

The background of the slide is a blurred image of the United States flag, showing the stars and stripes in shades of blue, white, and red.

Foundations of American Democracy

The Roots of American Government

- Aristotle and the Greeks articulated the idea of natural law.
 - Society should be governed by ethical principles that are part of nature and can be understood through reason.
 - Government before had been by “divine right,” but these philosophical changes put humans on the road toward self government.

Origins

- Force theory: one person or group claimed control over an area and forced all to submit. State was born of force
- Evolutionary: family units became networks/clans (12 Tribes of Israel)
- Divine Right: state created by God, who gave those of royal birth the “divine right” to control (Aztec, Egypt, Japan)

Social Contract Theory and the State of Nature

- No government = anarchy
- No one has superior power
- Humans give up freedom in exchange for protection and security
- Agree to allow state to protect “natural rights” of life, liberty, & property and in return will abide by state laws

Thomas Hobbes

- English
(1588-1679)
- *Leviathan*, 1651
- state of war (fear)
- Man in a state of nature

...every one is governed by his own reason, and there is nothing he can make use of that may not be a help unto him in preserving his life against his enemies, it followeth that in such a condition every man has a right to everything, even to one another's body . . .

Man in a Political State

- power surrendered to sovereign
- man has no right to resist
- the sovereign answers to no one
- if your sovereign is overthrown, you give loyalty to the new sovereign

Conclusion

- A brutal, oppressive government is better than a “state of nature”
- Government is not a contract between subjects and their ruler

John Locke

- English
(1632-1704)
- *Two Treatises on Civil Government*, 1690
 - man is bound by natural law
 - can be discovered through reason
 - no man may harm another in his life, liberty or possessions
 - every man has the duty to enforce the natural law

Continued...the social contract

- contract between man and their government
- government created to serve its subjects
- legislatures may not delegate power
- executive cannot make law
- government cannot violate natural law or contract broken. Subjects no longer bound.
- Right of Revolution!

Jean Jacques Rousseau

- French
(1712-1778)
- *The Social Contract*, 1762
- man is good; society corrupts him
- men have two instincts: self preservation and compassion
- there are two types of inequality: natural and moral or political

Continued...Social Contract

- the individual must submit to the will of the majority. Individuality would destroy society.
- society is a living organism ruled by the general will
- Majority rules - no minority rights - no limited government
- Direct or pure democracy only.

Summary

- Rousseau stressed the concepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity (majority rule).
- Locke stressed the concepts of limited government and sovereignty of the people.
- Hobbes stressed the concepts of a strong and unlimited ruler or sovereign. Absolute power of the state.

“We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.”

Declaration of Independence

What is the Purpose of Govt?

1. Keep societies ordered
2. Provide public services
3. Provide for national security
4. Promote standards of behavior
5. Make economic decisions

Principles of American Democracy: The Individual

- Recognize each person's worth and dignity
- Your personal freedom must be tempered by respect for others
- All people are entitled to equality and opportunity

Principles of American Democracy: Community & Govt

- Majority rule with respect to minority rights
- Limited government-It's not all powerful-it may only do what the people have given it power to do.
- Representative govt-citizens choose individuals through elections to represent their ideas in law

The background of the slide is a blurred image of the United States flag, showing the stars and stripes in soft focus.

Principles of American Democracy: Political Power

- Free Elections
- Competing Political Parties

Direct Democracy (or Pure Democracy)

- All come together periodically to discuss policy and abide by majority rule.
 - Does not exist in its pure form as any nation's govt today
 - Ex: town meetings

Representative Democracy

- People elect reps and give them power to govern
- Elections called when needed, not regularly
 - Japan, Jamaica, Taiwan, New Zealand, Pakistan

Democratic Republic

- Representative democracy with no inherited public office
- Regular elections
- Reps accountable to the people for their conduct
 - US, France, Tunisia, Kenya, Canada, Brazil

Capitalism

- private ownership of property
- free market economy (laissez-faire)

Ideology of Americans

- **Conservatism** – thought to believe that a government is best that governs least and that big government can only infringe on individual, personal, and economic rights.

