

Family Profile No. 6, 2017

Generational Differences During Young Adulthood: Baby Boomers vs Millennials

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The demographic composition of the Baby Boomer versus the Millennial generations has long been of interest to policy makers and scholars alike. This profile explores the "generation gap" (Taylor, 2016) between the two by examining the demographic characteristics of early members in each generation from the ages of 25-34 using data from the 1980 Decennial Census (Baby Boomers) and the 2015 American Community Survey (Millennials).

*Note: The terms Baby Boomer and Millennial throughout this profile represent early members of each generation.

Early Baby Boomers

Aged 25-34 in 1980
 Birth Years: 1945-1955

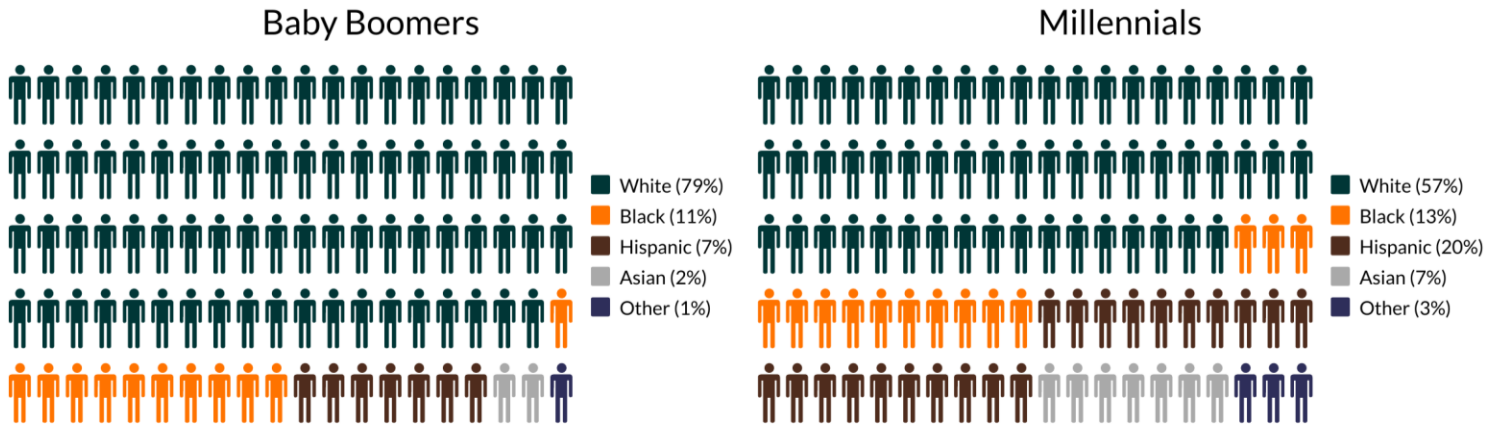


Early Millennials

Aged 25-34 in 2015
 Birth Years: 1980-1990

Racial and Ethnic Composition

Figure 1. Racial and Ethnic Composition of Baby Boomers (1980) and Millennials (2015) Aged 25-34, 2015



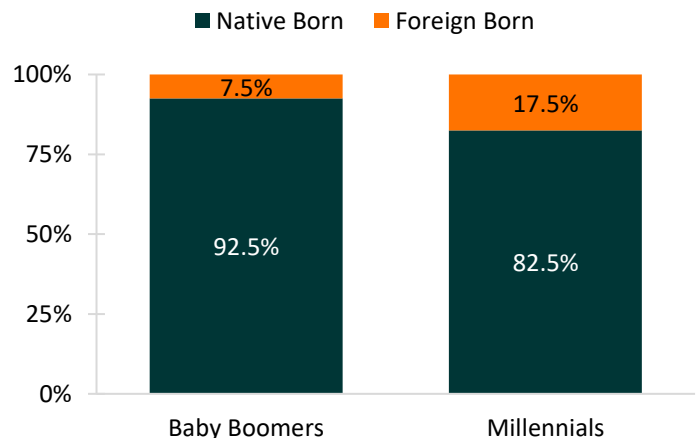
Source: NCFMR analyses of Decennial Census, 1980; American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2015

- Millennials are more racially and ethnically diverse than Baby Boomers, with larger proportions of Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Other racial categories.
- In 1980, 79% of Baby Boomers were White compared to 57% of Millennials in 2015.

Nativity Status

- The percentage of the population aged 25-34 who were foreign born more than doubled between the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations.
 - The percentage increased from 7.5% in 1980 to 17.5% in 2015.

