



Age Stratification

Agents of Socialization

Age stratification varies from culture to culture

- “Being old” is master status that commonly overshadows all others in U.S.
- Once people labeled “old,” this designation has major impact on how others perceive them and how individuals view themselves



Explaining the Ageing Process

- **Functionalist Approach**
 - **Disengagement Theory**
 - Society and aging individuals mutually sever many of their relationships
- **Interactionist Approach**
 - **Activity Theory**
 - Elderly persons who remain active and socially involved are best-adjusted
- **The Conflict Approach**
 - Elderly victimized by social structure
 - Social roles relatively unchanged but devalued

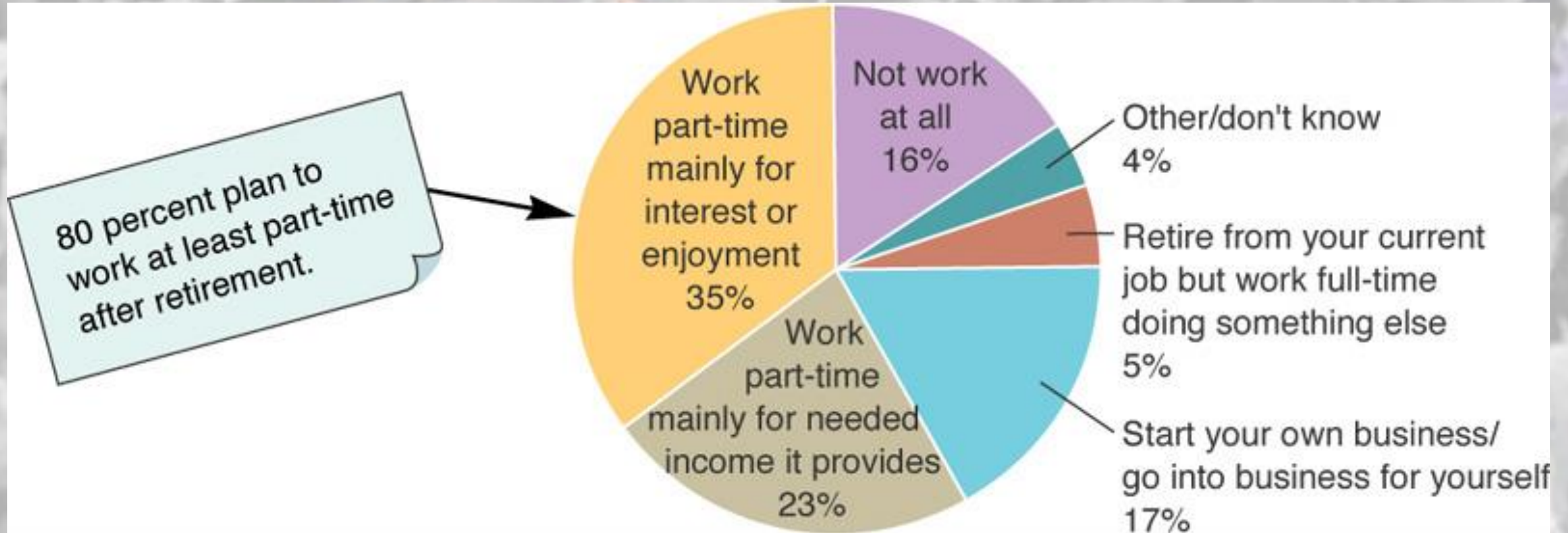


Role Transitions Throughout the Life Course

- **Midlife Crisis:** A period during which adults realize that they have not achieved basic goals and ambitions and have little time left to do so
- The Sandwich Generation
 - Adults who simultaneously try to meet the competing needs of their parents and of their own children



