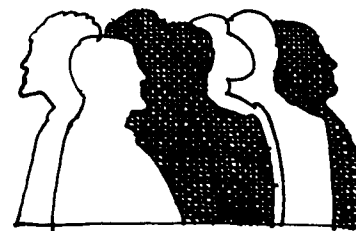


Special Labor Force Reports—Summaries



Labor force activity among students, graduates, and dropouts in 1980

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The number of young people in the population and the labor force was virtually unchanged over the year ending in October 1980. After two decades of annual increases, the total of youths age 16 to 24 had leveled off, as most members of the post-World War II baby boom had already reached age 25. More than 24 million were either working or looking for work—47.5 percent in school and 81.8 percent out of school. (See table 1.)

Reflecting the sluggish economy, unemployment among young men and women was generally higher in October 1980 than a year earlier, with a particularly large increase among high school dropouts.¹ The jobless rate for dropouts was 25.3 percent, 6 percentage points higher than in October 1979 and equal to the previous high reached in 1975. The increase was larger for men than for women and was particularly sharp for blacks. The unemployment rate for black dropouts was about 44 percent in October 1980, up from 32 percent a year earlier.

For youths who were no longer in school but who had at least a high school education, the effects of the economic slowdown were mixed. The year-to-year increase in unemployment rates among graduates was generally smaller than among dropouts and affected only men. The unemployment rate of college graduates showed no significant change. Altogether, unemployed out-of-school youths numbered 2.4 million in October 1980, accounting for almost one third of all jobless persons. In addition, nearly 1 million students were looking for a job, a number not significantly different from that of a year earlier.

Recent high school graduates and dropouts

Nearly half of the June 1980 high school graduates were enrolled in college as of October, the same proportion as in 1979. A higher proportion of female than

male graduates was enrolled—a reversal of the usual pattern. (See table 2.) The proportion of blacks enrolled was 43 percent, the third year of decline in their college attendance.

For those in college, labor force participation and unemployment rates were about the same as a year earlier. For those who had not gone on to college, labor force participation rates were also about the same as in 1979, but the male unemployment rate was much higher than a year earlier, 19.0 percent compared to 13.8 percent. The female unemployment rate was about the same as a year earlier.

About 740,000 young people, 16 to 24, dropped out of high school during the year. Half were 16 or 17. Almost 6 of 10 were men, who were especially affected by the recession. Their unemployment rate was 30.5 percent compared with 18.7 percent a year earlier. The majority of dropouts were in the labor force but their participation rate was substantially lower than that of high school graduates not in college (64 percent versus 85 percent) and their unemployment rate much higher (31.6 percent versus 18.0 percent).

Hours of work

School enrollment status remains a major determinant of the number of hours young people work.² Usually, high school students and full-time college students work only part time—on average less than 20 hours per week—to fit their classroom schedules. This was true of the average weekly hours of students employed in nonagricultural industries in October 1980:

| | <i>Men</i> | <i>Women</i> |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| High school | 15.8 | 14.1 |
| College, full time | 19.7 | 17.4 |
| College, part time | 36.3 | 34.0 |

Some of the difference between the hours worked by men and women was due to the large proportion of male students at the upper end of the age scale in both high school and college. For example, 62 percent of the male, full-time college students were 20 to 24 years old, compared with 53 percent of the women. Part-time college students (those taking fewer than 12 semester hours of classes) were generally older than the full-time students; almost 80 percent were 20 to 24 compared with 57 percent of the full-time students. One in 5 was

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Table 1. Employment status of persons 16 to 24 years old, by school enrollment status, educational attainment, sex and race, 1979 and 1980

[Numbers in thousands]

