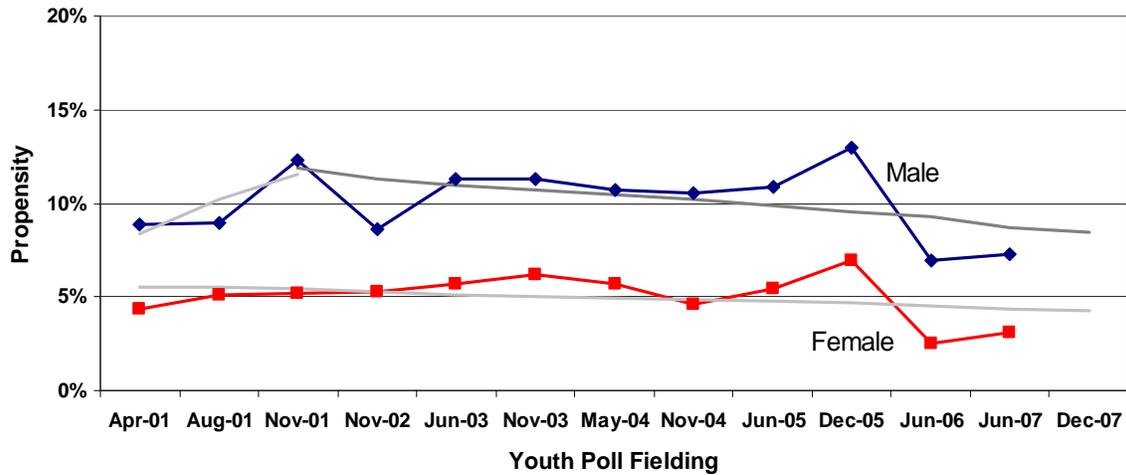
Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Nov 01. The second trend line for men is based on Nov 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The first trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – May 04. The second trend line for women is based on May 04 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-10 shows trends in propensity for the Navy. Similar to the trend seen with Army, propensity among males increased sharply in 2001 and then remained relatively stable through 2005. In June 2006, there was a significant decrease in Navy propensity among males. Navy propensity remained stable in June 2007.

Propensity for service in the Navy among females remained relatively stable from 2001 through 2005. After a considerable decrease in June 2006, Navy propensity among females remains statistically unchanged in June 2007.

Figure 3-10. Trends in Propensity for Service in the Navy



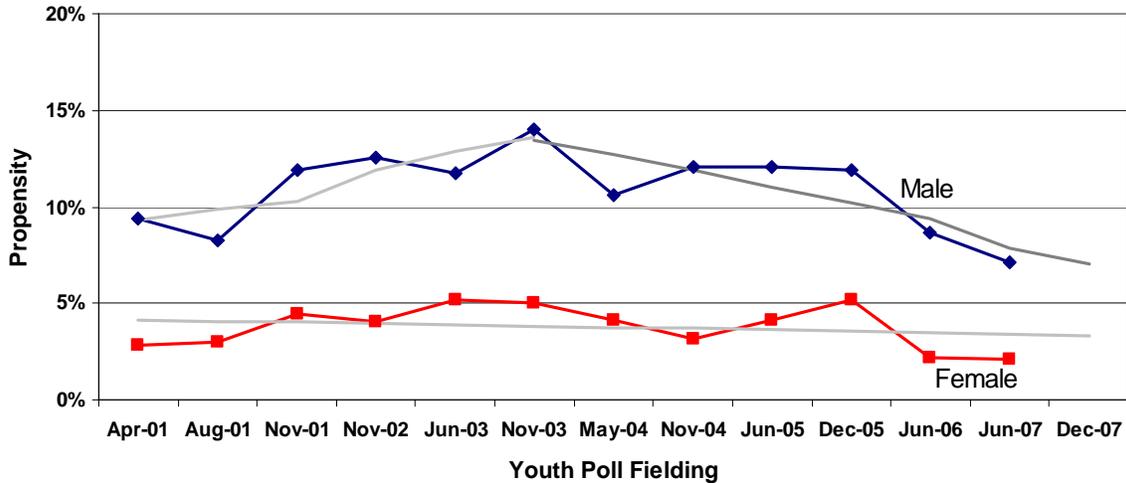
Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Nov 01. The second trend line for men is based on Nov 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-11 shows trends in propensity for the Marine Corps. Propensity for service in the Marine Corps among males increased steadily from 2001 through November 2003. However, beginning in 2004, propensity began a downward trend which has continued through June 2007.

