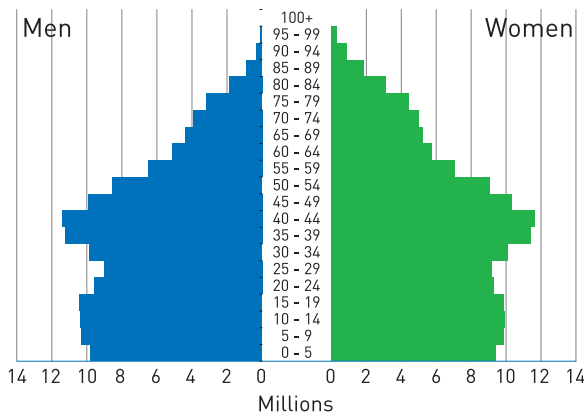


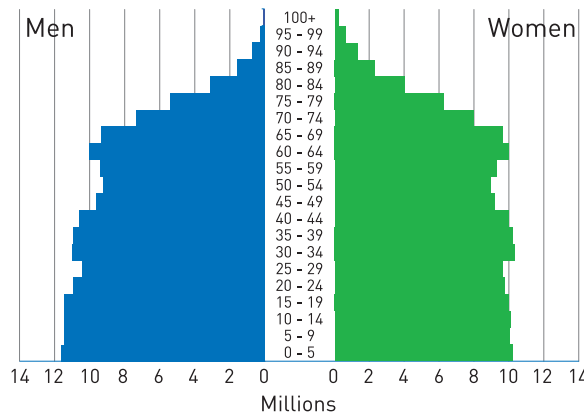
# Demographics...

280 Million Americans in 2002



Source: National Projections Program, Population Division

...And 338 Million by 2025



Source: National Projections Program, Population Division

**T**HE NEXT 25 YEARS PROMISE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES THAT WILL RESHAPE THE FACE OF America and transform the lives of all who live here. Like an explosion in a fireworks factory, these changes will amplify one another and deeply alter our national concerns, assumptions, and agendas.

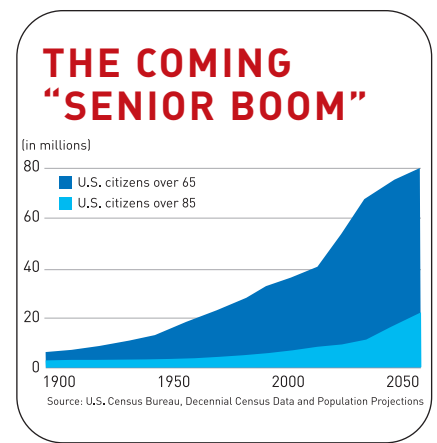
Much of this change is likely to be spurred by increased longevity. People are living longer today than ever before — more than 66% of all the people who have ever been over 65 are alive right now — and the numbers are going up. This boom in senior citizenship is coming just at the moment that the baby boomers, who at birth were the largest generation in American history, start to retire. By 2025, there will be 64 million baby boomers aged 61 to 79, a 90% increase in the size of this population from today. In 1980, the median age of the United States was 30. Today, it is 35. If present trends continue, “over 50s” will form a majority of adults in the United States sometime around 2050.

All those seniors are going to seriously stress current governmental and

social infrastructure. Traditionally, societies have been structured like a pyramid, with a lot of young people at the bottom supporting far fewer seniors at the top. But by 2025, the American population pyramid will get far steeper, with relatively fewer young people to support their elders’ increased needs, and expectations, for social services. The “gray lobby” will wield considerably more political, cultural, and marketplace power — a significant shift in a country that routinely caters only to the Britney Spears set.

