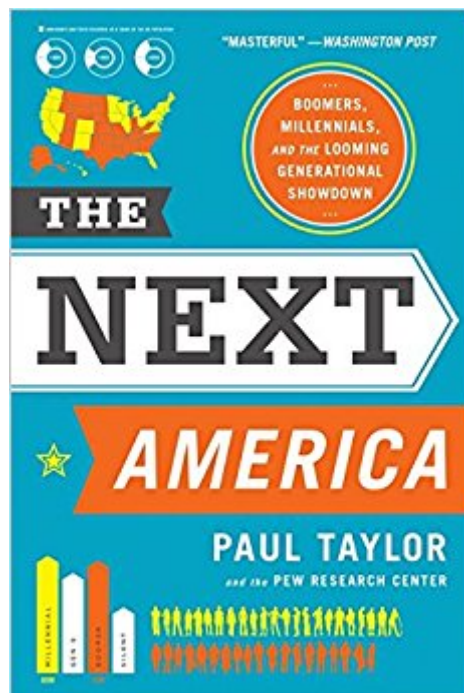




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# The Next America: Boomers, Millennials, And The Looming Generational Showdown



## Synopsis

The America of the near future will look nothing like the America of the recent past. America is in the throes of a demographic overhaul. Huge generation gaps have opened up in our political and social values, our economic well-being, our family structure, our racial and ethnic identity, our gender norms, our religious affiliation, and our technology use. Today's Millennials; well-educated, tech savvy, underemployed twenty-somethings; are at risk of becoming the first generation in American history to have a lower standard of living than their parents. Meantime, more than 10,000 Baby Boomers are retiring every single day, most of them not as well prepared financially as they'd hoped. This graying of our population has helped polarize our politics, put stresses on our social safety net, and presented our elected leaders with a daunting challenge: How to keep faith with the old without bankrupting the young and starving the future. Every aspect of our demography is being fundamentally transformed. By mid-century, the population of the United States will be majority non-white and our median age will edge above 40; both unprecedented milestones. But other rapidly-aging economic powers like China, Germany, and Japan will have populations that are much older. With our heavy immigration flows, the US is poised to remain relatively young. If we can get our spending priorities and generational equities in order, we can keep our economy second to none. But doing so means we have to rebalance the social compact that binds young and old. In tomorrow's world, yesterday's math will not add up. Drawing on Pew Research Center's extensive archive of public opinion surveys and demographic data, *The Next America* is a rich portrait of where we are as a nation and where we're headed; toward a future marked by the most striking social, racial, and economic shifts the country has seen in a century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The book's greatest strength lies in its detailed analysis of significant trends-from politics to lifestyle choices-among the four generational groups surveyed." ---Publishers Weekly --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Paul Taylor is a Senior Fellow at the Pew Research Center. He previously served as its executive vice president, where he oversaw demographic, social, and generational research. He is the author of *See How They Run* and coauthor of *The Old News Versus the New News*. He is a former reporter with the *Washington Post*, where he covered presidential politics and served as a foreign correspondent. He and his wife live in Bethesda, Maryland.

To paraphrase a famous scientist, the nice thing about data is that it doesn't matter whether you believe it or not. This book contains a tremendous amount of (summarized) data about the current and future demographics of the United States, gathered from both public sources (eg statistics published by the Bureau of the Census, the IRS, and other Federal agencies) and from one of the world's best-known nonpartisan survey-based research foundations. I'd summarize the biggest takeaways as follows:- The combination of immigration, intermarriage, and changing social mores among younger generations (the author identifies today's primary generational groups from oldest to youngest as Silent, Boomers, GenX, and Millennials) mean that the social attitudes of current and future voters lean overwhelmingly towards what most people would associate with "progressive values" or with the Democratic Party. In particular, as the Republican Party has tacked farther and farther to the right, the segment of the electorate receptive to their messages is shrinking and in fact dying. On the other hand, these younger-but-growing segments of the electorate have a much poorer voter-turnout record than their older and more conservative counterparts. This combination of elements has profound consequences for future elections.- The biggest coming "showdown" (to which the subtitle alludes) is the aging of the world's population. Japan, China, and some European nations will get there ahead of the US, in part because although birth rates are falling everywhere throughout the developed world, in the US that effect is partially offset by immigration, especially economically (since most immigrants arrive ready to work rather than newborn). But all these countries are rapidly approaching a point where fewer and fewer working people are supporting

more and more seniors. (In Japan the ratio will approach 1:1 by about 2040 if current trends continue.) There is an unfortunate positive feedback loop in countries like the US where most legislation is made democratically: the older generations constitute a large and growing voter bloc to whom politicians must cater, and that bloc has been using its influence to appropriate a growing share of government wealth redistribution. In the US, Social Security and Medicare are basically on the ropes. At some level most of us know this, but the statistics and trends presented to quantify the situation are stark. In other words: not only will the older and younger generations find themselves at odds on how to redistribute wealth, but their positions will be even farther apart because their social contexts are so different. As the author states in the introduction, "either transformation by itself would be the dominant demographic story of its era." The book does a nice job of including enough charts and graphs inline when necessary to illustrate or back up a point, but relegating vastly more charts and tables to an Appendix you can browse at leisure or for more detail. There is also a fascinating and well written appendix describing in high level terms the survey methodologies used by Pew and other professional research organizations, for those who think surveys are just a matter of asking some questions and tabulating answers. The appendix covers random sampling; a lay-person explanation of sampling error and reweighting; various biases including recency, confirmation, and self-selection; running meta-surveys to test the effect of different phrasings or presentations of the same questions; and much more. Indeed, this appendix is useful reading for anyone involved in doing rigorous surveys, whether they are interested in the rest of the book's content or not. Whether it cheers you up, depresses you, or just causes you to raise an eyebrow may depend on where you fall on the political spectrum, but regardless of where you do, this is essential and well-reported information.

This amazing book is based on Pew Research data, data, and more data! And, it's written in such a wonderful way that tells a story - well backed with the data - but a compelling and interesting story none the less! VERY MUCH worth reading, if you would like to learn about the current and future path of our country in a non-biased - just the facts - approach!

This is a thoughtful analysis of political trends by the Pew research folks, identifying the political biases of succeeding generations of Americans and extrapolating from that information some insightful predictions of the future. I thought the presentation was well-reasoned and documented and that it provides a likely picture of the near future.

This book helped me to identify not only who buys or uses what products but why they do so. In trying to plan a marketing approach for my product, I found this book to be invaluable. It helped me to be more effective with features of my product and fine tune my strategy to reach the audience it was intended for.

Paul Taylor puts together an extraordinarily readable set of stories on demographic trends and what they mean for us in the future. Lovers of data will particularly appreciate having the data presented in detail along with the polls on public perceptions of many trends. But unlike many data-oriented books and papers, this one is extremely readable. The stories weave together and the challenges are made clear, while Paul Taylor succeeds in leaving us optimistic that we will unite to confront any new issues as we always have done.

This book although quite statistical and detailed is a must read for not only political and business planners, but also many in the general population. The book could be scanned with a quick stop at each chart or graph to get most of the author's points.

A quick read with tons of interesting statistics. No earthshattering revelations but provides a primer on a changing landscape in society.

Pew research reports and statistics graphically demonstrate how America has changed over the last 50-60 years and predictions into the middle of this century show how the demographics of America will be quite different from today. All institutions will be affected, population growth, governmental policies, religion, education, family make up, employment, immigration, and retirement, social security and medicare. The outlook for America is bright, compared to other parts of the world. This book shows that change is inevitable.

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