

# Changing demographics and career pathways: SCWEA conference 2018

Rosemary A. Venne  
Edwards School of Business  
University of Saskatchewan  
October 26, 2018

## **Demographic Trends: Canada**

### **Changing Population Patterns**

- small spread out population + large land mass  
= high infrastructure costs
- population pyramids: middle-age spread/boomers
- aging population
- current fertility rate (1.6)

## **Trends: boom/bust cycles**

- Boom groups: face more (within-group) generational crowding; generally boom groups have more generational crowding throughout their lifetime;
- Often results in excess labour supply and lower wages
- Bust groups: face less generational crowding; generally bust groups often have a smoother sail through life
- Often results in labour shortage and higher wage rate

## **Generations and Demography: boom & bust cycles**

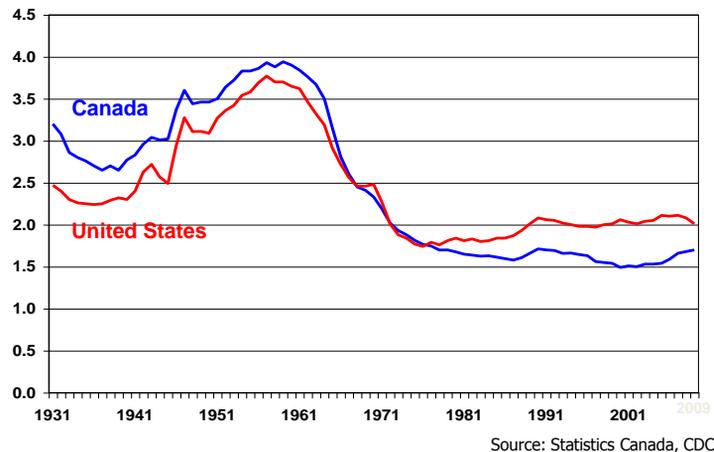
- WWI bust: 1914-1919
- Roaring 20s boom: 1920-1929
- depression/WWII bust; 1930-1946
- postwar babyboom: 1947-1966
- postboom bust; 1967-1979
- babyboom echo: 1980-1995
- Current bust 1996-2006
- Boom 2007 on, not sure how long it lasted

## Trends: Changing Aboriginal Population

- compositional changes: aboriginal population
- 16 % of 2011 SK population
- young and growing
- influx of young labour force entrants in coming years
- education/training challenges
- Different burning issues than general SK population

5

## Fertility Rates, Canada and US 1931-2009 (children per women)



## Generational differences

- most changes are a long time coming (eg less automatic respect for authority)
- age cycle vs generational differences
- how do we define a generation?
- what is an age cycle?

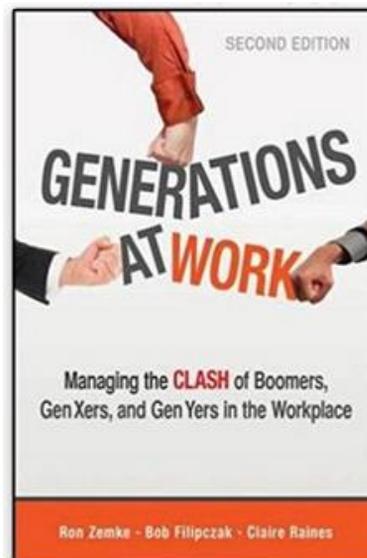
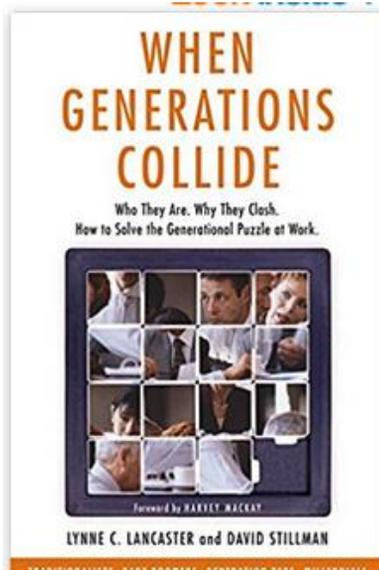
## Generational differences Cont'd

