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## The Millennials- America's Future

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I have an affinity for the demographic group labeled "Millennials," Generation Y, or Echo Boomers, and extending through Generation Z. A more inclusive label is young adults. Although our grandchildren fit within these categories, the identity goes deeper, and for very good reasons. In many ways, we share the same values, but they are the face in the future. Mine is the past.

Previous generations really stuck it to the young adults. Their idealism, unfortunately, exacerbated the situation. Following is a situational summary, and why older generations owe them big time.

### **The legacy they inherited**

Following WWII, with the industrial systems of Europe and Asia in shambles, opportunities in industry exploded as Americans manufactured goods and materials to rebuild the world. Everyone who wanted to work had a job. Industry financed the emergent middle class. For a number of complex reasons, detailed in my book, Freedom and Opportunity, we, their elders, shipped American industry offshore, and in less than twenty years, the United States shifted from a production to a consumer based society. We gave away our economic engine.

Under the Bush administration, the national debt ballooned to 4.9 trillion dollars. In 2008, the economy, under extreme stress from personnel debt, and fraudulent investment practices, collapsed into an economic recession. Since 1929-33, other recessions were deeper, but governmental actions prolonged this one for a record six years. The young adults grew up during this turbulent time, the first generation of Americans with fewer opportunities than those enjoyed by prior ones.

### **How the Young adults exacerbated the problem**

Young people are always impressionable and open. The current education system has programmed a line of thinking that makes them vulnerable to manipulation. They trusted the very people that exploited them, took actions based on these factors, and negatively affected their own prospects, in political, academic, and social situations.

### **Political**

The first mistake was idealistically backing President Obama. In 2012, he won them over by promise and social manipulation. They responded by voting for him 69 to 39 percent, assuring his reelection. In return, the Obama administration stacked the deck against this demographic. There is not enough space in this newsletter to detail all the ways he threw them under the bus, but here are some examples.

President Obama has driven the national debt to \$18 trillion and growing. This is greater than one year of America's Gross Domestic Product. When this debt comes due, it will explode directly on these demographics and their families. It is a poor prognosis for their eventual retirement opportunities.

Given the job situation, young adults will find it difficult to buy health care insurance, as mandated by the Affordable Care Act. This is an intergenerational problem, where the young must subsidize the high cost of elder care. If they refuse to buy insurance, they will pay a penalty regardless of how much they make.

The ACA mandated a thirty-hour workweek, setting a threshold for employer-paid health care benefits. The ruling affected companies with more than fifty employees, but the law of unintended consequences kicked in. Employers simply hired workers part time, working twenty-nine (29) hours a week. This drastically reduced the prospects for young adults. Part-time jobs and twenty-nine hours of pay are insufficient to meet minimum income requirements.

Young adults must subsidize Social Security without any guarantee it will be available for them. Regardless, elected officials from both parties avoid resolving this third rail of politics.

The political lesson learned is that we are Americans, not Democrats, or Republicans. The bureaucracy exists to perpetuate itself, regardless of the party. We need to vote for politicians that support the constitution, the rule of law, and present solutions for real problems. Policy is more important than emotion. Young adults must not drop out of the political process, but apply their considerable intelligence to discern the intention of the candidates and the consequences of their policies.

### **Academic**

The second mistake was buying into the myth that a college degree is required to be successful in today's economy. To meet this expectation, many young adults incurred hardships and high student debt earning their degrees. Graduating with great expectations, young adults find those degrees mismatched to the needs of the marketplace. Forced to work outside of their field of study, they must take less challenging or entry-level positions to survive. Because high-paying jobs continue to migrate from America, the future remains bleak.

The mismatch of education to opportunity has another side. Jobs in high technology requiring college education beyond high school, but not necessarily college degrees, are unfulfilled. Edward Gordon, PhD,

estimates that current vacancy for high-tech jobs is greater than 6 million and by 2020, will explode to 20 million.

This mismatch has been worsening for more than ten years, yet continues for several reasons. The first is education economics. Universities will fight to protect their revenue streams, while the situation calls for an enormous transfer of revenue to the technical institutions. The second is the perception that tech school graduates are lower tier. Young adults detest this built in inequality, but participate by continuing to attend four-year colleges instead of technical schools.

A technical school degree or tech training is only the entry level to applied technologies. For example, a machine operator controlling robots can work up the ladder in educational step functions, to programmer, then engineer, and eventually into managerial positions. The journey to success is not just where your career starts, but where additional education and hard work allow you to finish.

The third misconception is the perception that our factory system is dirty and demeaning. The following photo-essays are on our website, putting both the factory system and future jobs in perspective.