Ideology of Americans

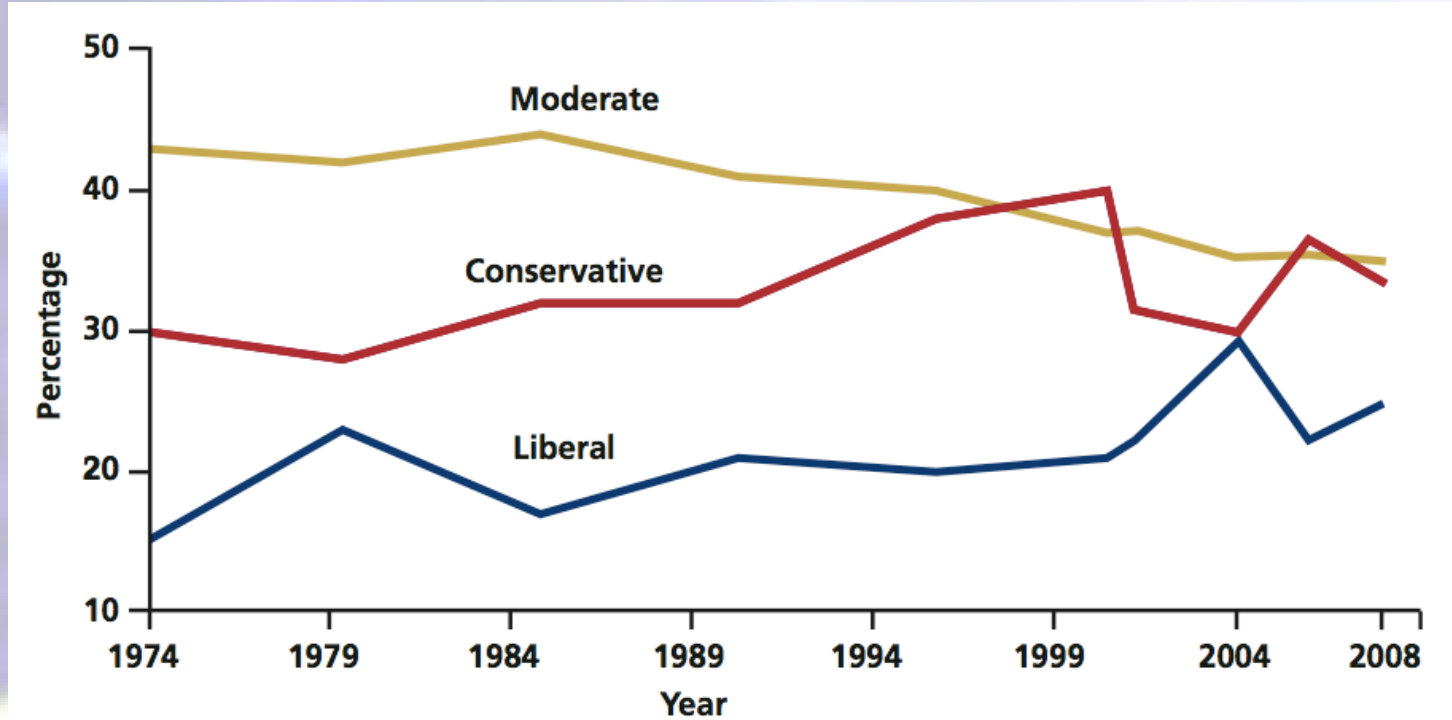
- **Liberalism** – thought to favor government involvement in the economy and the provision of social services and to take an activist role in protecting women, the elderly, minorities, and the environment.

Ideology of Americans

- **Libertarianism** – thought to favor a free market economy and no governmental interference in personal liberties.

- Libertarians favor free markets and personal liberty.
- Fiscal Conservatives want little regulation of economy.
- Social Conservatives favor regulation of morality.
- Liberals want an active government.

Adult Self-Identification



Is it easy to fit into the labels?