| Characteristics | Civilian noninstitutional population | | Civilian labor force | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|--------------------------------|------|----------|--------|------------|-------|-------------------|------|
| | | | Number | | Labor force participation rate | | Employed | | Unemployed | | | |
| | 1979 | 1980 | 1979 | 1980 | 1979 | 1980 | 1979 | 1980 | Number | | Unemployment rate | |
| | | | | | | | | | 1979 | 1980 | 1979 | 1980 |
| Total, 16 to 24 years old | 36,131 | 36,143 | 24,340 | 24,266 | 67.4 | 67.1 | 21,556 | 20,897 | 2,785 | 3,368 | 11.5 | 13.9 |
| ENROLLED | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 15,262 | 15,363 | 7,341 | 7,298 | 48.1 | 47.5 | 6,392 | 6,302 | 949 | 996 | 12.9 | 13.6 |
| 16 to 19 years | 10,972 | 10,917 | 4,883 | 4,760 | 44.5 | 43.6 | 4,143 | 3,970 | 739 | 790 | 15.1 | 16.6 |
| 20 to 24 years | 4,290 | 4,446 | 2,458 | 2,538 | 57.3 | 57.1 | 2,249 | 2,332 | 210 | 206 | 8.5 | 8.1 |
| Men | 7,861 | 7,798 | 3,802 | 3,731 | 48.4 | 47.8 | 3,295 | 3,173 | 506 | 557 | 13.3 | 14.9 |
| Women | 7,402 | 7,566 | 3,539 | 3,568 | 47.8 | 47.2 | 3,093 | 3,130 | 445 | 441 | 12.6 | 12.4 |
| White | 12,921 | 13,011 | 6,594 | 6,576 | 51.0 | 50.5 | 5,868 | 5,786 | 726 | 791 | 11.0 | 12.0 |
| Black | 2,006 | 1,979 | 622 | 572 | 31.0 | 28.9 | 409 | 389 | 213 | 184 | 34.2 | 32.2 |
| Elementary and high school | 7,971 | 7,894 | 3,628 | 3,401 | 45.6 | 43.1 | 3,021 | 2,755 | 607 | 643 | 16.7 | 18.9 |
| Men | 4,233 | 4,102 | 1,985 | 1,836 | 47.0 | 44.8 | 1,668 | 1,470 | 317 | 364 | 16.0 | 19.8 |
| Women | 3,738 | 3,792 | 1,643 | 1,565 | 44.0 | 41.3 | 1,353 | 1,285 | 290 | 279 | 17.7 | 17.9 |
| White | 6,556 | 6,469 | 3,268 | 3,058 | 49.8 | 47.3 | 2,811 | 2,546 | 458 | 511 | 14.0 | 16.7 |
| Black | 1,266 | 1,261 | 319 | 284 | 25.1 | 22.5 | 177 | 168 | 143 | 115 | 44.8 | 40.5 |
| Hispanic origin | 483 | 559 | 143 | 179 | 29.6 | 32.0 | 107 | 137 | 37 | 43 | 25.8 | 24.0 |
| College | 7,291 | 7,470 | 3,711 | 3,897 | 50.9 | 52.2 | 3,368 | 3,541 | 345 | 353 | 9.3 | 9.1 |
| Men | 3,628 | 3,697 | 1,816 | 1,895 | 50.1 | 51.3 | 1,629 | 1,701 | 189 | 192 | 10.4 | 10.1 |
| Women | 3,663 | 3,773 | 1,895 | 2,002 | 51.7 | 53.1 | 1,739 | 1,840 | 156 | 161 | 8.2 | 8.0 |
| Full-time students | 6,079 | 6,237 | 2,608 | 2,786 | 42.9 | 44.7 | 2,315 | 2,496 | 293 | 291 | 11.2 | 10.4 |
| Part-time students | 1,213 | 1,233 | 1,103 | 1,111 | 90.9 | 90.1 | 1,053 | 1,045 | 50 | 62 | 4.5 | 5.6 |
| White | 6,365 | 6,543 | 3,327 | 3,518 | 52.3 | 53.8 | 3,057 | 3,238 | 269 | 278 | 8.1 | 7.9 |
| Black | 741 | 719 | 302 | 287 | 40.8 | 39.9 | 234 | 220 | 68 | 67 | 22.5 | 23.3 |
| Hispanic origin | 311 | 326 | 150 | 187 | 48.2 | 57.4 | 134 | 163 | 17 | 24 | 11.3 | 12.8 |
| NOT ENROLLED | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 20,869 | 20,780 | 16,999 | 16,968 | 81.5 | 81.8 | 15,164 | 14,595 | 1,836 | 2,372 | 10.8 | 14.0 |
| High school dropouts | 5,263 | 5,084 | 3,512 | 3,430 | 66.7 | 67.5 | 2,845 | 2,563 | 667 | 867 | 19.0 | 25.3 |
| Men | 2,650 | 2,672 | 2,248 | 2,242 | 84.8 | 83.9 | 1,892 | 1,715 | 356 | 527 | 15.8 | 23.5 |
| Women | 2,614 | 2,412 | 1,264 | 1,188 | 48.4 | 49.3 | 953 | 848 | 311 | 340 | 24.6 | 28.6 |
| 16 to 19 years | 2,085 | 1,993 | 1,344 | 1,279 | 64.5 | 64.2 | 1,036 | 907 | 308 | 372 | 22.9 | 29.1 |
| 20 to 24 years | 3,178 | 3,093 | 2,168 | 2,148 | 68.2 | 69.4 | 1,809 | 1,655 | 359 | 493 | 16.6 | 23.0 |
| White | 4,167 | 4,065 | 2,873 | 2,859 | 68.9 | 70.3 | 2,402 | 2,239 | 471 | 621 | 16.4 | 21.7 |
| Black | 988 | 910 | 565 | 513 | 57.2 | 56.4 | 386 | 287 | 179 | 226 | 31.7 | 44.1 |
| Hispanic origin | 758 | 885 | 521 | 592 | 68.7 | 66.9 | 437 | 489 | 84 | 103 | 16.1 | 17.4 |
| High school graduates | 15,604 | 15,695 | 13,488 | 13,541 | 86.4 | 86.3 | 12,322 | 12,033 | 1,166 | 1,508 | 8.6 | 11.1 |
| Men | 7,197 | 7,245 | 6,863 | 6,868 | 95.4 | 94.8 | 6,359 | 6,029 | 504 | 839 | 7.3 | 12.2 |
| Women | 8,407 | 8,450 | 6,625 | 6,673 | 78.8 | 79.0 | 5,962 | 6,004 | 663 | 669 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| White | 13,653 | 13,598 | 11,940 | 11,895 | 87.5 | 87.5 | 11,050 | 10,751 | 890 | 1,144 | 7.6 | 9.6 |
| Black | 1,675 | 1,821 | 1,325 | 1,438 | 79.1 | 79.0 | 1,068 | 1,093 | 257 | 345 | 19.4 | 24.0 |
| Hispanic origin | 691 | 748 | 573 | 606 | 82.9 | 81.0 | 512 | 548 | 61 | 58 | 10.6 | 9.7 |
| High school, no college | 11,094 | 11,318 | 9,382 | 9,541 | 84.6 | 84.3 | 8,460 | 8,347 | 922 | 1,194 | 9.8 | 12.5 |
| College, 1 to 3 years | 3,017 | 2,947 | 2,683 | 2,635 | 88.9 | 89.4 | 2,509 | 2,403 | 174 | 232 | 6.4 | 8.8 |
| College graduates | 1,493 | 1,430 | 1,423 | 1,362 | 95.2 | 95.2 | 1,352 | 1,282 | 71 | 80 | 5.0 | 5.9 |

