

## **The Next America: Boomers, Millennials, and the Looming Generational Showdown**

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288 Pages.

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Paul Taylor, the author of *The Next America: Boomers, Millennials, and the Looming Generational Showdown*, analyzes the changes that have been occurring in the demographic social, political and cultural structures of the present American society, and tries to predict how those changes will form the U.S.' future and affect the generations. The book illustrates the generations' perspectives on religion, technology, race, immigration, gender roles, marriage, and employment. The arguments in the book are based on the public surveys and data that Taylor received from *Pew Research Center*, an independent think that provides knowledge and data in social, political and cultural spectrums. Taylor is the executive vice president of the Pew Research Center.

The book chooses to observe four generations of the U.S. and describes their major characteristics: Silents (born 1928-1945), Boomers (1946-1964), Gen Xers (1965-1980) and Millennials (1981-...). However, it mainly focuses on Boomers and Millennials because they are the most populous generations. Thus, they have profound effects on the social, political and economic fields of the nation. Millennials constitute the young population of the nation and they are trying to enter highly competitive workforce, while Boomers are on their way to become retirees. After their retirement Social security and Medicare are the most significant welfare programs that support in the old age. However, those programs can also lead an economic burden on the young. Because of the Boomers' vast numbers and their expanding life spans, the taxes that

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Millennials will be pay is going to increase. Some of the Boomers think that those programs are not sufficient to provide a comfortable life. Therefore, they are not in the favor of leaving their professions and they tend to delay their retirement. The book questions “How do we keep our promises to the old without bankrupting the young and starving the future?” The book underlines that Millennials might encounter financial problems in the future and whether they will be able to receive those welfare programs when they get old is not certain. However, Millennials seem to be optimistic about their future and many of them gives importance to those programs.

Each generation experiences history, technology, life standards and social norms in their own political, cultural social and economic environments and forms their distinctive attitudes, roles and behaviors. This would lead “generation gap and conflict” as defined universally. From the book it can be observe that the economic hardships and social changes do not necessarily turn Millennial and Boomers’ relationship into a showdown. In fact, those changes can create solidarity among Millennials and Boomers. One of the examples the book gives is that there has been a decline in the tendency of the young people to leave their homes when they reach their adulthood. Millennials have changed this trend and 40 percent of men and 32 percent of women to choose stay with their parents or those who left turned back to their parent’s homes. The reason why they remain with their parents is because they are not confident financially. Living with their parents helps them to ease their economic burden. Therefore, they become less mobile and they establish their social environment digitally. In the case of the Boomers who live with their children, they feel safe when they are taken care of by their children as they get older. Therefore, such a relationship constructs a strong bound among Millennials and Boomers bound that would diminish the possible generational clashes.

The book reflects the outcomes of the changing attitudes of generations towards the main social institutions, such as marriage, religion and family which have undergone major transformations. The charts in the book demonstrate that there has been a decrease in both marriage and fertility rates. This will affect the demography of the U.S. and it will be no surprise that the number of the old will increase, whereas the number of the young will decrease. It will also lead a shortage in the young workforce who supports the social welfare programs for the old.

As the book suggests, younger generations are in the favor of having fewer children when they are compared to older ones. In order to keep the popula-

tion young, the immigrants seem to be a solution because they have higher birth rates. The book expresses that the immigrants contribute to form a rich, racially mixed American society through marriage. It also claims that white population is expected to lose their majority in the future because the immigrants do not mainly come from Europe but from Latin America and Asia.

It is important to note that the immigrants have a significant impact on the U.S. politics. The political parties need to develop policies for the immigrant electorate in order to get their votes. It is because immigrants are in vast numbers and their participation affects the election results. As experienced in the 2012 presidential elections, many of the immigrants supported the Liberal Party for its sympathetic approach towards them.

While the graphs and charts, public surveys and Taylor's interpretation of data are the strengths of the book, it would have been more convincing if the book had been written in theoretical framework. The arguments backed up by the theory would reflect more objective propositions because analyses only based on numbers, surveys, observation and experience is not sufficient to anticipate the U.S. and the generations' future, but it is a good reference book for whom wonders where the U.S. heading and wants to gain an insight into the generations characteristics and their responds to the changing the social, economic, political and cultural trends of the U.S.