America is Changing

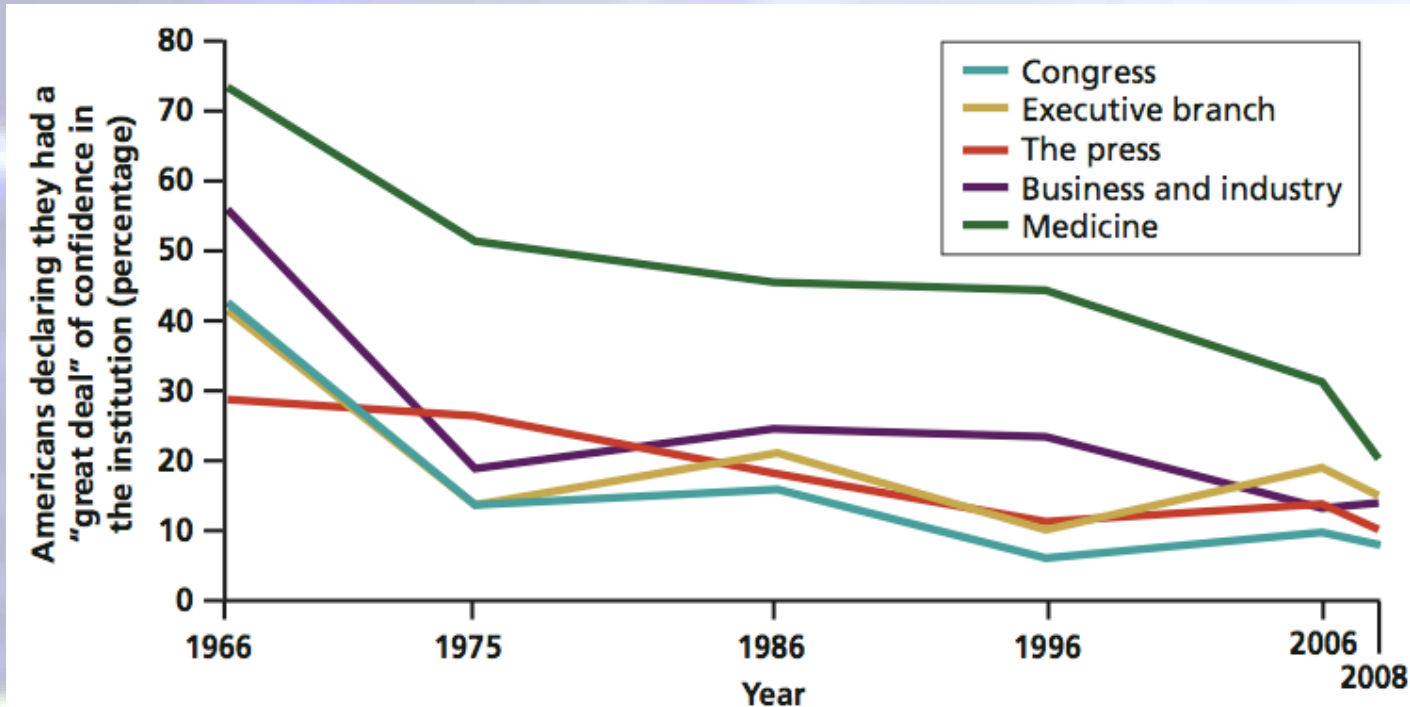
How will that affect politics?

- Population is increasing in size.
- Racial and ethnic composition is shifting.
- Country is aging.
- Families are becoming smaller and less traditional.
- Selfish interests?

