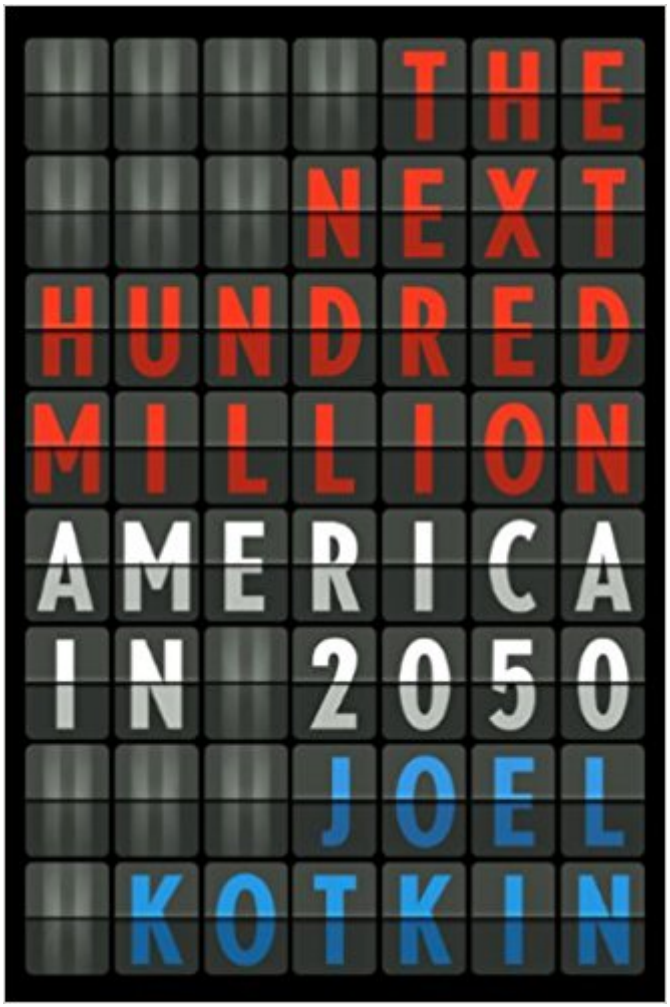
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The Next Hundred Million: America In 2050



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Synopsis

Visionary social thinker Joel Kotkin looks ahead to America in 2050, revealing how the addition of one hundred million Americans by midcentury will transform how we all live, work, and prosper. In stark contrast to the rest of the world's advanced nations, the United States is growing at a record rate and, according to census projections, will be home to four hundred million Americans by 2050. This projected rise in population is the strongest indicator of our long-term economic strength, Joel Kotkin believes, and will make us more diverse and more competitive than any nation on earth. Drawing on prodigious research, firsthand reportage, and historical analysis, The Next Hundred Million reveals how this unprecedented growth will take physical shape and change the face of America. The majority of the additional hundred million Americans will find their homes in suburbia, though the suburbs of tomorrow will not resemble the Levittowns of the 1950s or the sprawling exurbs of the late twentieth century. The suburbs of the twenty-first century will be less reliant on major cities for jobs and other amenities and, as a result, more energy efficient. Suburbs will also be the melting pots of the future as more and more immigrants opt for dispersed living over crowded inner cities and the majority in the United States becomes nonwhite by 2050. In coming decades, urbanites will flock in far greater numbers to affordable, vast, and autoreliant metropolitan areas-such as Houston, Phoenix, and Las Vegas-than to glamorous but expensive industrial cities, such as New York and Chicago. Kotkin also foresees that the twenty-first century will be marked by a resurgence of the American heartland, far less isolated in the digital era and a crucial source of renewable fuels and real estate for a growing population. But in both big cities and small towns across the country, we will see what Kotkin calls "the new localism"-a greater emphasis on family ties and local community, enabled by online networks and the increasing numbers of Americans working from home. The Next Hundred Million provides a vivid snapshot of America in 2050 by focusing not on power brokers, policy disputes, or abstract trends, but rather on the evolution of the more intimate units of American society-families, towns, neighborhoods, industries. It is upon the success or failure of these communities, Kotkin argues, that the American future rests.

