

how well does “frequency of
mention” correlate with
quantifiable aspects of culture?

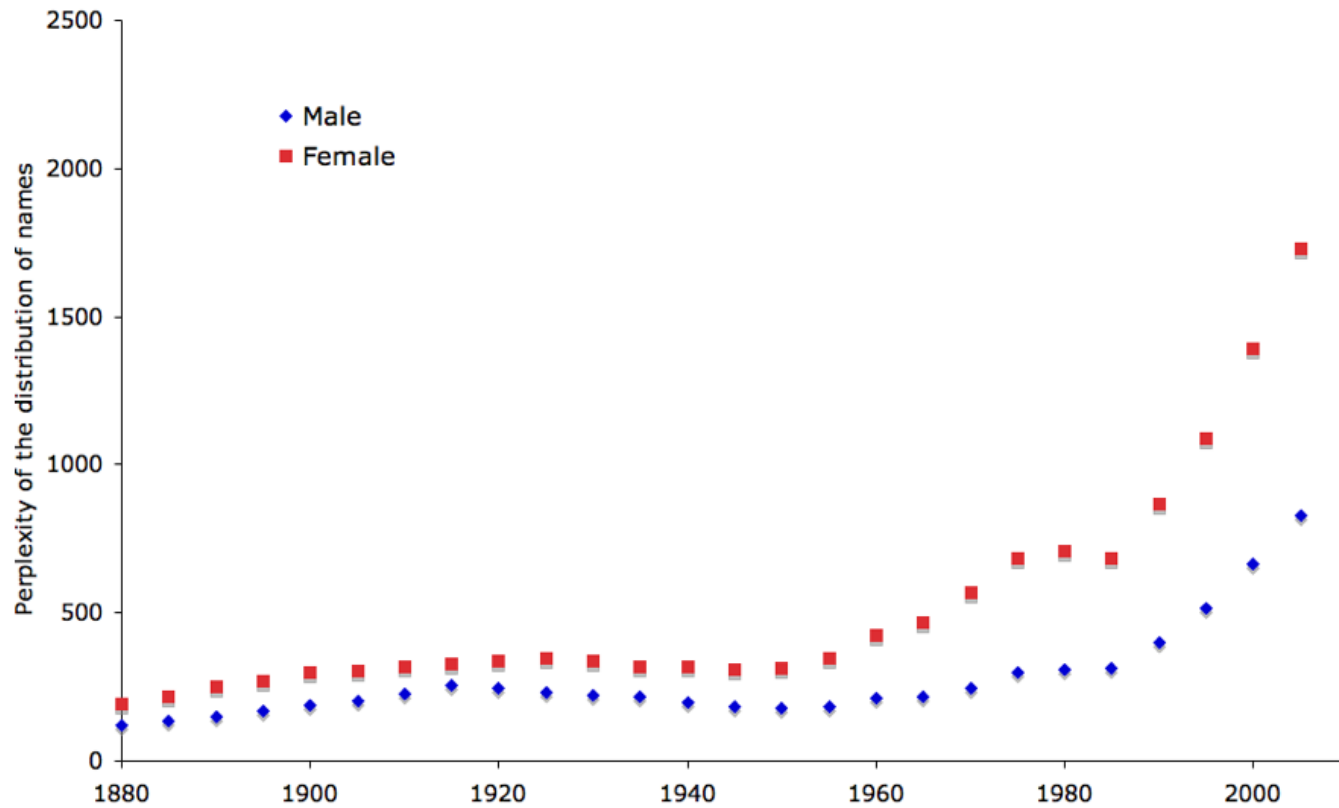
michael ramscar

names

- are names getting easier to remember?