Attitudes toward Govt

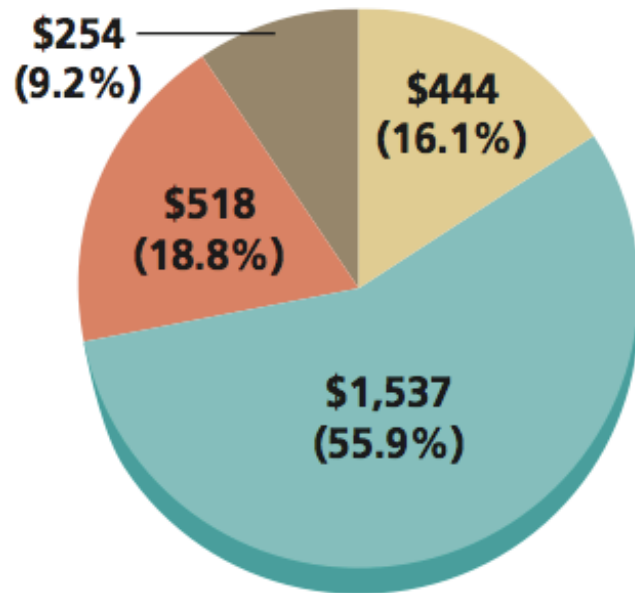
- Demographics shape our perspective
- American dream is a goal for many citizens
- People have high expectations
- Voters can be apathetic
- Americans may lack faith in leaders
- The standard of living is quite high
- Each generation should do better than the last...