Propensity for service in the Marine Corps among females remained relatively stable from 2001 through 2005. In June 2006, Marine Corps propensity for females decreased considerably and has not yet rebounded.

Figure 3-11. Trends in Propensity for Service in the Marine Corps



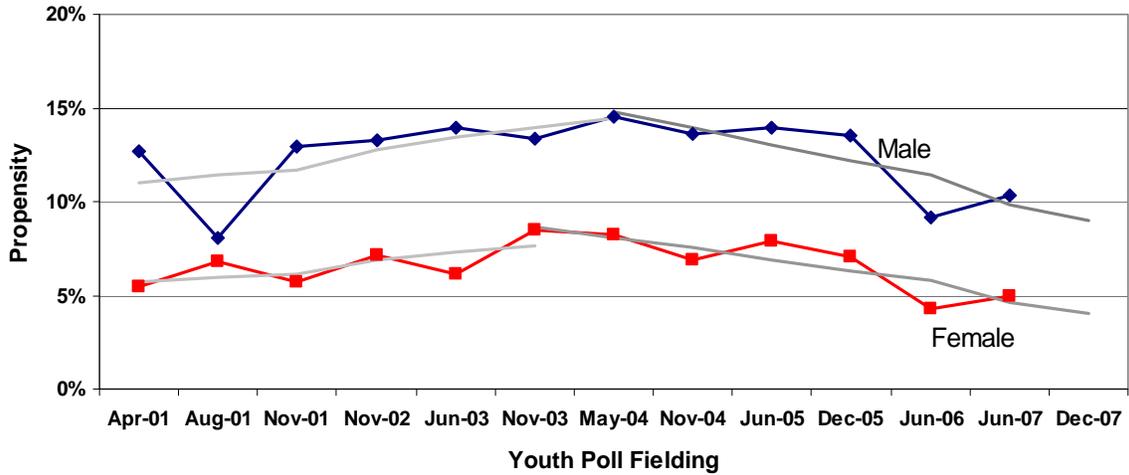
Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Nov 03. The second trend line for men is based on Nov 03 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Jun 07 propensity projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-12 shows trends for propensity for the Air Force. Propensity among males increased gradually from 2001 though May 2004 and then remained relatively stable through 2005. Air Force propensity among male youth decreased considerably in June 2006 and has not yet significantly rebounded.

Propensity for service in the Air Force among females increased gradually from 2001 through 2003. However, it began to trend downward in 2004 and has remained low in June 2007.

Figure 3-12. Trends in Propensity for Service in the Air Force



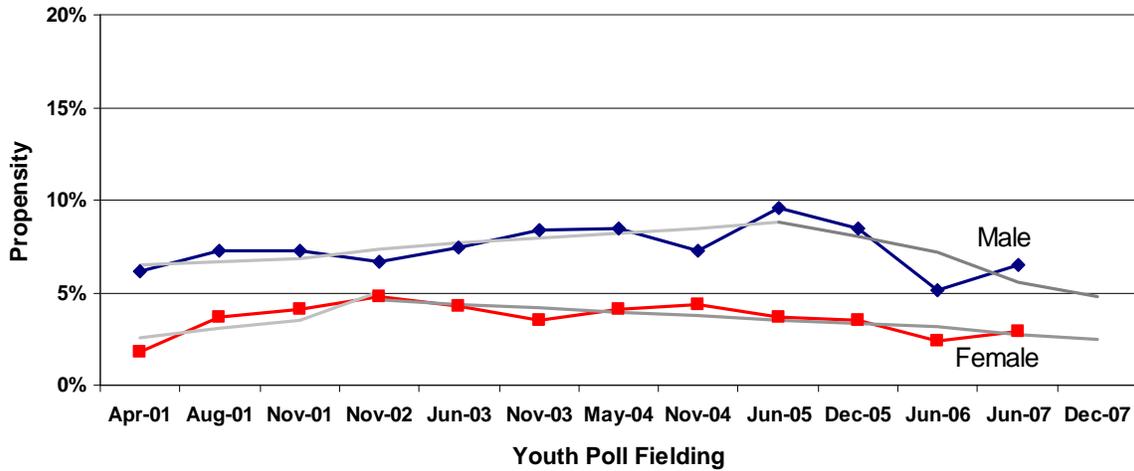
Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – May 04. The second trend line for men is based on May 04 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The first trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Nov 03. The second trend line for women is based on Nov 03 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-13 shows trends in propensity for the Coast Guard. Propensity for the Coast Guard among males increased gradually from 2001 through June 2005. Since then, male Coast Guard propensity has declined.

