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Richard Jackson and Neil Howe: The Graying of the Great Powers: Study Guide

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RICHARD JACKSON AND NEIL HOWE: THE GRAYING OF THE GREAT POWERS: STUDY GUIDE (2010)
Steven Alan Samson

http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/080630_gai_majorfindings.pdf

Study Questions

1.   What does this report explain? What are its major findings?

Major Findings: The Demographic Transformation

2.   What is the significance of a **high median age**, whether 30, 40, or 50? What is the significance of a growing number of countries that have shrinking populations? What is meant by demographic momentum and why is it significant? Which countries are projected to experience the least aging?

3.   Discuss three types of economic, social, and political consequences of the **demographic transformation** that could undermine the ability of the United States and its traditional allies to maintain security. What impact is smaller family size likely to have on preparedness for war?

4.   What countries (at the opportunity end of the spectrum) are likely to be favored by a "demographic dividend?"   What parts of the world fall closer to the challenge end with youth bulges and chronic civil unrest? Where might political crises be triggered?

Major Findings: The Geopolitical Implications

5.   Why is the global influence of the developed world likely to decline? What will it need to do to fortify its global position? Why is the population and GDP of the United States likely to expand steadily as a share of the developed world totals? What country is likely to remain at the same population ranking during the next four decades?

6.   What is a **youth bulge**? What might help some nations break the cycle of high fertility and high poverty? Compared with the youth bulge countries of sub-Saharan Africa and parts of the Muslim world, why are some of the rapidly modernizing "fast-transitioning countries" likely to face even more serious crises?

7.   Why will religious conflict become an even more serious global problem? Why are the 2020s likely to emerge as the decade of maximum geopolitical danger for the developed world? Why is a "**youth echo boom**" likely to be a problem during that period? What light is shed on the situation by the "**power transition**" theories of global conflict? What chronic shortages are likely to be faced by aging develop countries?   What will render many developed countries "permanent free riders on their allies?"

NOTE: Fewer (2004) by Ben J. Wattenberg provides a realistic assessment of the dangers we face. I included the following in a lecture I gave in April 2007. On page 37 Wattenberg writes: "Consider Europe according to 'Replacement Migration' [a 2001 publication of the UN Population Division]: Today Europe has more than twice as many people as the United States, but the whole continent takes in a net of 376,000 immigrants per year, about a third of the American number. In order to keep a *total constant population*, that European immigration number would have to rise to 1,917,000 per year, an annual increase of more than *500 percent*. To maintain a *constant age group of workers age 15-64*, the number of immigrants would have to rise to 3,227,000 per year, an annual increase of more than *900 percent*. The UNPD also calculated what it would take to

keep the *dependency ratio* constant, that is, the proportions of working-age persons to those over age 65 and under 15. That would require an annual immigration of 27,139,000, an increase of more than *7,100 percent.* That is not likely to happen."

Wattenberg's numbers merely represent the numbers of people who may be required for the maintenance of an aging, affluent population: that is, the amount of additional workers that is required simply to pass along a real inheritance rather than a deficit to future generations. But even if such high levels of immigration were possible, would they be desirable? How could any society, especially one seeks to preserve its character, begin to assimilate all the nannies, gardeners, nurses, and other workers needed simply to maintain the status quo or to preserve the infrastructure? See "The Grapes of Parnassos": http://works.bepress.com/steven_samson/51/

9.   What is likely to change the widespread support for the "soft power" of liberal democracy and the global democratic order? How might illiberal neo-authoritarian regimes win popularity?

A Framework for Policy Action

10.   What are some of the authors' policy recommendations?

Review

high median age	demographic transformation	youth bulge
youth echo boom	power (hegemonic) transition	liberal democracy
neo-authoritarian regimes		

Appendix: Statistical Comparisons from the United Nations Population Division:

World Population Prospects: the 2006 Revision (Excerpts)

TABLE I:2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORLD POPULATION BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND MAJOR AREA, 1950, 1975, 2007 and 2050, ACCORDING TO PROJECTION VARIANT (PERCENTAGE)

Population

Major Area	1950	1975	2007
More Developed	32.1	25.7	18.3
Less Developed	67.9	74.3	81.7

TABLE I:3. AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF POPULATION CHANGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IN BROAD AGE GROUPS BY MAJOR AREAS, MEDIUM VARIANT, 2005-2050 (PERCENTAGE)

Age	0-14	15-59	60+	80+	Total Population
World	-0.03	0.65	2.43	3.38	0.76
Europe	-0.41	-0.70	0.93	2.02	-0.21
N. America	0.25	0.38	1.73	2.42	0.65

TABLE II:1. ESTIMATED AND PROJECTED TOTAL FERTILITY FOR THE WORLD, MAJOR DEVELOPMENT GROUPS AND MAJOR AREAS, 1970-1975, 2005-2010 AND 2045-2050, ACCORDING TO VARIANTS

Total Fertility (average number of children per woman)

	1970-1975	2005-2010	2045-2050 (low)
World	4.47	2.55	1.54
Europe	2.16	1.45	1.26
Northern America	2.01	2.00	1.35