Figure 2. Nativity Status of Baby Boomers (1980) and Millennials (2015) Aged 25-34, 2015

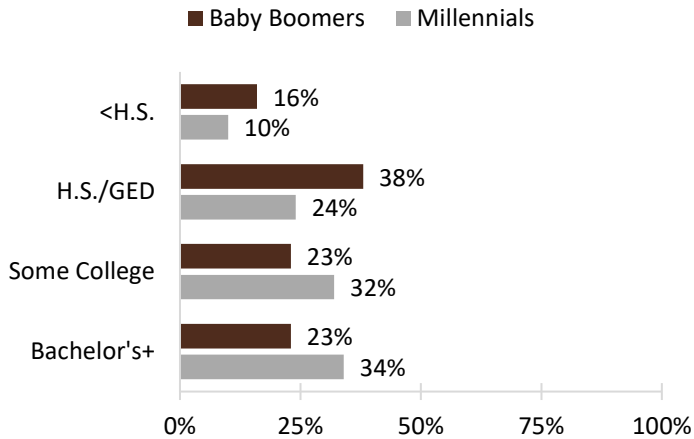


Source: NCFMR analyses of Decennial Census, 1980; American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2015

Educational Attainment

- Millennials were more educated than Baby Boomers at the same age.
 - The proportion with less than a high school education decreased between the two generations, whereas the proportion with a Bachelor's degree or higher increased.
- In 1980, the modal educational category for 25-34 year olds was a high school diploma or equivalent. By comparison, in 2015, the modal educational category was a Bachelor's degree or higher.

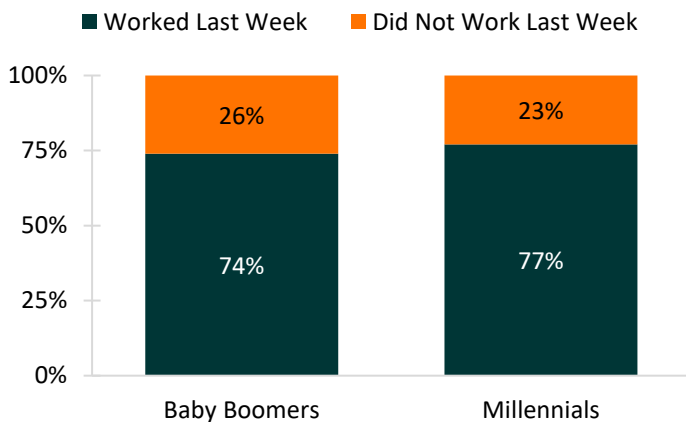
Figure 3. Educational Attainment of Baby Boomers (1980) and Millennials (2015) Aged 25-34



Source: NCFMR analyses of Decennial Census, 1980; American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2015

At Work in the Past Week

Figure 5. Those Working Last Week Among Baby Boomers (1980) and Millennials (2015) Aged 25-34



Source: NCFMR analyses of Decennial Census, 1980; American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2015

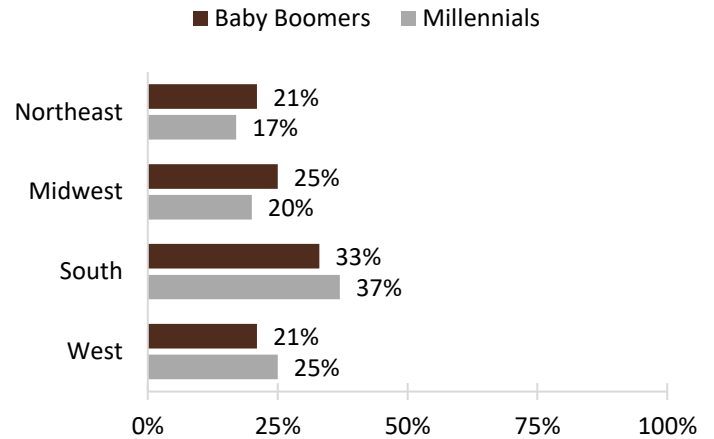
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Region of Residence

- The largest share of young adult Baby Boomers and Millennials lived in the South. Further, the overall share living in the South increased between the two periods.
- An increasing proportion of Millennials lived in the West compared to Baby Boomers.
- Decreasing proportions of Millennials lived in the Northeast and Midwest compared to Baby Boomers at the same age.

Figure 4. Region of Residence of Baby Boomers (1980) and Millennials (2015) Aged 25-34



- The majority of young adult Baby Boomers and Millennials were working in the past week.
- Among both groups, around 20% were not in the labor force (not shown).

References:

- Taylor, P. (2016). *The next America: Boomers, Millennials, and the looming generational showdown*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.
- Ruggles, S., Genadek, K., Goeken, R., Grover, J., & Sobek, M. (2015). *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0* [dataset]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.181281D01.0.V6.0>