

AMERICAN POLITICS:

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Presented by Zhang Wei
September 7, 2022





TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 POLITICAL SYSTEM

politics, government, authority,
democratic republic...

03 POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Conservatism, liberalism,
spectrum, grid

02 POLITICAL CULTURE

liberty, order, equality, the
size of the government

04 US TODAY

Population changes



01.

POLITICAL SYSTEM



Politics Definition

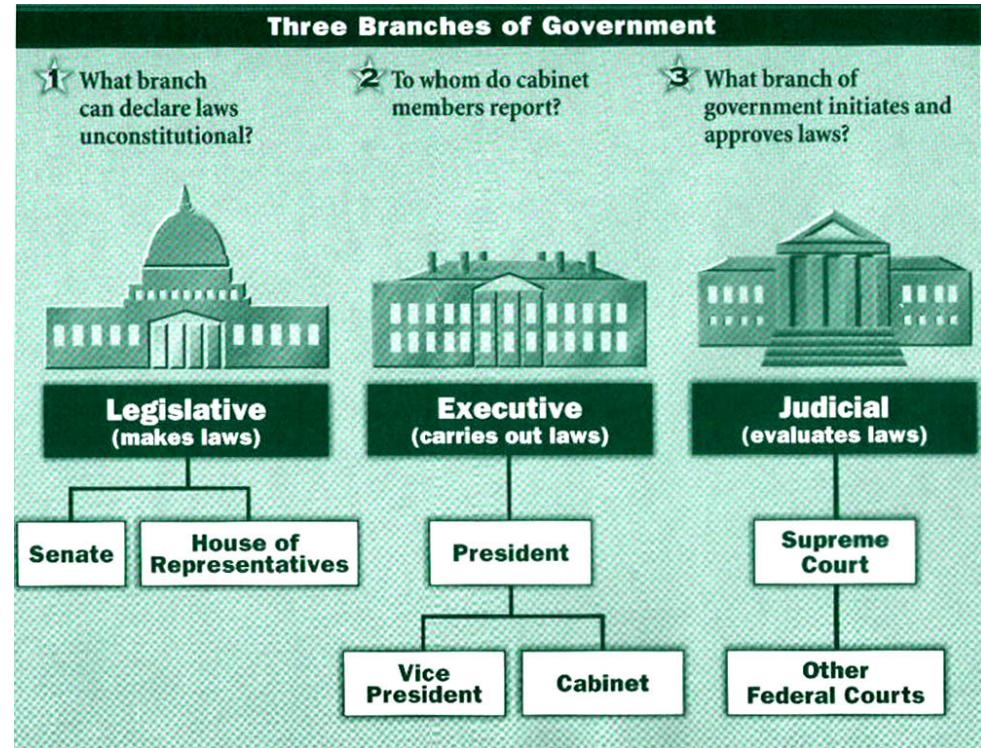
- ✓ The process of resolving conflicts and deciding “who gets what, when, and how.”
- ✓ The struggle over power within **organizations** that can grant benefits or privileges.





Government Definition

- ✓ Within government, decisions are made to resolve conflicts and allocate benefits and privileges.
- ✓ The **preeminent** institution within society
- ✓ Why is it preeminent?





Government's Preeminence

- ✓ The omnipresent government
 - ✓ Personal ID, Study in public school, security, taxes, transportation, social welfare...
- ✓ Scenario 1: no government control
- ✓ Scenario 2: too much government control





Scenario 1: No Government Control



Syria

- 2011, Assad government killed peaceful protestors
- Armed rebellions
- The government lost control of the country



Scenario 1: No Government Control



Syria

- Law and order had broken down completely
- By 2020, up to 570,000 people had been killed, and more than half of the country's people had been driven from their homes.



Scenario 2: Too Much Government Control

A more common case

- Syria before the rebellions broke out
- Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler

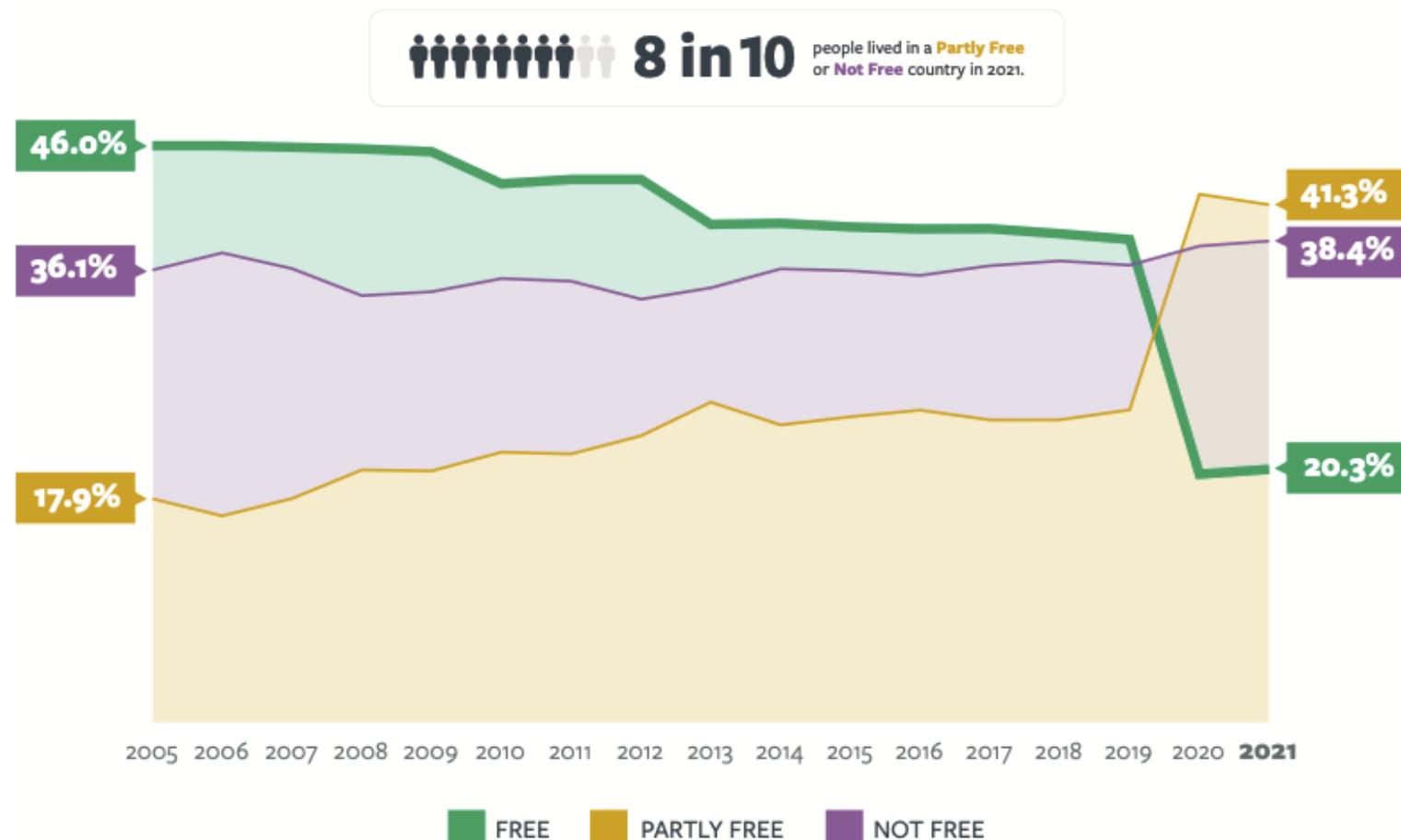
Human rights organizations

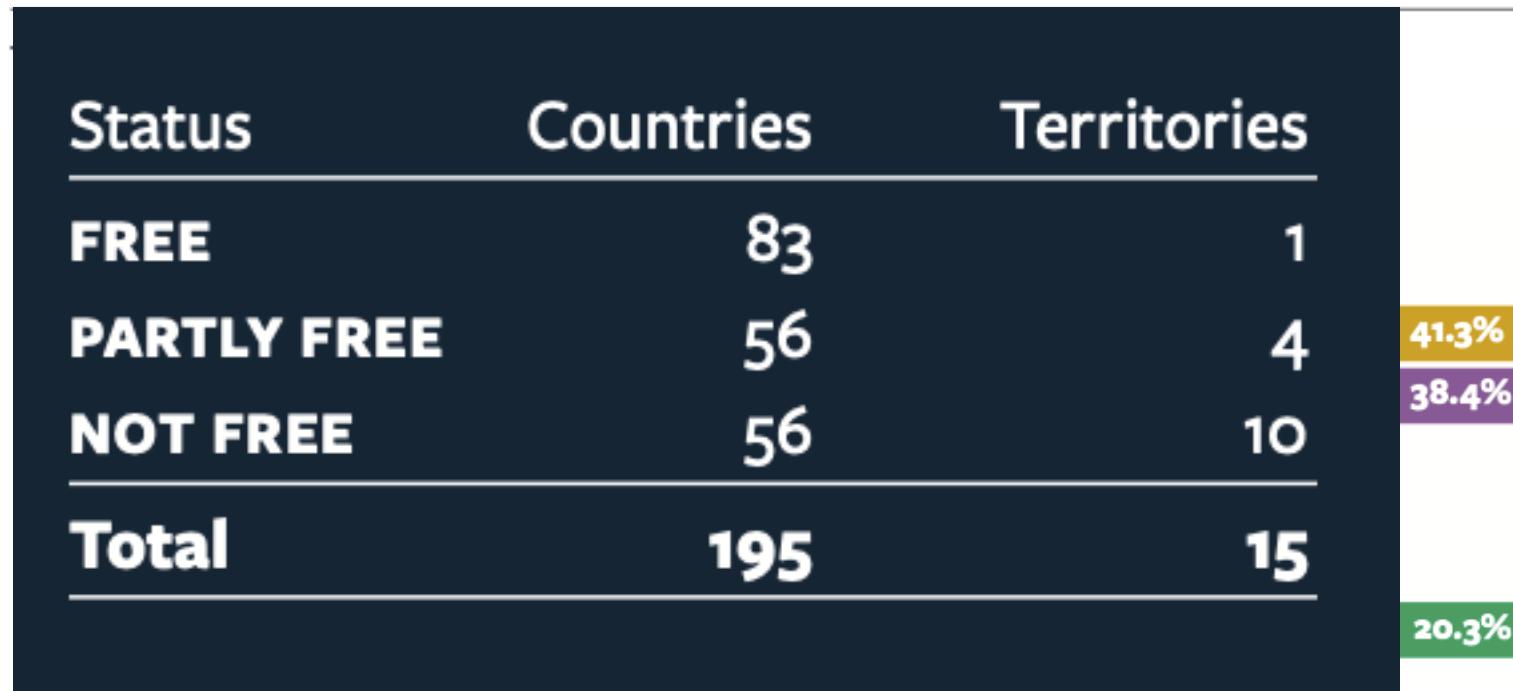
Freedom House 2022



LIVING IN A LESS FREE WORLD

The share of the world's population living in Free environments has fallen as authoritarian practices proliferate.