Propensity for service in the Coast Guard among females increased steadily from 2001 to 2002 and then remained relatively stable between 2002 and 2004. However, in November 2004 it began to trend downward and has remained low in June 2007.

Figure 3-13. Trends in Propensity for Service in the Coast Guard



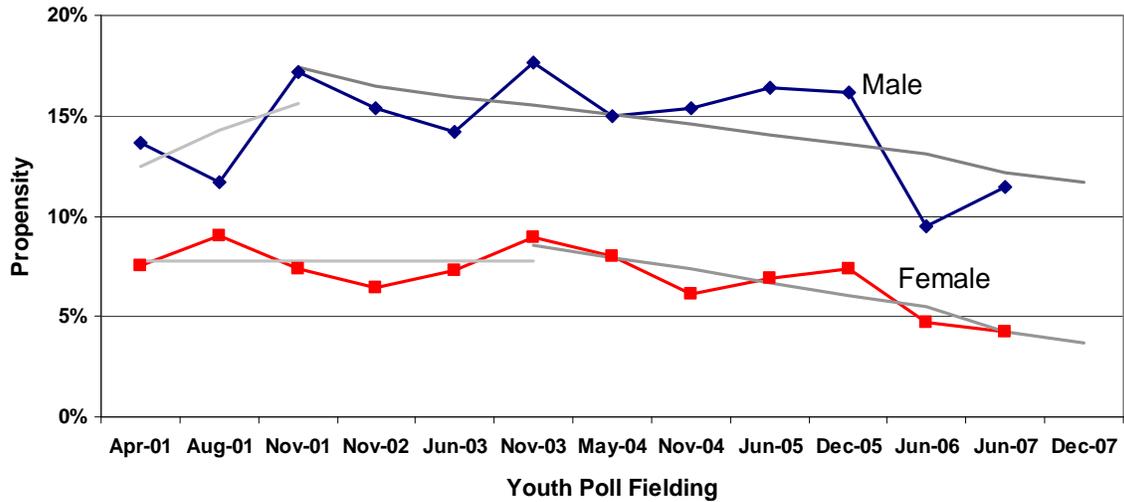
Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Jun 05. The second trend line for men is based on Jun 05 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The first trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Nov 02. The second trend line for women is based on Nov 02 – Jun 07 propensity projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-14 shows trends in propensity for the Reserves. Among males, propensity for the Reserves increased in 2001 and then remained stable through 2005. Reserve propensity decreased significantly in June 2006. Propensity rebounded slightly in June 2007 however this increase was not statistically significant.

Propensity for service in the Reserves among females remained relatively stable from 2001 through 2003. However, starting in November 2003, Reserve propensity among females has steadily trended downward. This trend continued in June 2007.