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Customer Reviews

Kotkin (The City) offers a well-researchedÃ¢â ¬â •and very sunnyÃ¢â ¬â •forecast for the American economy, arguing that despite its daunting current difficulties, the U.S. will emerge by midcentury as the most affluent, culturally rich, and successful nation in human history. Nourished by mass immigration and American society's proven adaptability, the country will reign supreme over an industrialized world beset by old age, bitter ethnic conflicts, and erratically functioning economic institutions. Although decreasing social mobility will present a challenge, demographic resources will give the U.S. an edge over its European rivals, which will be constrained by shrinking work forces and rapidly proliferating social welfare commitments. Largely concerned with migration patterns within the U.S., the book also offers a nonpartisan view of America's strengths, identifying both pro-immigration and strongly capitalist policies as sources of its continued prosperity. However, Kotkin tends to gloss over the looming and incontrovertible challenges facing the country and devotes limited space to the long-term consequences posed by the current recession, the rise of India and China, and the resulting competition over diminishing energy resources. Nevertheless, his confidence is well-supported and is a reassuring balm amid the political and economic turmoil of the moment. (Feb.) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Assuming that America will increase to 400 million people in the next 40 years, Kotkin divines demographic consequences in this catalog of predictions. Optimistic in contrast to elite opinions on the Left and the Right that see America in decline, KotkinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s views are not certitudes: the author regularly cautions that if certain things are not done, such as ensuring an economic environment of upward mobility, his vision of the future may not come to pass. Caveats dealt with, Kotkin essentially asks where the extra 100 million will live. Because some of them are already hereÃ¢â ¬â •those born or who have immigrated since the early 1980sÃ¢â ¬â •Kotkin tends to

extrapolate present trends. After a career-starting stint in the big city, family-raising aspirations send people to the suburbs and, increasingly in the Internet-connected world, to small towns and rural areas. Describing specific locales, Kotkin anticipates a revitalization of older suburbs and even a repopulation of the Great Plains. As sociological futurists engage with KotkinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s outlook, the opportunity for critics lies in the authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s lesser attention to the environmental and political effects of population growth. --Gilbert Taylor

A very useful thought process; the author is really asking the question - Where will the Next Hundred Million Americans go?

I found this book very interesting as I'm interested in the future of our country. It gave me some great insight for what we may expect the U.S. to look like in the next few decades and it was a very quick read with some great research and current trends discussed.

My only qualm was that I was hoping for a bit more specificity from Mr.Kotkin's predictions for the country 50 years from now. Otherwise, this was an enjoyable book and a quick read.

If you are tired of the same ol' new urbanism or bust reading then check this out. Im in my mid 30's and find this book refreshing. A future for all and not just the cram us in a small box crowd, even though theres plenty o room for them also.

Insightful

Kotkin is upbeat about America's future supported by a robust demographic growth (+100 million by 2050). Since much of this growth is from immigration, it is akin to "voting with your feet." This "voting" is due to immigrants preferring the tolerant US culture vs the class conscious, xenophobic, and sexist cultures of Japan, China, India, Russia and Europe. None of those cultures integrate immigrants well. As a result, the US will not experience the challenges of an aging society to the same degree as its counterparts. By 2050, 31% of China's population will be over 65; 41% for Japan; in the high 30s for Europe, but less than 25% for the U.S. By 2050, the U.S. population is expected to be four times Russia.Kotkin indicates that today 30% of the US population is nonwhite. By, 2050 this figure will reach 50% due to both fertility and immigration patterns.A difference in immigrant integration can be observed between Muslims in Europe vs the U.S. In Europe they are

marginalized, discriminated and unemployed. In the U.S. Muslims have education and income levels above the national average and 80% are registered to vote. America's culture better transcends religion or race.Kotkin believes demography is destiny, and the more vibrant U.S. demographics insures it will remain a dominant power culturally and economically. This contrasts with everyone who has sold the U.S. short for decades. But, Kotkin indicates the recent history has not collaborated with any of those dire predictions. This is even true after this worldwide Great Recession caused by Wall Street, US regulators, Fannie Mae & Freddie Mac, rating agencies, and US borrowers. Yet, the US is on the rebound while Europe is tangled in a sovereign debt crisis lead by its weakest link: Greece.Kotkin indicates that the US attracts and retains a rising percentage of skilled immigrants. Immigrants are a source of economic energy as between 1990 and 2005, they started one quarter of all US venture-backed public companies. Work ethic also favors the US. Americans currently work 300 hours more per year than Europeans. And, they appear much more content than their European counterparts. The fruits of their labor give Americans a greater sense of control over their lives and hope in a better tomorrow. By 2050, non-Hispanic whites will be in a minority within both the general population and the workforce.Kotkin conveys that the competitiveness of China and India appears exaggerated. Both countries are not expected to generate GDPs per capita anywhere near the U.S. for decades if not over a century. Both countries have a large percentage of their populations whose lifestyle is barely above survival. And, many of their brightest come to the U.S. to succeed. Silicon Valley is crowded with both Chinese and Indian immigrants who have started successful hi-tech businesses, or are part of senior management, or are key computer programmers. Thus, any brain-drain between the three powers still strongly favors the U.S.While Richard Florida as he expressed inÃ Â Who's Your City?: How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your LifeÃ Â thinks that the driving economic unit is no more nations but instead super cities, Kotkin feels nations do matter a lot. They are in a competition of culture and for the reasons mentioned above Kotkin states the U.S. is winning that race. Richard Florida has written an entire book on the creative class preferring the European capitalist model vs the U.S. Kotkin indicates that it is another case of selling the U.S. short while the facts (international immigration patterns) contradict the theory as far more Europeans members of the creative class have moved to the U.S. than the reverse. This makes sense. If you have an idea, it is easier to get it funded and start a business in the U.S. vs Europe.When Kotkin turns to where the 100 million will locate in the U.S. he offers a vision that sharply contrasts with Richard Florida. While Richard Florida envisions a rise of a creative class clustering in super cities (London, Paris, NY, SF, etc...) Kotkin anticipates the growth and economic