Retirement Expectations



Role Transitions Throughout the Life Course

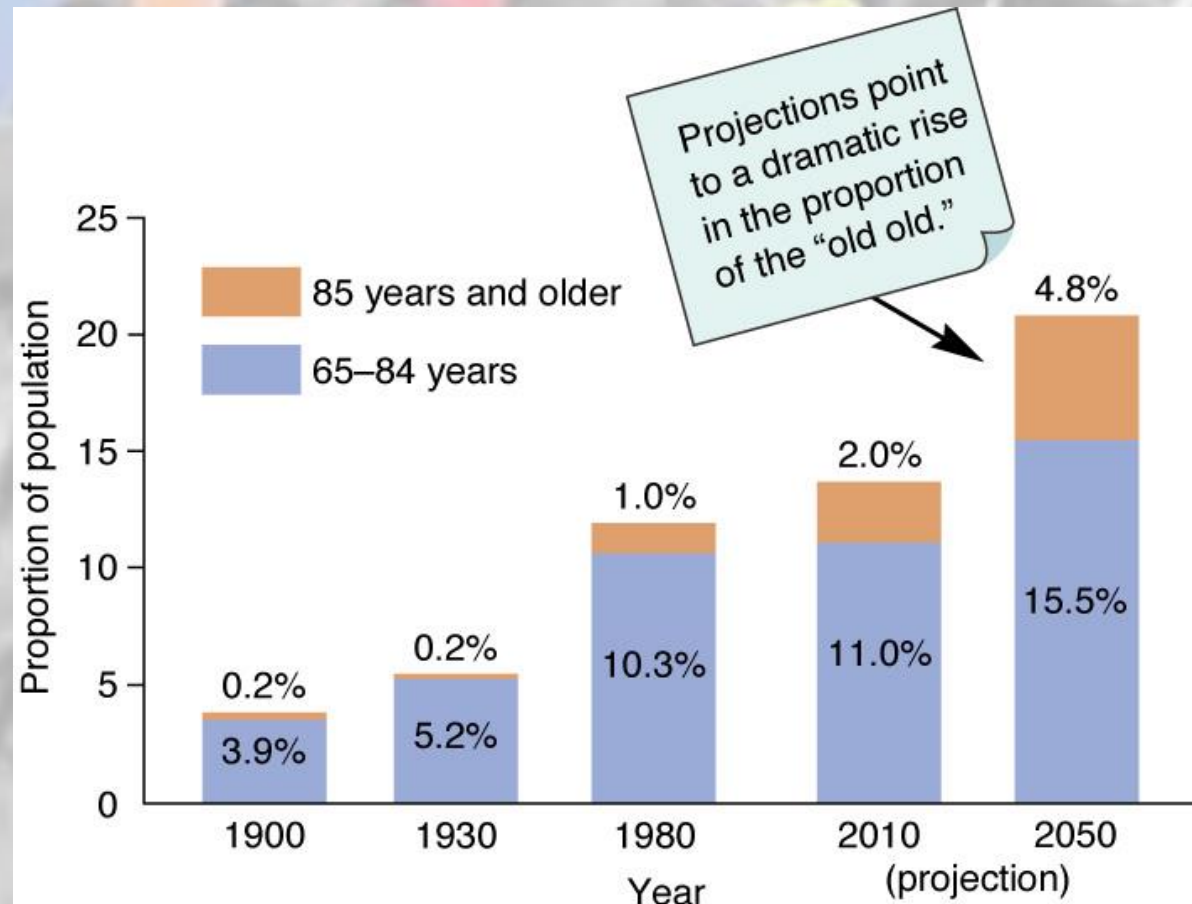
- Death and Dying
 - Kubler-Ross research greatly encouraged open discussion of the process of dying
 - Functionalists see those who are dying as fulfilling distinct social functions.
 - **Hospice care:** “Good death” by improving dying person’s last days