2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010

Freedom in the World 2022
assessed 210 countries and
territories around the globe.



Origins of Government

Thomas Hobbes

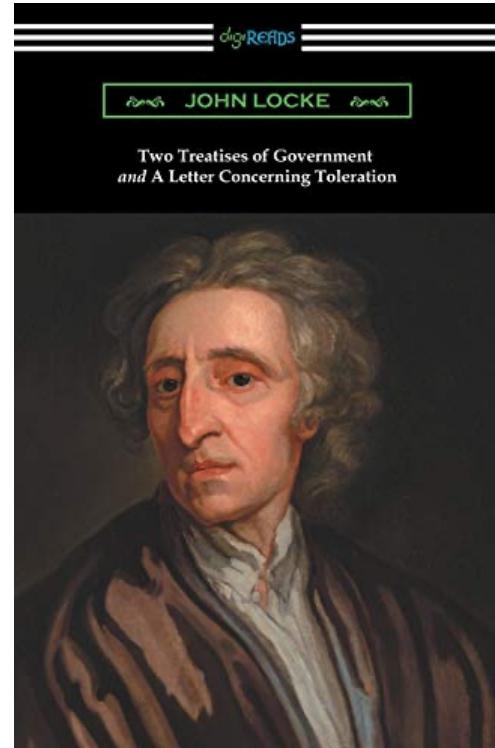
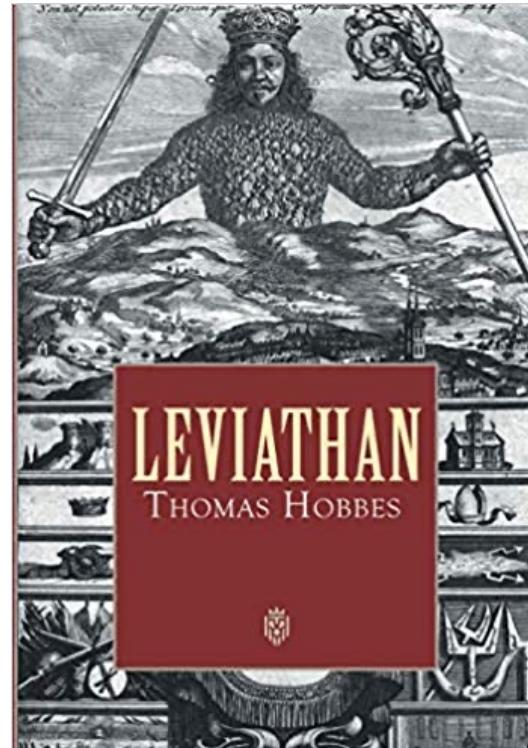
Leviathan