Faith in Institutions



Who do you trust? “No one over thirty...”

Allocation of the Budget



- Mandatory spending, in billions of dollars
- Discretionary nonmilitary spending, in billions of dollars
- Discretionary military spending, in billions of dollars
- Net interest

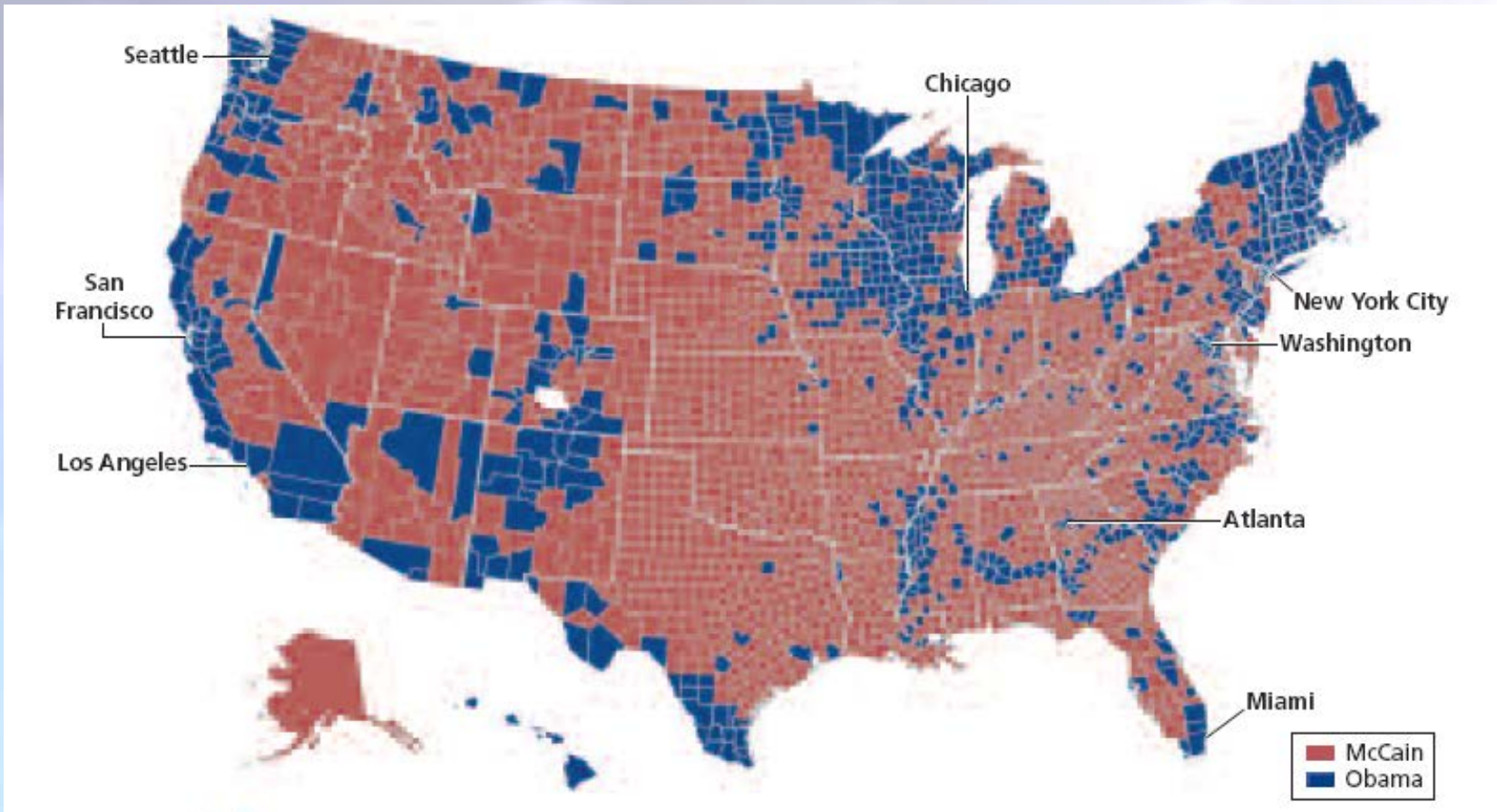
What is the purpose of government?