Age Stratification in the United States

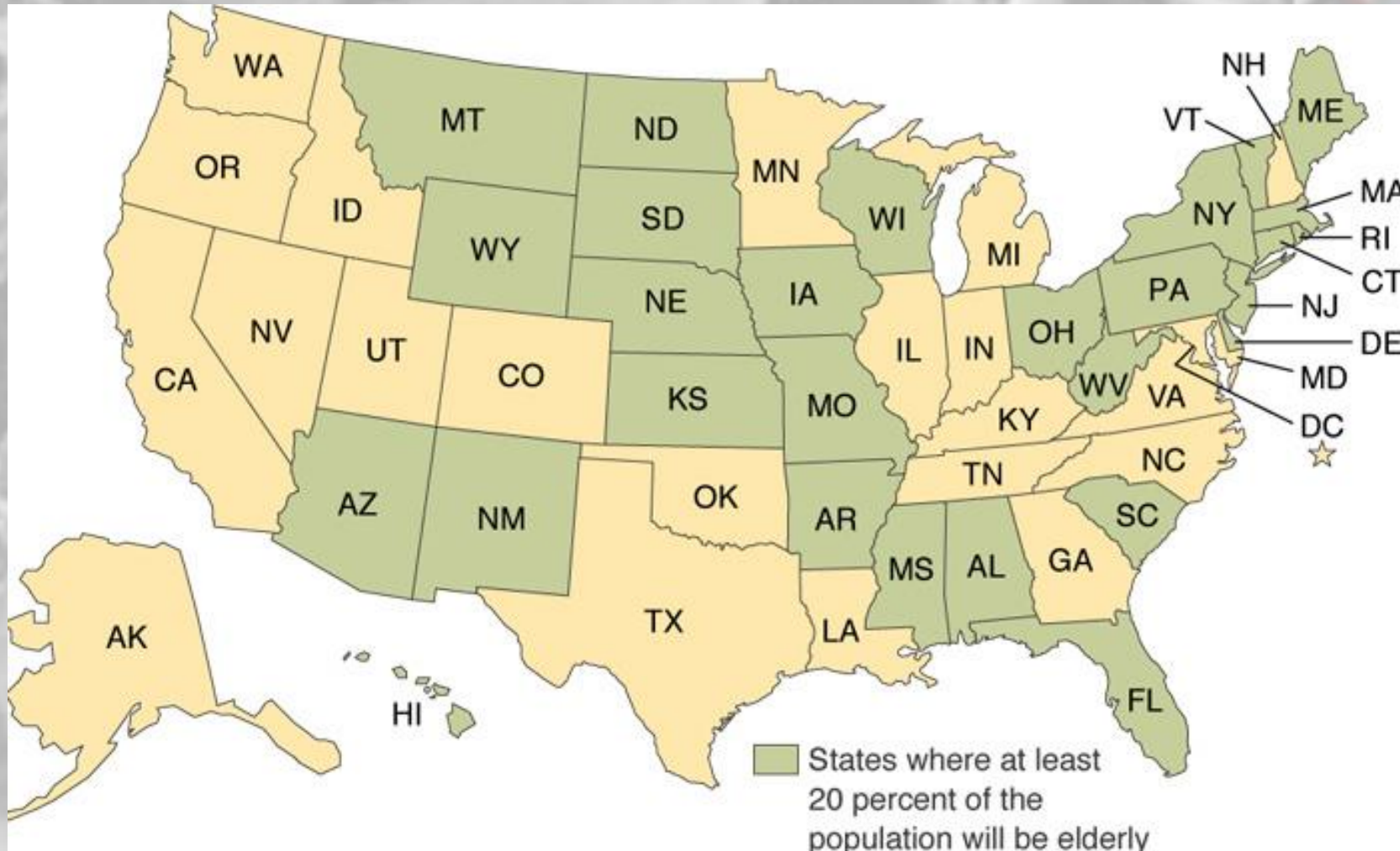
- The Graying of America
 - In 1900, 4.1% of the population of the United States was age 65 or older.
 - By 2010, 13% of the population of the United States will be age 65 or older.
 - Highest proportions of older people in Florida, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Iowa, West Virginia, and Arkansas

Age Stratification in the United States

Actual and Projected Growth of the Elderly Population of the United States



Age Stratification in the United States



Age Stratification in the United States

- Ageism
 - Prejudice and discrimination based on a person's age
- Competition in the Labor Force
 - Older workers face discrimination in the labor force



Social Policy and Age Socialization

- The Right to Die Worldwide
 - Physician-assisted suicide one aspect of larger debate in U.S.
- Euthanasia: act of bring about the death of a hopelessly ill and suffering person
 - Public opinion on euthanasia divided
 - Many societies practiced senilicide
 - Killing the old because of extreme difficulties in providing basic necessities