

Introduction

Categorizing people is not an easy task given the peculiarities and nontransferable traits of each individual. There are only ever specific people living in a particular era. Thus, when we refer to generations, we fall back on a generalization aimed at reflecting what specific individuals born during the same period have in common. This helps to group them since, as José Ortega y Gasset stated, «we're molded by the times in which we live,» especially during childhood and adolescence. While generalizations necessarily lack precise detail, they do help humans to think and communicate or, rather, better understand our nature.

The millennial generation encompasses individuals born between 1980 and 2000. They currently represent 32.8% of the world population, which translates to 2 billion people. Of these, 51 million live in Europe and 8 million in Spain.¹ In 2025, millennials will constitute 75% of the world's workforce.² Within this generation, it is possible to distinguish between senior and junior millennials.

Although the cutoffs between generations are somewhat vague, individuals born in the '80s are considered to be senior millennials. They were educated by parents belonging to Generation X or even the previ-

1. The Cocktail Analysis and Arena Media, *Observatorio Redes Sociales – Millennials*, 2016.

2. BBVA Innovation Center, *Millennial Generation*, Innovation Trends Series, 2015.

ous generation, the baby boomers. The education they received was very similar to that of their parents but they experienced a significant change with the sudden access to new technologies that allowed them to interact more intensely. The major technological milestones that marked that period include the increased use of cell phones and household Internet connections. Educated for a world that no longer exists, these individuals are too young to belong to Generation X yet too old to be considered junior millennials. Some have referred to them as «xennials,»³ or people halfway between Generation Xers and millennials. They are the last generation that will remember what life was like before the Internet.

Junior millennials were born in the '90s. They were educated almost entirely by Generation Xers and grew up enjoying a high degree of independence. Given the absence of their parents at home and the access to new technologies they have had since a very young age, their education was vastly different from that which their parents received. They are often less well understood than previous generations and are often spoken about in cliché terms that mock their true profile. Members of this generation are considered digital natives and they show strong socialization via different online networks.⁴

Now that we have introduced the protagonists, let's continue on to the genesis of the book. The author has written this piece because of his need to better understand his own children, his students and the growing number of business professionals and directors with whom he works. As will be read later on, they are not different, rather they have mutated. What does this mutations consist of? What caused it? How can we keep up with it? Where is it headed?

Although the presence of the unexpected gives shape to the way we live, you can reduce the uncertainty that we cause through the full use of intelligence to understand things as they are (identify the truth) and decide what is best in each case (betting on goodness). Because of this enduring method, the years do not pass nor change the course of the generations, due do the fact that it has to do with what we are like as women and men since our creation. The author has interpreted it like the thread of Ariadne that helped Theseus out of the labyrinth of Crete before being devoured by the fearsome Minotaur. In this day and age, there is no Minotaur other than confusion.

3. A. Moreno (2017); D. Woodman (2017).

4. G. Stein, R. Mesa, and M. Martín, «The Leadership of Millennials: Profile of a Generation,» DPON-130-E, 2016; G. Stein, R. Mesa, and M. Martín, «Millennials, Work and the Company: Management Policies and Leadership Styles», DPON-131-E, 2016; G. Stein and M. Martín, «Millennials and Technology,» DPON-138-E, 2016.

The work is divided into three parts: the first is essentially descriptive; it addresses the common generational characteristics and their origin, giving special attention to the influence of technology on personal, social and business relationships, and it finishes with a set of reflections about how to direct them, and, consequently, how to be directed by them.

The second part shows three real cases which take a look at the convergence of the different existing generations, what happens within the scope of business organizations and the decisions and actions that should be adopted; in the third, the author gives his own perspective, which he has also weaved into the preceding pages, staking on a humanism that places the person on center stage, rather than a simulation of one.

I will begin this acknowledgment section with my research assistant and friend, Miguel Martín, whose collaboration in this intellectual and moral journey has made the experience infinitely more attractive and enriching. Rafael Mesa, a former student and expert manager, has collaborated on many of the pages, with special emphasis on those related to social networks and technology. Eduardo Rábago is the principal author of the American Valley case. Hundreds of students, businessmen and managers who have helped me as inspirers and critics must also be added to this short list.

To EUNSA, specifically to its editor, Esperanza Melero, for her cordial and effective professionalism.

To IESE, which has a preferential place on this list, and which has encouraged and facilitated the development of each line, the first publication of this piece as teaching material and its subsequent discussion, and which has benefited the final version now.

To my millennial children Jaime, Alicia and Luisa, and those who push them: José-Otto and Juan for having been a crucial part of the experiment. The fifth has already been mentioned.

To Luisa, my wife, who has again chosen the title, the subtitle, the cover, and ..., I will stop here, because if not this list would be endless and too personal.

Madrid, December 2018
IESE Business School