

Book Review

March 2016

The Next Hundred Million, America in 2050

Joel Kotkin, The Penguin Press, NY, 308 pages, 2010.

Summary

Mr. Kotkin rejects “declinism” as applied to the United States. He looks at the world and touts the U.S.’s flexible business culture, acceptance of immigrants and the distribution of our age cohorts. He ventures into describing “How we will live in 2050” and is bullish on suburbia based on its resilient popularity and its malleability and adaptability to accommodating workers in the New Innovation Economy. He acknowledges the “superstar” cities but focuses on cities in the Heartland. “One of the least anticipated developments in the nation’s 21st century geography will be the resurgence of the American Heartland” [p19]. Among his macro-trends he observes that “By the middle of the 21st century, America will have no clear majority race.” So, he ponders, what will hold society together. He quotes C.K. Chesterton [p28] as saying “the United States ‘is the only nation...that is founded on a creed”.

He spends time discussing the “anti-city”, “luxury cities”, “cities of aspiration” and the lure of small cities and towns. He presents the virtues of small towns and applies their qualities as agents for transforming the suburbs into livable communities. A provocative book published in the waning turmoil of 2010, but useful as a thought-piece. He quotes from demographer James Allen, “The future of America is in the suburbs”.

The book is very readable, well researched with copious footnotes and a thoughtful approach to the problem of what to do with four hundred million people living in the U.S. by 2050, one hundred million of them yet to arrive. He states that class, not race will define society. Upward mobility will be the challenge. Technology, “green” innovations, the strength of the American creed and the fertile ground in the suburbs leads Mr. Kotkin to feel good about the future...a required read when pondering the future.

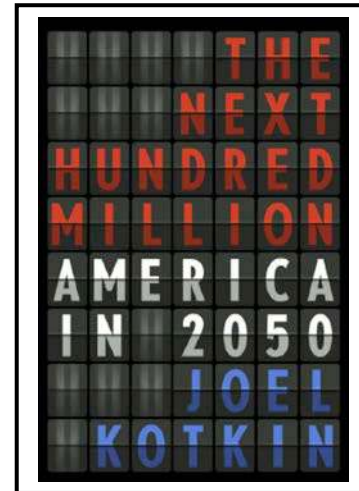
YouTube: In addition to the reviews cited below, check out:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=LQcuLhd-RIQ&autoplay=1>

Published Reviews

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/26/books/26book.html? r=0>

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704117304575137873173648114>



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Joel Kotkin is the Roger Hobbs Distinguished Fellow in Urban Studies at Chapman University in Orange, California, and the Executive Editor of the widely read website NewGeography.com. He is the author, most recently, of *The New Class Conflict*, as well as *The Next Hundred Million: America in 2050*, *The City: A Global History*, and *The New Geography: How the Digital Revolution Is Reshaping the American Landscape*. An internationally recognized authority on global economic, political, social, and technological trends, Kotkin is a regular contributor to *The Daily Beast* and *Forbes.com*, and he writes a weekly column for the *Orange County Register*, where he serves on the editorial board. His writing has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Examiner*, *City Journal*, *Politico*, the *New York Daily News*, and *Newsweek*.