Values?

\$16+ Trillion

<http://demonocracy.info/infog>

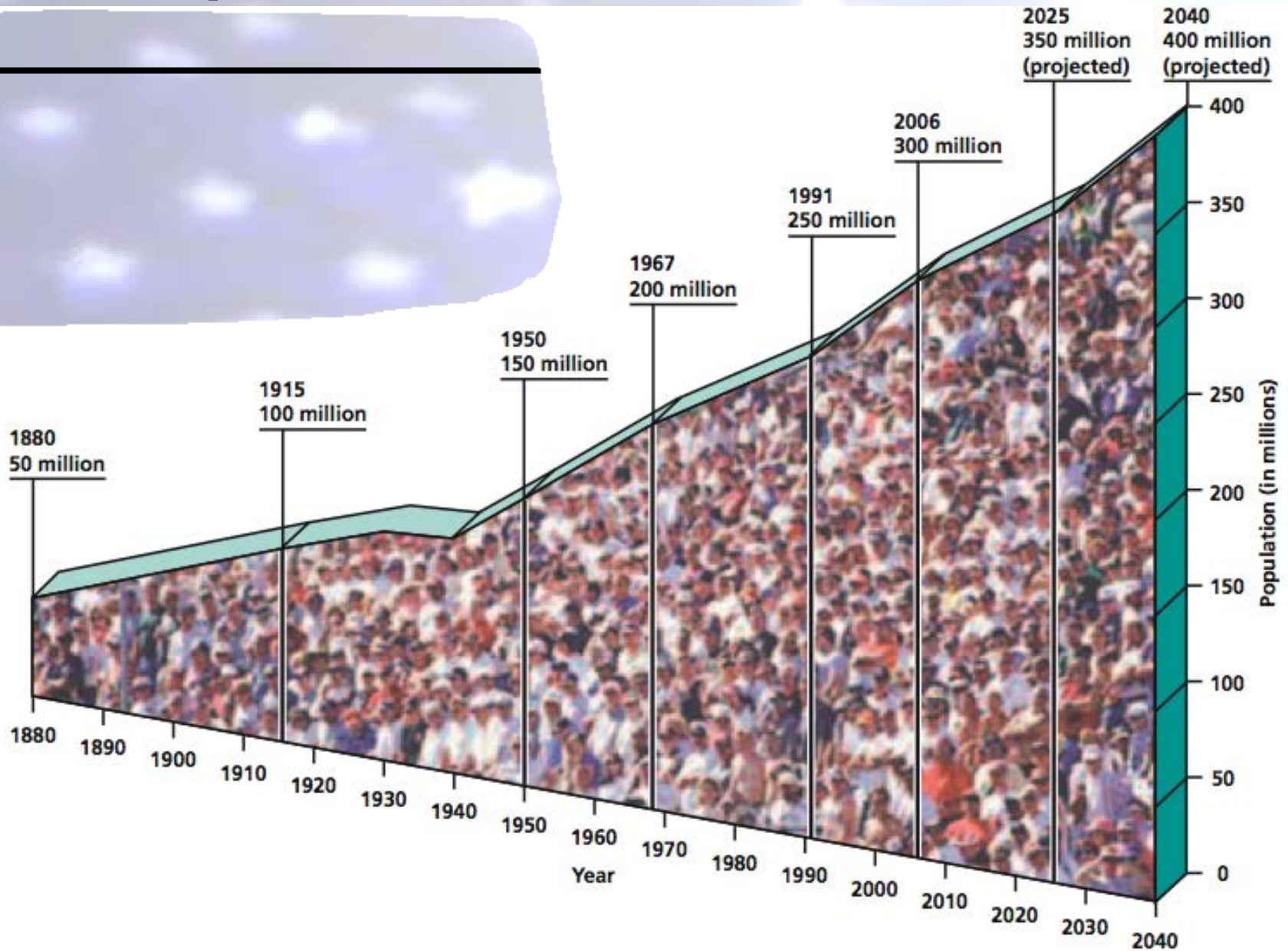
2008 Presidential Election



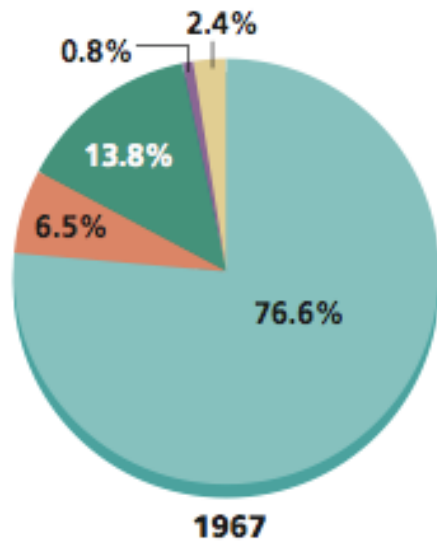
Do you see any demographic trends?

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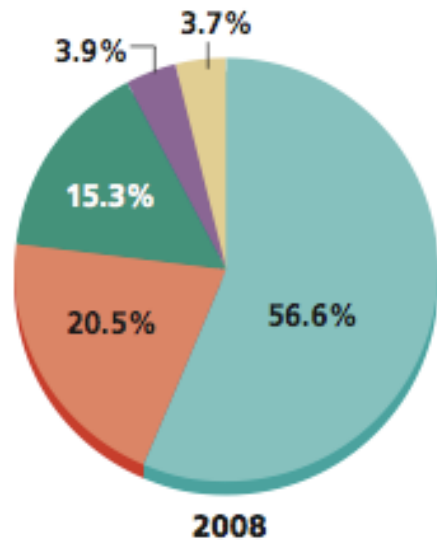
U.S. Population Growth