Realism

John Locke

*Two Treatises of
Government*

Liberalism





Authority

- Facilitates GOV to enforce its decisions
- Based on armed forces & the police



Legitimacy

- Authority accepted----Legitimate
- Authority not accepted----illegitimate



Forms of Government

- ✓ Divided by which person or group of people controls society through the government:
 - ✓ **Totalitarian** regimes: few ctrl gov; gov ctrl all
 - ✓ **Authoritarian** regimes: few ctrl gov; gov ctrl gov
 - ✓ **Democracies: rule by the people**



Forms of Government

✓ **Direct democracy**

- ✓ Decisions are made by everyone directly
- ✓ Ancient Greece

✓ **Representative democracy/democratic republic**

- ✓ Decisions are made by representatives elected by the people



Forms of Government

✓ **Direct democracy**

- ✓ Small communities
- ✓ Demerits
 - ✓ The tendency for the public to be easily swayed by demagogues
 - ✓ The possibility for the tyranny of the majority
- ✓ Serve as complements: initiatives, referenda, recalls

✓ **Representative democracy/democratic republic**



Forms of Government

- ✓ **Direct democracy**
- ✓ **Representative democracy/democratic republic**
 - ✓ With or without a monarch
 - ✓ the people hold the ultimate power over the government through elections
 - ✓ Universal suffrage; majority rule; minority rights; Constitutional democracy



Forms of Government: Other Names

Autocracy

Rule by a dictator with no legal restraints or popular control

Monarchy

Rule by a dynasty; monarch sovereignty

Communism

the means of production are commonly owned and production is undertaken for use, rather than for profit.

Aristocracy

Rule by the best/rich

Theocracy

Rule by God

Oligarchy

Rule by few

(See Wikipedia at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listofformsofgovernment>)



Theories Describing American Democracy

✓ Majoritarianism

- ✓ GOV does what the majority want
- ✓ Not authentic description

✓ Elite Theory

- ✓ GOV does what the elites want
- ✓ US a sham democracy

✓ Pluralism

- ✓ GOV does what the groups want
-
-
-



Theories Describing American Democracy

✓ **Majoritarianism**

✓ **Elite Theory**

✓ **Pluralism**

✓ GOV does what the groups want

✓ Groups struggle for the benefits of their members

✓ Demerits:

✓ Poor people not represented;

✓ Rich people overrepresented;

✓ Strong groups' interests win in the end



02.

Liberty, Order, Equality,
Beliefs on the size of GOV

POLITICAL CULTURE





1) Liberty vs. Order

Freedom of religion

Abortion

Pro-choice?

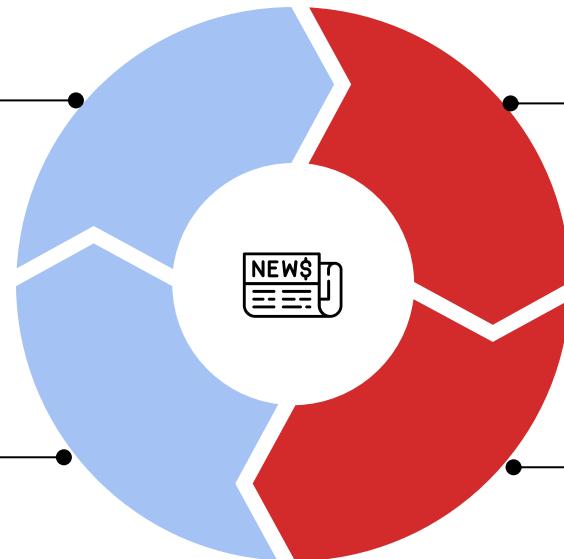
Freedom of speech

Pro-life?

Same-sex Marriage

Privacy right?

A challenge to order?





