**Generations and Futuring**

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Scholars have long tried to identify and explain generational differences. Classic theories tend to focus on major events – WWI, Great Depression, WWII, Vietnam War, September 11 and COVID – as the primary explanatory factors. Most recently this model of generations has been expressed by William Strauss and Neil Howe in their work, *The Fourth Turning.*

One of my concerns as we study the future and apply Strategic Foresight to help us identify plausible futures is that we might not be paying enough attention to these generational differences. I have found a new book on that topic that I highly recommend: ***Generations:*** *The Real Differences between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers and Silents and What They Mean for America’s Future,* by Jean M. Twenge, PhD*.* Itprovides us with a sound knowledge base on each generation and the implications for the future.

Twenge sheds new light on generational theory and the impact of generations for our future. She acknowledges that these major events *do* have an impact, but she argues that they are not the *primary* force driving generational differences. Twenge asserts that the generational differences are best explained by “…technology and its aftereffects on culture, behavior and attitudes…”, what she calls the **Technology Model of Generations**.

Twenge’s theory is heavily based on her analysis of 24 unique databases which uncover changes in behavior and attitudes across generations. She conveys her findings in separate chapters on each generation: Silents, Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z and Polaris. In her final chapter, Twenge explains what this means for the future of work, family, politics, race, religion, the economy, and generations.

This would be excellent reading for the Foresight Network.