- Reactions to economic conditions labour force experiences (especially early ones)
- Changes in child rearing, family size
- Tech changes (comfort with technology in youth)
- Changes in communication styles
- New courses at workplace: titled: Generations at work

**SPEED BUMP**

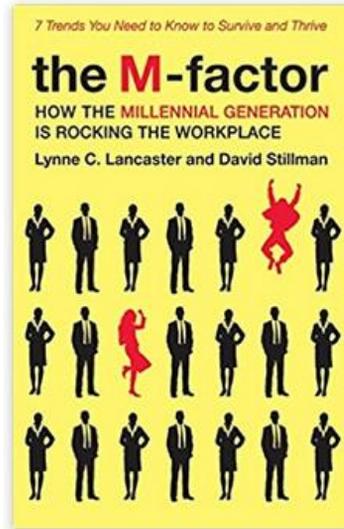


## Books on generational issues

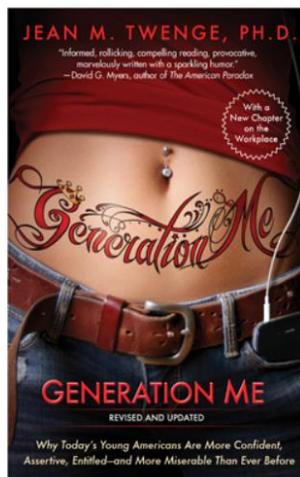


## Criticism of these books

- These books [and consultants who deal with these issues] mostly don't rely on over-time [time-lagged] data comparing the generations, they often use a cross-sectional survey so it's impossible to tell if differences are due to age or generational differences



## New book: Generation Me by J. Twenge



- When you were born dictates the culture you will experience
- Generational differences are the manifestation of cultural change
- Study using over-time survey (sampling people of same age at different points in time) show generational shifts

## Twenge's research

- Over-time changes: strong shift towards individualism, lower need for social approval, more distrust of institutions
- Two main changes in characteristics: more independent and open-minded
- Upside: lessened prejudice and discrimination [equality and tolerance]
- Downside: narcissism, decline in following social rules, see morality as a personal choice

## Twenge's research: at the workplace

- Impact on the workplace: younger workers more likely to question authority & question the status quo [want to know why]
- Have high expectations
- Want work/life balance
- Value flexibility

## Generational issues quote:

- “Having unrealistic expectations of the working world is a product of inexperience, not a trait of a specific generation. An individual with little workplace experience will be likely to have some mistaken ideas”.
- Source: Lauren Friese, founder of TalentEgg

## Changing factors affecting youth and careers

- Expansion of adolescence
- slower to leave home
- sometimes boomerang back (cluttered nest)
- increased educational participation (no longer job-ready at end of high school)
- more difficult school-to-work transition
- career shifters and lifelong learners



17

## Changing Factors affecting careers

- career pattern shifts (from stability to flux)
- delayering and flattening corporate hierarchies with more mixing of generations
- rising skill requirements and tech change
- lifelong learning

## The old psychological contract

- Old careers: stability, lifetime at one workplace
- Regimented: firm in charge of one's career
- Promotion-centred white-collar career: climb the tall career ladder
- Lifetime career: career as a vocation/calling

19

## The new psychological contract

- New careers: you are in charge of career
- More career movement between firms
- More volatility/flux, less guarantees
- Spiral careers: lot of horizontal movement
- Transitory careers: contract/project work, many jobs

20

## Change in management styles

- Traditional authoritarian style
- Rigid hierarchies, top-down communication
- Bureaucracy: rule oriented (follow the manual), replaceable people
- New management style: concern for quality, speed & innovation, change to a knowledge-based economy, increased communication, flatter hierarchy, increased importance of leadership

## Mentoring then & now

- Then: rigid, structured internal career ladder, little individual say
- Now: part of retention & engagement strategy, recognition of change in career paths
- Mentor gives career coaching for your individual career path
- Works best with training and generational sensitivity