2) Liberty vs. Equality

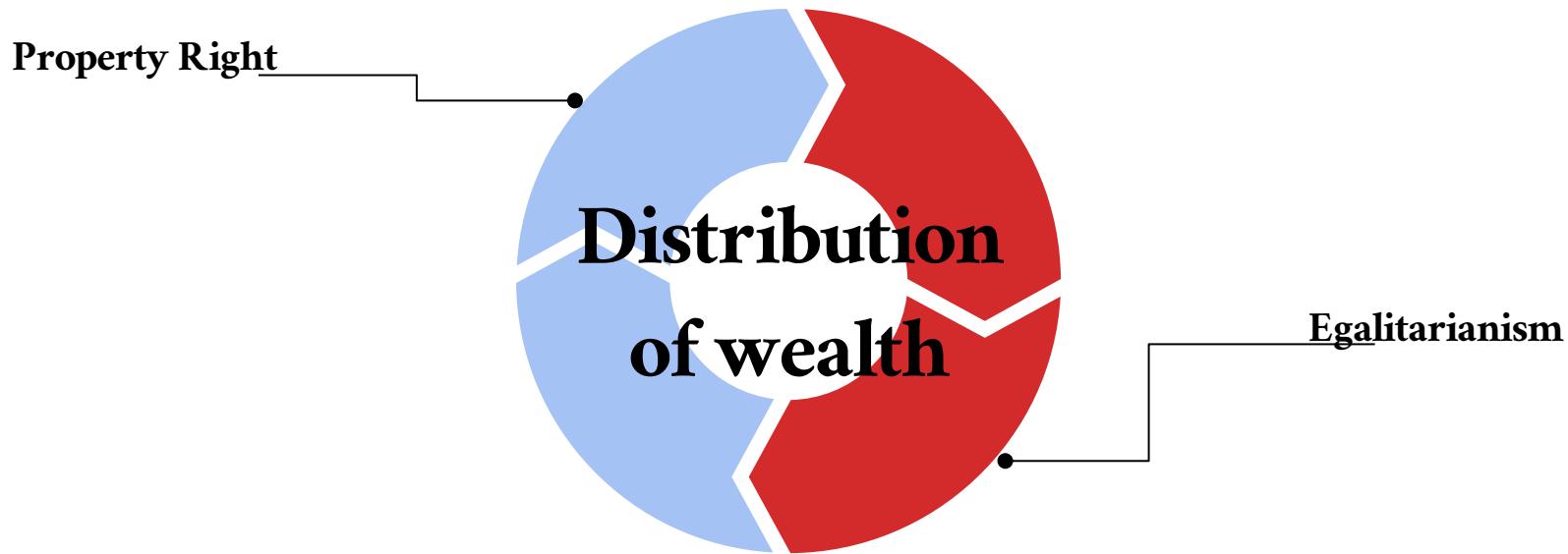
- ✓ Promoting **equality** would limit the majority's de facto **right (freedom/liberty)** to discriminate against the minority.

 - ✓ equality in terms of suffrage 

 - ✓ equality in terms of distribution of wealth ?
-
-
-



2) Liberty vs. Equality





3) Small GOV vs. Big GOV

- ✓ Americans tend to oppose big government, even though they receive benefits from it
- ✓ A recent case where big government failed
 - ✓ Obama and the recession
- ✓ Conservatives seemingly against big government but actually supporting projects like Medicare



3) Small GOV vs. Big GOV

- ✓ American people have different views about whether government should be big or small enough to meet their needs.
- ✓ A recent poll found that 55% of Americans believe the government does too much for them.
- ✓ On the other hand, 44% believe the government does not do enough for them.
- ✓ One reason for this divide is that people have different views on whether one can benefit from government programs.
- ✓ Conservatives tend to believe that individuals should be responsible for their own well-being, while liberals tend to believe that government has a responsibility to help those in need.
- ✓ Another factor is the size of the government itself. Some argue that a large government is inefficient and wastes resources, while others believe it is necessary to provide essential services and support for vulnerable populations.

Whether to have small or big GOV

|
|
v

Whether one can benefit from GOV



POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Conservatism vs. Liberalism



Major Ideologies

	Conservatism	Liberalism
Definition	pro (religious) tradition	against (religious) tradition
Values they support	Liberty, order, authority	Liberty, equality
Liberty meaning	negative liberty free from GOV control	positive liberty free to live one's own values
LGBTQ and abortion	against	for



Major Ideologies: Spectrum

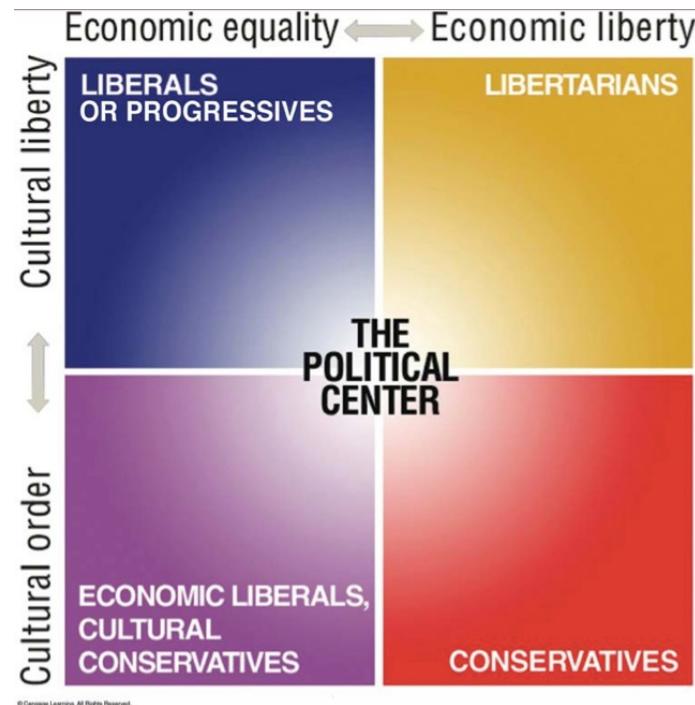
Table 1.1 The Traditional Political Spectrum

Which of these platforms are likely to be popular? Why?