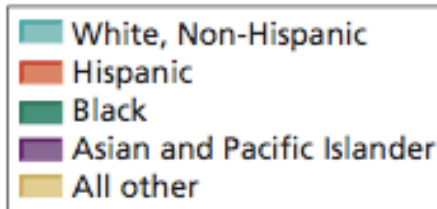
Race and Ethnicity



1967



2008



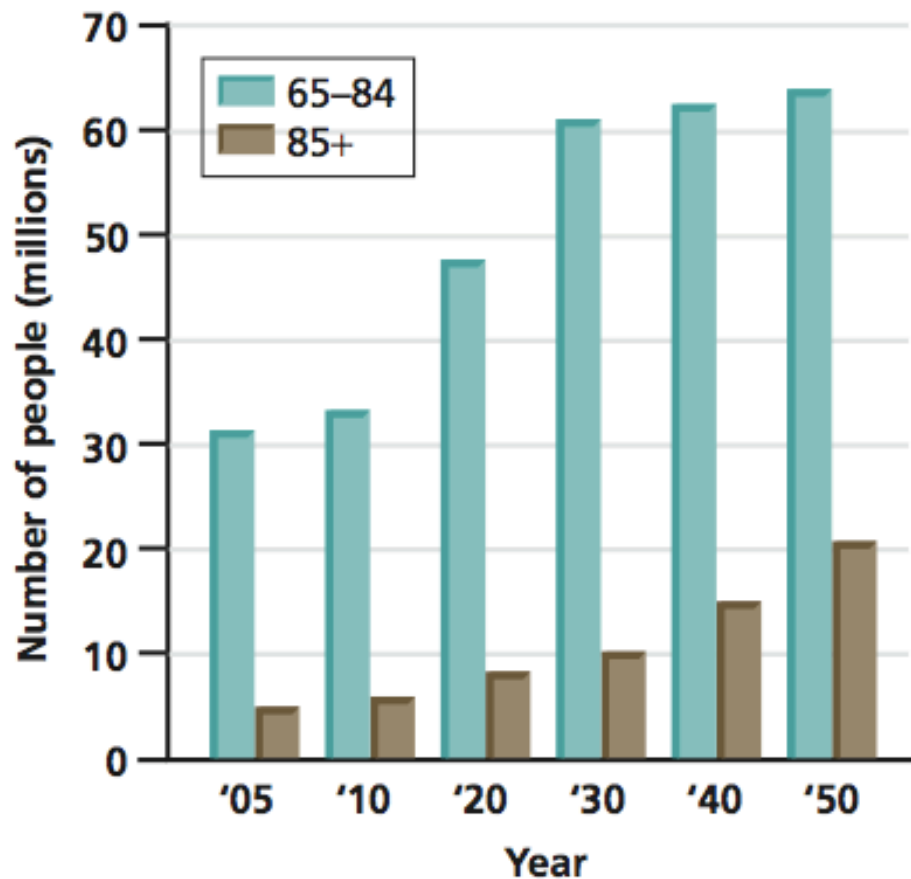
WASP?

Which box do you check?

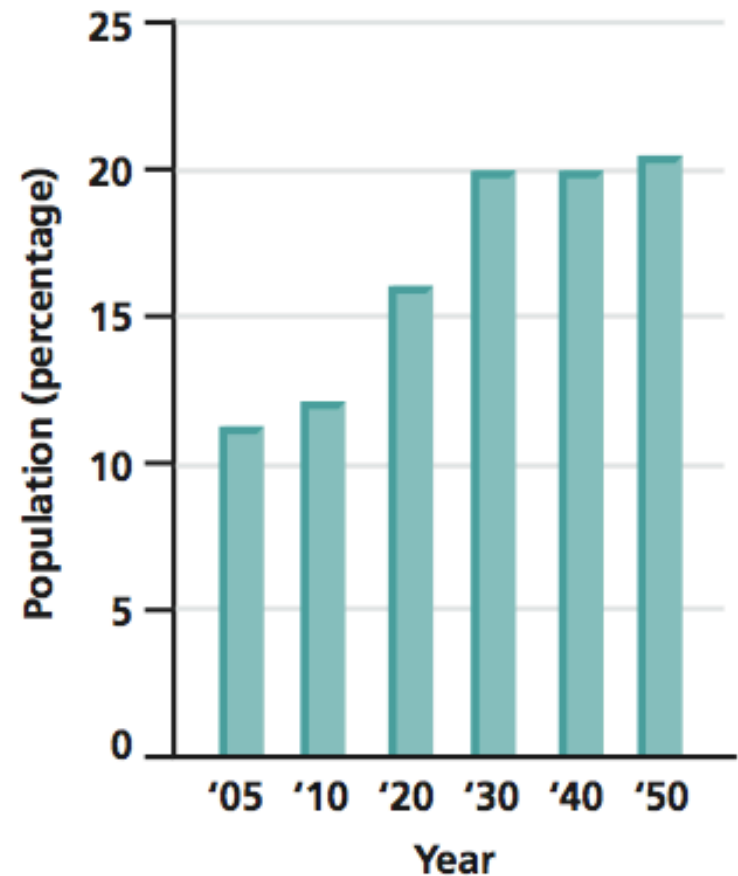
Historical context

Equality

America Is Getting Older



The number of Americans 65 and older will double by 2040.



Seniors will account for a greater portion of the U.S. population.

At least 90% of political conflict has historically revolved around the questions of:

- Who has the power/responsibility and who doesn't?
- How much government is necessary?
- Today that conflict continues