Figure 3-14. Trends in Propensity for Service in the Reserve Components

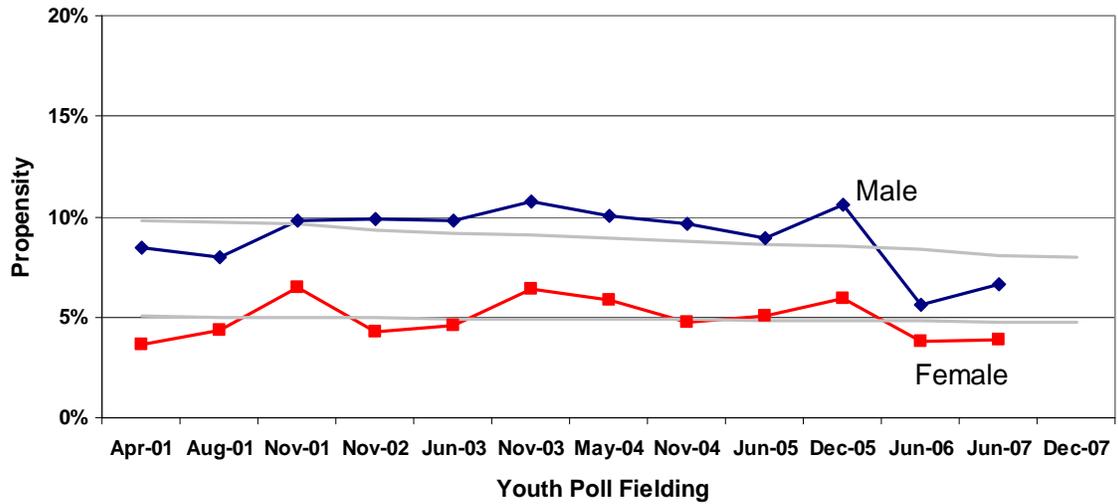


Note: The first trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Nov 01. The second trend line for men is based on Nov 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The first trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Nov 03. The second trend line for women is based on Nov 03 – Jun 07 propensity projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Figure 3-15 shows trends in propensity for the National Guard. Among both males and females, propensity for the National Guard remained stable from 2001 through 2005. Propensity among both genders decreased in June 2006 and has not yet significantly rebounded.

Figure 3-15. Trends in Propensity for Service in the Army/Air National Guard



Note: The trend line for men is based on Apr 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07. The trend line for women is based on Apr 01 – Jun 07 projected to Dec 07.

Source: 2001 – 2007 Youth Polls

Summary

Propensity – defined in the Youth Polls as the percentage of youth stating they will “definitely” or “probably” enter military service in the next few years – has been determined to be a valid indicator of enlistment behavior. Youth who say they are likely to join are more likely to do so than are those who say they are unlikely to join.

Looking back at data collected as part of the YATS, which was conducted until 1999, propensity for military service rose during the Cold War, dropped following Operation Desert Storm, and had been declining through 2001⁸. Beginning in 2001, propensity among young men appeared to be on the rise. However, starting in 2003-2004, propensity began to trend downward again. In June 2006, substantial declines in propensity occurred. Propensity in June 2007 has remained low.

Examining data from the May 2004 through June 2007 Youth Polls reveals that propensity is related to several demographic factors:

- Men show higher levels of propensity than do women.
- Propensity declines with age.
- Propensity declines with increased education. High school students are more likely than college students to indicate propensity for military service.
- Propensity is related to perceived employment prospects:
 - Propensity is higher among unemployed youth than among employed youth.
 - Propensity is higher among youth who believe it is difficult to get a job in their local community than among youth who believe this is not difficult.
 - Propensity is higher among youth who believe pay in the Military is better than pay in the civilian sector.
- Propensity is highest among Hispanic youth.
 - Propensity among Black youth is higher than White youth.
 - Propensity among White and Asian youth is relatively equivalent.
- Propensity varies by region: propensity is relatively high in the Pacific, Mountain, and West South Central regions and lowest in the New England region.

Propensity for military service is not tied to a specific Service for the majority of youth. Most youth who express propensity for military service express propensity for multiple Services. Most youth who express propensity for Reserve Components also express propensity for one of the Active Duty Services.

⁸ It is important to note that these historical trends pertain to propensity for general military service and do not entirely hold for specific racial and ethnic groups or for different Active Duty Services, Reserve Components or the National Guard.

ⁱ Orvis, B.R., Sastry, N., & McDonald, L.L. (1996). *Military recruiting outlook: Recent trends in enlistment propensity and conversion of potential enlisted supply* (MR-677-A/OSD). Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

ⁱⁱ Orvis, B.R., Gahart, M.T., & Ludwig, A.K. (1992). *Validity and usefulness of enlistment intention information* (R-3775-FMP) Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

ⁱⁱⁱ Stone, B.M., Turner, K.L., & Wiggins, V.L. (1993). *Population propensity measurement model: Final analysis report*. Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center.

^{iv} Berkowitz, S., Achatz, M., & Perry, S. (1999). *Career plans and military propensity of young women: Interviews with 1997 Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) respondents* (DMDC No. 2000-001). Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center.

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