	Socialism	Liberalism	Conservatism	Libertarianism
How much power should the government have over the economy?	Active government control of major economic sectors.	Positive government action in the economy.	Positive government action to support capitalism.	Almost no regulation over the economy.
What should the government promote?	Economic equality, community.	Economic security, equal opportunity, social liberty.	Economic liberty, morality, social order.	Maximal economic and social liberty.

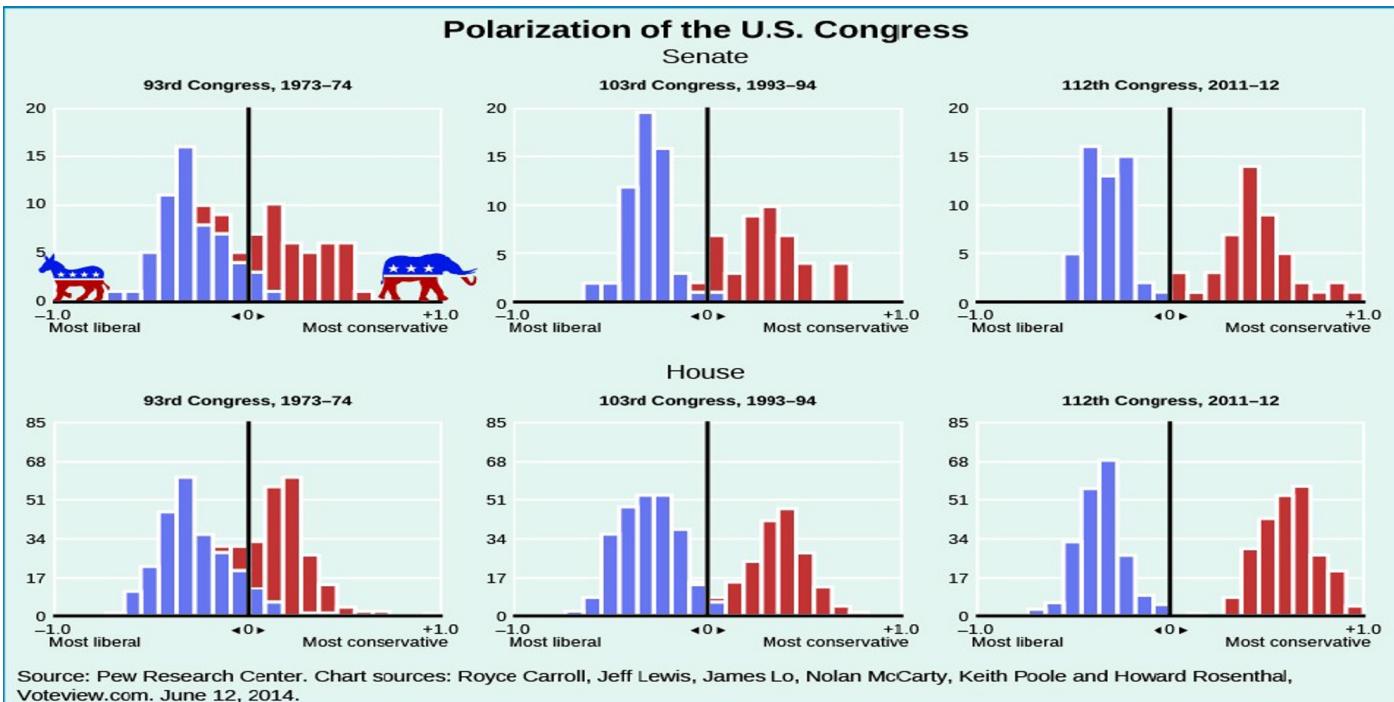


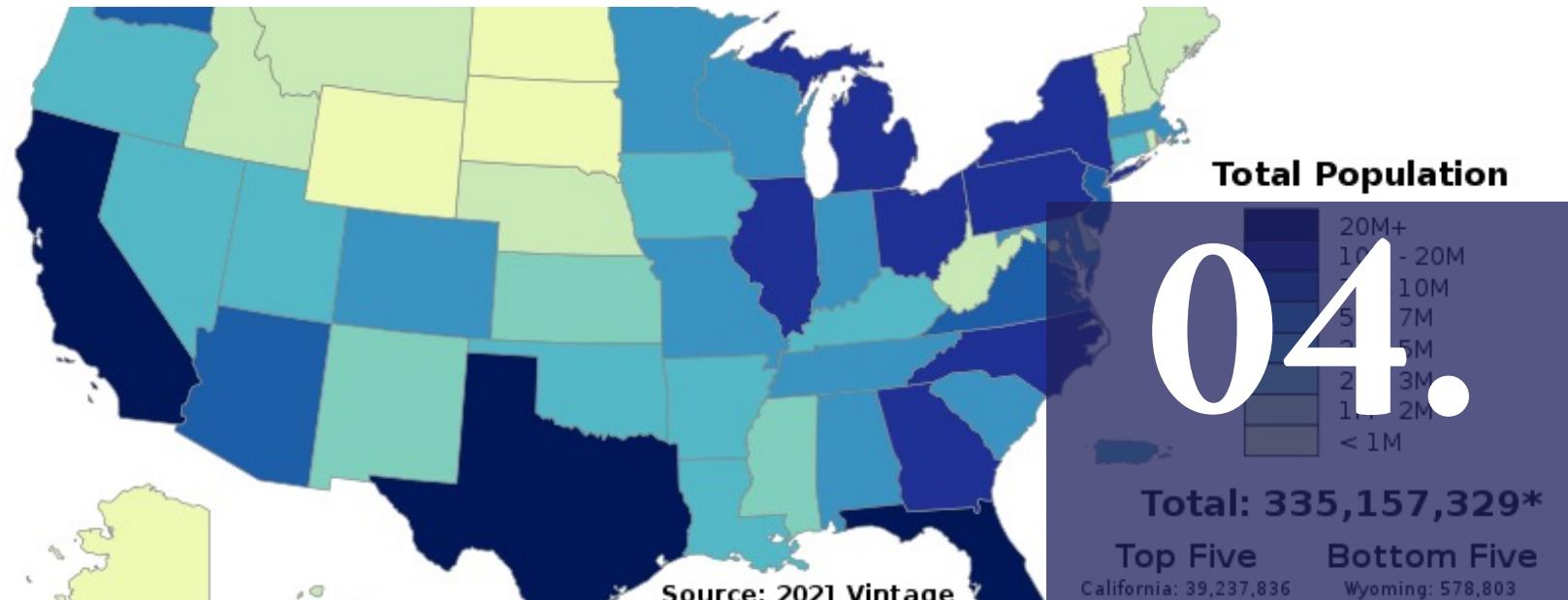
Major Ideologies: Grid





Major Ideologies: Polarization





US TODAY



US TODAY

Population changes

The population explosion in America stops,

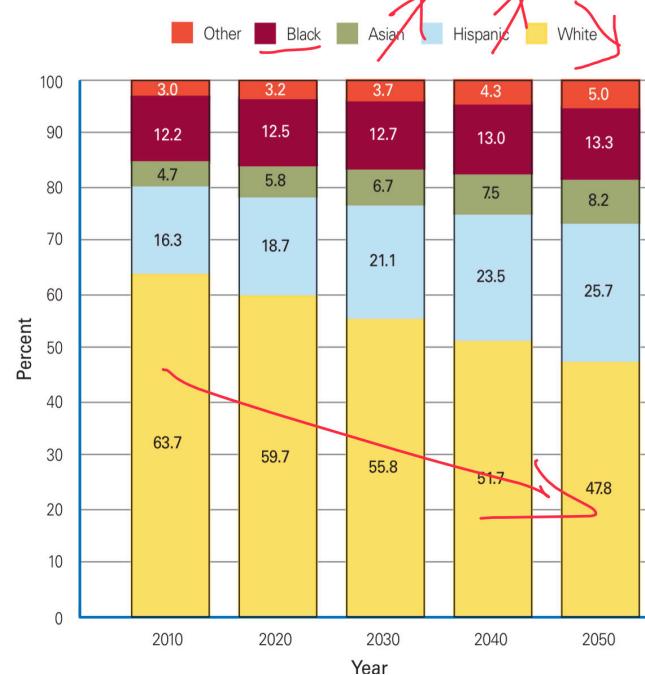
- the fertility rate 2.1;
- Natural birth + immigration = P

There's an ethnic change:

- Asian American and Hispanic American
- White Americans are decreasing;
- Political preferences for white Americans are foreseen to be shifting towards conservatism.