vibrancy will concentrate in the "cities of aspirations" modeled after Los Angeles such as Phoenix, Houston, Dallas, Denver, and Atlanta. Immigrants will cluster in the suburbs of such sprawling cities and others. Since 1950 the suburban share of the nation’s population has doubled to its current 50%. Suburbs will be increasingly diversified. Over 27% of suburbanites are minorities. This percent could rise to 50% by 2050.Kotkin advances that the suburb and urban sprawl offers an ideal lifestyle associated with affordable and expansive housing, low crime rate, and good public school systems. In the future, the health of cities will depend more on good schools and safe parks (Kotkin) than hip art galleries and music scene (R. Florida). Meanwhile, the dense constrained urban centers of Richard Florida super cities are challenged to compete on affordable lifestyle parameters. Kotkin refers to Richard Florida’s super cities as "luxury cities." He acknowledges that for the time being they will maintain their position as managers of the world economy as they house the most powerful residents.Kotkin calls the emerging, networked suburbs and sprawl "smart sprawl." He envisions that telecommuters, the Internet, home-based businesses, and satellite office centers will turn the suburbs into self-sufficient job centers that will rely less on traditional downtown job centers. He refers to demographer Wendell Cox when stating that by 2015 more people will work electronically at home than will take public transportation. In San Francisco and Los Angeles nearly 10% of workers are part-time telecommuters. He calls this process "de-clustering" [away from the super cities job centers]. Again this is the opposite of Richard Florida’s vision of increasing clustering of his creative class around those super cities. According to Kotkin, this de-clustering will cause smart sprawl to become an economic and cultural force. At the essence, it is again "voting with one’s feet" as people will move where they want to and can afford to; And, this means moving to lower-density neighborhoods.Per Kotkin, the heartland will benefit from this de-clustering. He indicates that many small rural cities are benefiting from a "hidden tech" trend whereby software companies are getting established far away from the super cities in areas associated with great outdoors, low housing costs, and have little trouble attracting the creative class. Kotkin mentions Fargo, Boise, Sioux Falls as such places. Since 2000, hi-tech employment has risen faster in those small cities than in the San Francisco Bay Area and Boston.Kotkin refers to Boise as a new model for Silicon Valley. The area benefits from a great quality of life, low cost, and plenty of talent. As a result, Boise and other similar cities are benefiting from an "onshoring’ trend whereby hi-tech companies are moving operations to those lower cost domestic areas instead of off shoring them to India.Kotkin anticipates a revival of U.S. manufacturing. This also contrasts with Richard Florida’s vision of a creative service economy (seeÃ Â The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life. On this one count it is challenging to side against

Florida.Ultimately, the future will likely capture nuances of both Kotkin and R. Florida's visions. R. Florida actually documents his theory far more thoroughly than Kotkin as he relies on his firsthand research building multivariate regressions and fascinating scatter plots demonstrating the relationships supporting his theories. Thus, as Florida says the future is likely to get increasingly spikier as the concentration of talent working within the super cities will continue to rise. But, this talent may very well live in the suburbs especially when starting a family as Kotkin suggests. In summary, they will both likely be right as people will continue to gravitate where the action is (super cities) but live where they can afford the best lifestyle (suburbs).

Kotkin is a glass-half-full kind of guy, a Clinton-esque New Democrat who delights in tweeking the conventional wisdom of Progressives and my fellow Land Use Planners. At the same time Kotkin sings the praises of America's suburban growth machine he re-light's Lady Liberty's invitation to immigrants far and near in an unbridled celebration of Creative Destruction.My only reservation is Joel's writing style--short and pithy is good for his regular columns in Forbes, but can be a bit disjointed to follow an argument. Even so, he's sure to infuriate doomsayers left and right.

I wanted to like this book. I really did. But between the author's arrogant dismissal of Jane Jacobs, and his holding up of Phoenix (yech!) as a great American city, I'm really disappointed. He completely fails to connect that the physicality of a city defies what that city becomes, and thinks that Las Vegas will be the new New York just because a bunch of people move there. He recognizes that there needs to be a new definition of suburbia, but fails to state how suburbia will become relevant beyond short-term strip malls. His view of urbania is slightly above contempt. Slightly. He ignores the political polarization now splitting America, or how it influences people's habitat choices, or how the automobile completely redefined how people live. In short, a simplistic, deeply lacking book.

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