This coming senior boom could affect our lives in unforeseen ways. We could see new intergenerational workplace politics, with “age diversity” becoming an important social issue, even

while children and parents compete for the same management jobs. It will certainly affect domestic life: a 35-year-old woman in 2025 may end up caring for her mother longer than her mother cared for her when she was growing up. And it’s

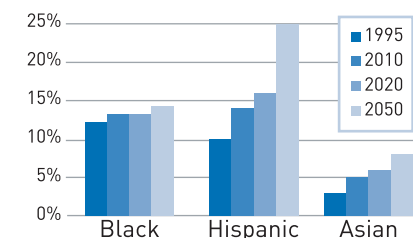


THE COMING “SENIOR BOOM”

(in millions)

■ U.S. citizens over 65  
■ U.S. citizens over 85

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data and Population Projections



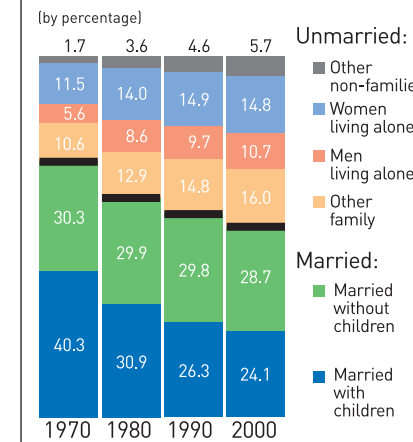
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**INCREASING DIVERSITY.** Minorities will become the majority by 2050.

likely to lead to a major immigration boom, as the country imports labor to keep social services properly functioning.

The graying of America will be accompanied by a rainbowing. Latino, Asian, black, Native American, and other ethnic populations jumped from 23% to 30% between 1990 and 2000. By shortly after 2050, non-Hispanic whites may become a true minority. Hispanics are poised to overtake blacks as the largest minority group; Asians and Pacific Islanders could almost double their numbers by 2020. And interracial marriages will add children to the population

## THE CHANGING AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD



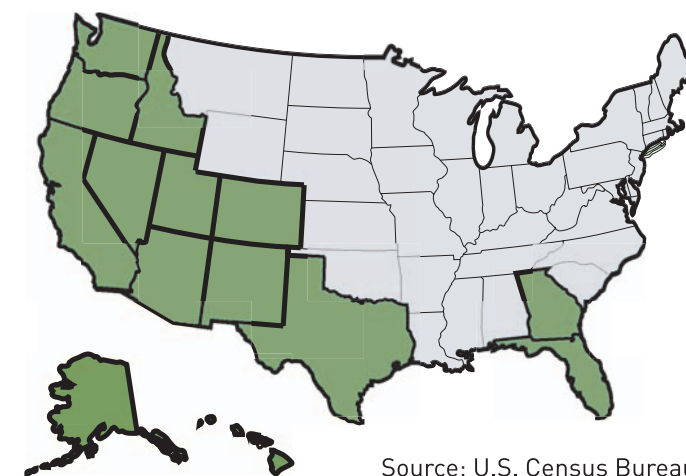
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

who cannot be easily labeled using current categories. This is likely to lead to greater workforce and community diversity and a rethinking of our educational policies. In 2025, it simply may not be possible to function in America without knowing Spanish.

The family unit is likely to continue to change as well. The national average household size continues to get smaller — meaning fewer children and fewer parents. The household size of the average American family declined from 3.1 to 2.6 persons during the last 30 years and will reach 2.35 by 2020 — only one child for every three couples. Reasons for this include the decline in fertility, changes in the living patterns of youth, fewer overall marriages, a higher median age for marriage, and increases in the divorce rate.

Cohabitation is one of America’s most recent and significant household trends. Between 1960 and 1998, America experienced a nearly 1,000% increase in unmarried couples living together. One-third of these couple households includes children. The percentage of never-married adults has consistently increased, from 22% in 1970 to 28% 30 years later. In the coming decade 4 million households will consist of unmarried couples living together.

These trends will intersect. The 21st century may find young minorities working to support an older and whiter



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**WESTWARD HO.** The fastest growing states 1995-2020.

population, spurring increased racial and ethnic tension across generational lines. As life spans increase, more and more people may give up the notion of lifetime marriage, choosing some form of serial monogamy instead. And there may be many more cuisine options alongside your local Chinese restaurant.

### PROVOCATIONS...

Will the AARP Party replace the Democrats or the Republicans? How will the Army cope with having proportionally fewer young people? Will high school Hindi replace high school French?

—Andrew Zolli

### WANT MORE?

MIT’S AGELAB  
<http://web.mit.edu/agelab/index.html>

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHICS  
[www.americandemographics.com](http://www.americandemographics.com)