Figure 1.4 Projected Changes in U.S. Ethnic Distribution

If in the future Americans were to consider many Hispanics simply to be "white," what political consequences might follow?

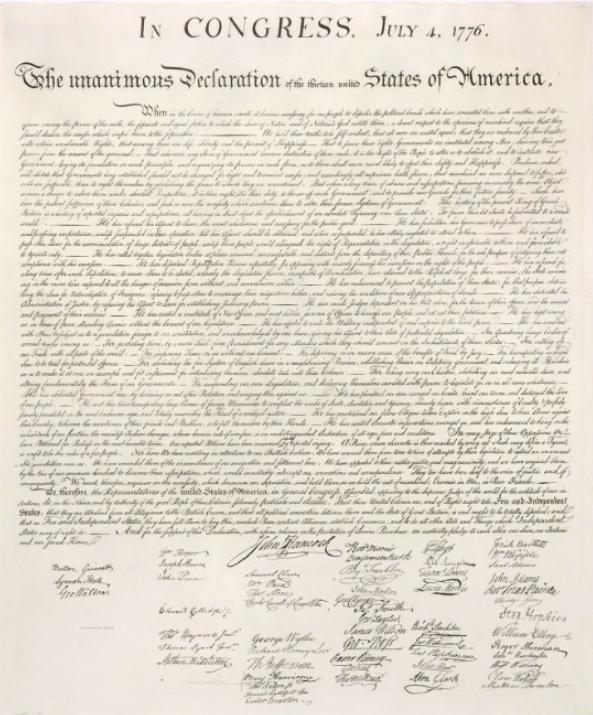




Declaration of Independence

the founding document of the United States

- Approved by the Continental Congress on **July 4, 1776**
- Announced **the separation of 13 North American British colonies** from Great Britain
- Explained the legitimacy for Independence by **listing the unfair treatment** they receive from Britain



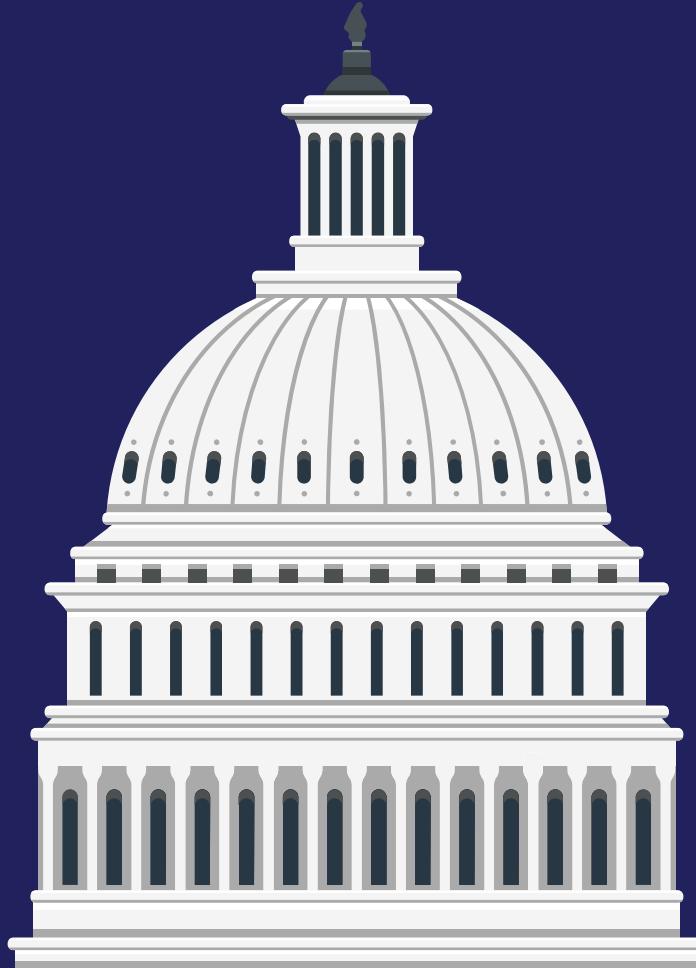


Declaration of Independence

“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 to abolish it**, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

THANKS!

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PRESENTED BY ZHANG WEI
SEPTEMBER 7, 2022





REFERENCES

- Ford, Lynne E., Barbara A. Bardes, Steffen W. Schmidt and Mack C. Shelley II. *American Government and Politics Today*, enhanced 20th ed., Cengage, 2022.
- Freedom House. Freedom in the World 2022.
https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/FIW_2022_PDF_Booklet_Digital_Final_Web.pdf
- David B. Magleby & Paul C. Light & Christine L. Nemacheck. *Government By the People*, 2016 Presidential Election Edition.
- The Declaration of Independence