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

married, compared to 1 in 16 full-time students. The largest number of part-time students was enrolled in evening classes in business and management, which make up the bulk of courses offered in "off" hours by educational institutions.

Having left school behind, at least for the moment, most male high school graduates were working full time. Half worked 35 to 40 hours and a third worked

41 hours or more, the same proportions as among men 25 and over. (See table 3.) On the other hand, the female graduates worked somewhat longer hours than older women, with relatively more of the younger women working a standard work week of 35 to 40 hours. This was probably because younger women are, on average, less encumbered by family responsibilities than older women. A high school diploma also gave these

women an advantage over some of the older women in the work force, 20 percent of whom had not completed high school.³

The high school dropouts who had full-time jobs were about as likely as graduates to work a standard workweek. However, the remaining dropouts were less likely to work overtime (41 hours or more) and more likely to work part time. The difference was greater among women—45 percent of the dropouts worked 35 hours or less compared to 29 percent of the graduates.

Much of the variation in working hours can be traced to the large proportion of employed dropouts who were 16 or 17 years old—11 percent of the men and 12 percent of the women. Less than 1 percent of the employed

Table 2. School enrollment and labor force status of 1980 high school graduates and 1979-80 school dropouts 16 to 24 years old, by sex and race, October 1980

[Numbers in thousands]