[http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Jobs\\_production.pdf](http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Jobs_production.pdf)

[http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Marten\\_mfg.pdf](http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Marten_mfg.pdf)

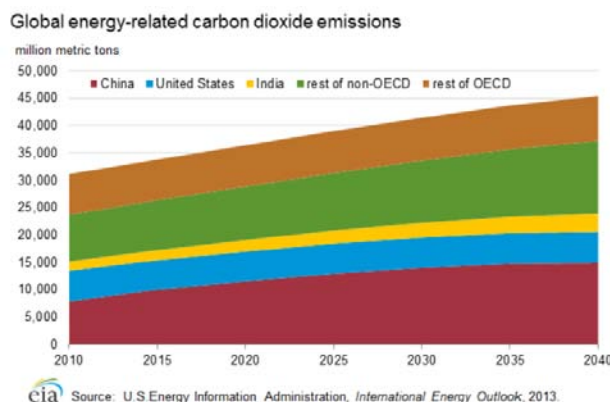
[http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Advanced\\_Agriculture.pdf](http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Advanced_Agriculture.pdf)

[http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Waste\\_mgmt.pdf](http://competitiveamerica.us/publications/Waste_mgmt.pdf)

## Conceptual

Increasingly tighter regulations cause the continued transfer of jobs to foreign competitors. One of the major premises for increased environmental regulation is Global warming. It is useful to test the premise and examine the consequences of incompletely stating and understanding issues.

Assume the green house gas (GHG) scenario is correct. If Americans cut GHG emissions to zero tomorrow, and move into caves and tepees, it would make little difference. China will increase emissions by a factor of three before 2030, making the worst-case GHG scenario a reality. Where does that date come from? The new environmental agreement the Obama administration signed with China. President Obama also committed America to cut another 26% of our emissions, meaning that more American jobs and opportunities will disappear. See last month's issue of the Focused Fire Newsletter, The USA is Now Number 2. The following chart shows projected increases in GHG.



<http://theenergycollective.com/henry-auer/565551/china-plans-nationwide-carbon-market>

If there is true global climate destruction, as most believe, where is the international anger? Politicians, academia, and environmental activists (including Al Gore) from every country should be screaming to punish China and other international polluters by not purchasing their products. There is no outcry.

Instead, we reward polluters by tightening our regulations and outsourcing even more high-paid jobs. The key question: Do we destroy America's economic future in a meaningless quest to compensate for the rest of the world? In my book, I call this madness.

Assume that greenhouse warming is a hoax. Acid rain, polluted water, and finite hydrocarbons are real and tangible. We must respect Planet Earth or risk passing a diminished world to future generations, much as we have done to the young adults. Plentiful American hydrocarbons are a bridge to the future, one with global implications. We must develop energy alternates but do so with complete situational knowledge allowing strategic evaluation and the development of practical tactics. The greatest force to achieve this new reality lies in America, powered by the intellectual power of the young adults. Building a green industrial system in America and shutting down pollution from both China and Mexico is a noble and achievable cause. To realize this objective will take courage, commitment, and a government that enables instead of inhibits and worsens the situation. The best solution to environmental issues is to have it managed by those sensitive to the issue, the young adults.

Programmed into distrusting capitalism, young adults were primed for socialism, where their freedoms will disappear along with opportunities. Economic systems destroying the environment are evil, but a compromise exists between destructive capitalism and dystopia. I call it an Opportunity Driven Society, and provide significant details in Freedom and Opportunity-Stop Redistributing and Downsizing America. The only solution to building an opportunity-based society is to reject big government and embrace entrepreneurship.

### **An oxymoron - different but the same**

The young adults and I are profoundly different because of upbringing. Many of us share growing up in dysfunctional families, for various reasons, but here we diverge substantially. I had a great deal of freedom to roam the woods, working with friends building interesting stuff from recovered materials, with very little direction from parents. We were very free - perhaps too much so, but learned independence and self-reliance by failing, getting up and trying again. Entrepreneurship was part of our legacy. Our generation learned to adjust to a reality dictating four or five career changes.

Many of the young adults were stifled, brought up by helicopter parents in highly regimented environments, and lacked the opportunity to explore and find out just how great they are. For these reasons, they are more risk adverse. However, young adults must adjust to a high-velocity world of change, dictating multi-career changes, and where entrepreneurship becomes a necessary skill.

Society must cease the meaningless discussion about helping youth trapped in marginalized circumstances, and take positive actions. In an increasingly complex world, there is a danger they will be lost. Technological training must be available, and potentially offer them hope for positive futures.

The young adults share my love for technology. I was fortunate, getting involved with computer science when it was still in formation, and developed the accumulated experiences into a successful systems consulting company. Altogether, I have experienced seven career changes. Young adults are digital natives and how they use technology may determine the fate for large populations of humans. I also rebelled against the concept of humans as mere gears in the industrial machine, and that attitude continues. All systems must respect humans.

I support applied technologies including robotics, artificial intelligence, and factory automation. It will take applied human intelligence for these systems to function. An automated world may make conditions worse for the young adults, but if this iteration of the industrial revolution happens in America, it will provide abundant opportunities of every type.

I wrote Freedom and Opportunity- Stop Redistributing and Downsizing America with the young adults and my grandchildren in my mind and in my heart. They deserve to know how America fell from the

greatest economic power in the world, to a country struggling to provide opportunities to a very smart and highly educated populace.

The purpose behind this and all future in-process manuscripts is helping the young adults reach their potential. If they do, the resulting America will be greener, more prosperous, and more equitable than at any time in history. Rebuilding America is the only path to positively resolving the 18 trillion-dollar national debt. To get there, all of us will have to exercise bravery and change the course of a run-a-way government that is becoming ever more stifling for entrepreneurs and job formation.

My dear precious young adults, you are the reason we married, raised families, and sacrificed. We want and need you to succeed. You are truly the future for civilized society and the great hope for building a free America for yourselves and future generations.

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20% of net profits are donated to worthy causes.