

# Anticipating the American Experience in 2015

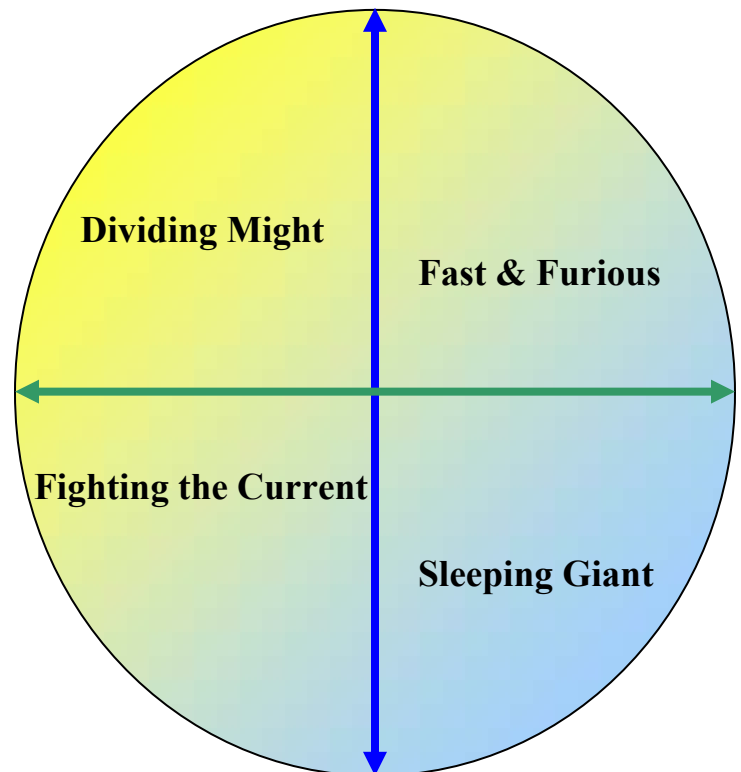
## Key forces that people and institutions will face in the next decade in the US:

1. Reaction to continuous, advancing technology
2. Level of US engagement, role, status in the world
3. Changes in social attitudes and values and cultural tensions
4. Levels of personal, societal security in a world framed by terrorism and uncertainty
5. Effects of increasing globalized economy
6. Response to pressures on natural world and the environment
7. Impact and response to demographic changes

## Actors who will shape the future around these forces:

- Civic Leaders
- Policymakers
- Business Community
- Religious Community
- The Four Generations (Silent, Boom, Gen X, Millennium)
- Media and Opinion Leaders
- University Centers
- Hospitals, Healthcare Community
- Philanthropic and Advocacy Organizations
- Mature Nonprofits and Regional Intermediaries
- Grassroots Organizations and Informal Associations
- Governments and Agencies
- New Immigrants
- International Community
- Rogue States and Terrorists
- International Organizations (IMF, OEDC)
- Supranational Institutions (EU)
- Global Corporations

## Four Possible Futures



Of the seven key forces, two will be critically important in the coming decade. These forces contain deep, embedded uncertainties. Placing these two forces on opposing axes generates a framework for developing four alternative futures.

## Key Uncertainties of Critical Importance

Will America continue to extend influence and dominance worldwide or will the US pull back and focus inward?

Will the wave of technological advances unify and lift all or divide the nation, leaving many behind?

## Four Possible Futures

**Fast and Furious:** In this future, the current of Americanization and dominance flows fast and furious. Everywhere, individuals find themselves spinning through a hi-speed cyber world. Software drives total information and cultural connectedness. With evangelical force, the voice of democracy and Christianity reverberates worldwide.

**Sleeping Giant:** In this future, America is both resting and building. The US has temporarily retreated from the world stage, following a small but spectacular defeat—one that did *not* bring America to her knees, but shook her nevertheless. Americans respond to the whine of anti-Americanism by closing doors and turning inward as if to say, “Fine then. Stay out.” Inside the mind of the sleeping giant, great ideas are stirring. Advanced health breakthroughs are harbingers of an “ageless future.” Energy and resource dilemmas are solved through technology. Rural schools leap ahead thanks to wireless and high-speed internet connections. A shift to greater investments in education results in a new generation of well-equipped graduates. Focused inward, the country becomes unified around and because of technological advances.

**Fighting the Current:** This future is marked by resistance and caution. Many Americans lose patience in the promises of simple, standardized software and a paved information highway that is yet to reach them. A nagging US economic migraine compounds an emotional and psychic hangover from the wars on terror. The government resists the pull to police the world.

**Dividing Might:** In this future, US power is a polarizing force in the international community. At home, technology divides by leaving the “have nots” behind. America feels overextended, nearly resentful of the role the US is forced to take in a world in which it is the sole superpower. A “zero sum” game is played out in policy, politics, education and economic development. Global terror spreads and the American public is increasingly insecure. Deficits persist, eviscerating many layers of the social safety net.