| Characteristic | Civilian noninstitutional population | Civilian labor force | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| | | Number | Labor force participation rate | Employed | Unemployed | |
| | | | | | Number | Unemployment rate |
| Total, 1980 high school graduates | 3,089 | 1,992 | 64.5 | 1,657 | 335 | 16.8 |
| Men | 1,500 | 1,027 | 68.5 | 842 | 185 | 18.0 |
| Women | 1,589 | 965 | 60.7 | 815 | 150 | 15.5 |
| White | 2,678 | 1,778 | 66.4 | 1,526 | 252 | 14.2 |
| Black | 354 | 184 | 52.0 | 106 | 78 | 42.4 |
| Hispanic origin | 129 | 80 | 62.0 | 65 | 15 | 18.8 |
| Enrolled in college | 1,524 | 662 | 43.4 | 579 | 83 | 12.5 |
| Men | 701 | 311 | 44.4 | 262 | 49 | 15.8 |
| Women | 823 | 351 | 42.6 | 317 | 34 | 9.7 |
| Full-time students | 1,396 | 557 | 39.9 | 481 | 76 | 13.6 |
| Part-time students | 128 | 105 | 82.0 | 98 | 7 | 6.7 |
| White | 1,339 | 606 | 45.3 | 529 | 77 | 12.7 |
| Black | 151 | 40 | 26.5 | 36 | 4 | (¹) |
| Hispanic origin | 68 | 30 | (¹) | 24 | 6 | (¹) |
| Not enrolled in college | 1,565 | 1,330 | 85.0 | 1,078 | 252 | 18.9 |
| Men | 799 | 716 | 89.6 | 580 | 136 | 19.0 |
| Women | 766 | 614 | 80.2 | 498 | 116 | 18.9 |
| White | 1,339 | 1,172 | 87.5 | 997 | 175 | 14.9 |
| Black | 203 | 144 | 70.9 | 70 | 74 | 51.4 |
| Hispanic origin | 61 | 50 | (¹) | 41 | 9 | (¹) |
| Total, 1979-80 school dropouts ² | 739 | 471 | 63.7 | 322 | 149 | 31.6 |
| Men | 422 | 305 | 72.3 | 212 | 93 | 30.5 |
| Women | 317 | 166 | 52.4 | 110 | 56 | 33.7 |
| White | 580 | 392 | 67.6 | 286 | 106 | 27.0 |
| Black | 146 | 73 | 50.0 | 33 | 40 | (¹) |
| Hispanic origin | 91 | 60 | 65.9 | 43 | 17 | (¹) |

¹ Percent not shown where base is less than 75,000.

² Persons who dropped out of school between October 1979 and October 1980. In addition, 76,000 persons 14 and 15 years old dropped out of school.

Table 3. Hours worked in nonagricultural industries by persons 16 to 24 years old not enrolled in school, and by persons 25 years and over, by sex, October 1980

[Numbers in thousands]

| Hours worked: | Persons 16 to 24 not enrolled in school | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------|--------------------------|--------|
| | Total | | High school graduates | |
| | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| Persons at work ¹ : | | | | |
| Number | 7,059 | 6,538 | 5,536 | 5,747 |
| Percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Hours worked: | | | | |
| 41 or more | 31.0 | 13.2 | 32.5 | 14.0 |
| 35 to 40 | 51.7 | 56.2 | 51.8 | 57.4 |
| Under 35 | 17.2 | 30.6 | 15.8 | 28.6 |
| For economic reasons | 7.7 | 9.3 | 6.3 | 7.9 |
| For other reasons | 9.6 | 21.3 | 9.5 | 20.7 |
| | Persons 16 to 24 not enrolled in school | | Total, 25 years and over | |
| | High school dropouts | | Men | Women |
| | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| Persons at work ¹ : | | | | |
| Number | 1,523 | 791 | 41,114 | 29,618 |
| Percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| Hours worked: | | | | |
| 41 or more | 25.5 | 7.3 | 35.7 | 14.7 |
| 35 to 40 | 51.7 | 47.4 | 49.4 | 50.7 |
| Under 35 | 22.8 | 45.1 | 14.8 | 34.8 |
| For economic reasons | 12.8 | 19.1 | 2.7 | 4.7 |
| For other reasons | 10.0 | 25.9 | 12.1 | 30.1 |

¹ Does not include employed persons who were sick or on vacation.

graduates were that young. Some young dropouts were at a disadvantage in competing for certain full-time jobs that are restricted by law to persons over age 18, such as those involving motor vehicle operation and some construction occupations.⁴ Their difficulty in the labor market was also reflected in the greater proportion of dropouts than graduates who worked fewer than 35 hours because they could not get full-time work. □

FOOTNOTES

This report is based primarily on supplementary questions in the October 1980 Current Population Survey, conducted and tabulated for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census. Most data relate to persons 16 to 24 years of age in the civilian non-institutional population in the calendar week ending October 18, 1980.

Sampling variability may be relatively large in cases where the numbers are small. Small estimates, or small differences between estimates, should be interpreted with caution.

The most recent report in this series was published in the *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1980, pp. 44-47, and reprinted as Special Labor Force Report 241.

The importance of school enrollment in the labor force activity of youth has been recognized in the planned revision of the Current Population Survey. As of 1983, the survey will include information on school enrollment each month instead of once a year in October.

Unpublished data on educational attainment of the labor force from the March 1980 supplement to the Current Population Survey.

⁴ Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended (29 U.S.C. 201, et seq.).