nope

The Increase In Perplexity of US Given Names 1880-2010

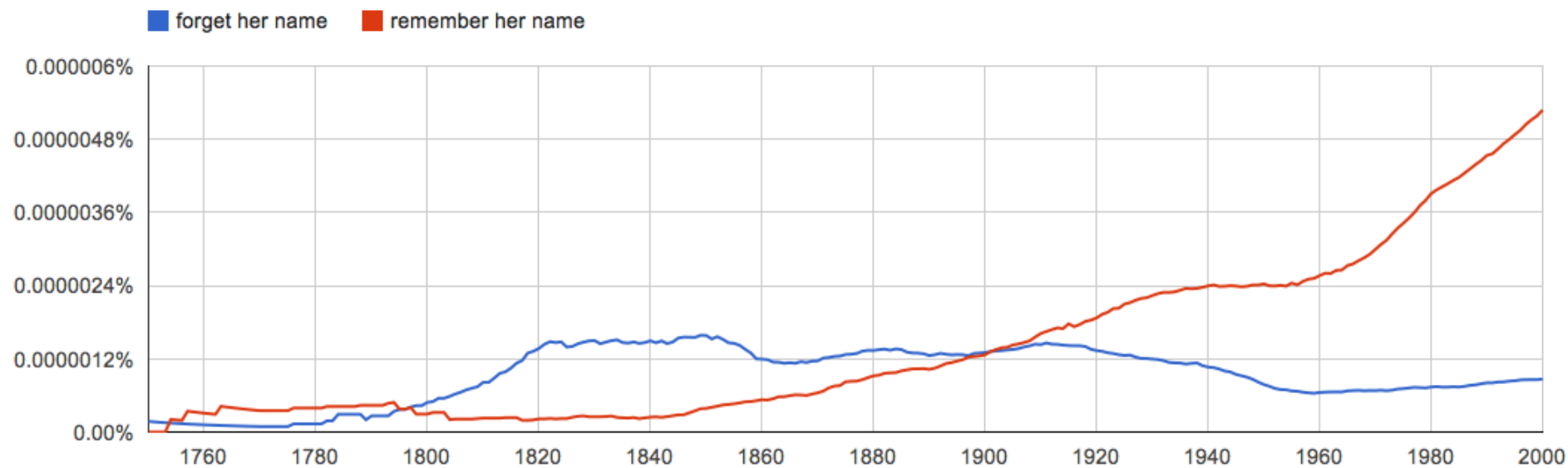
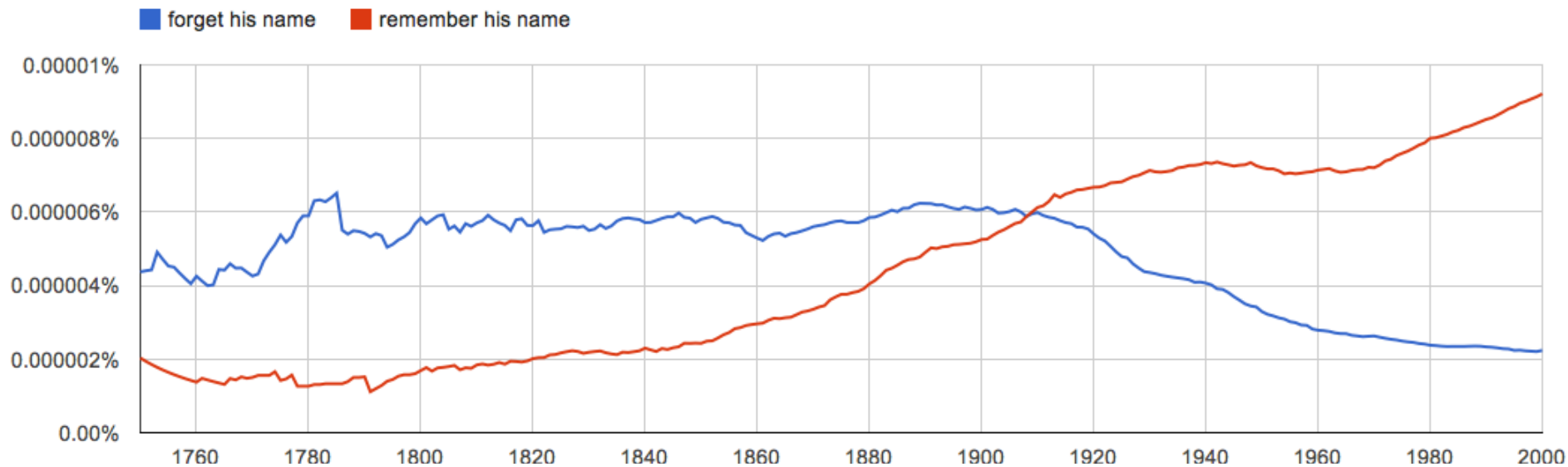


(until 1750, english names were as easy to remember as korean names)

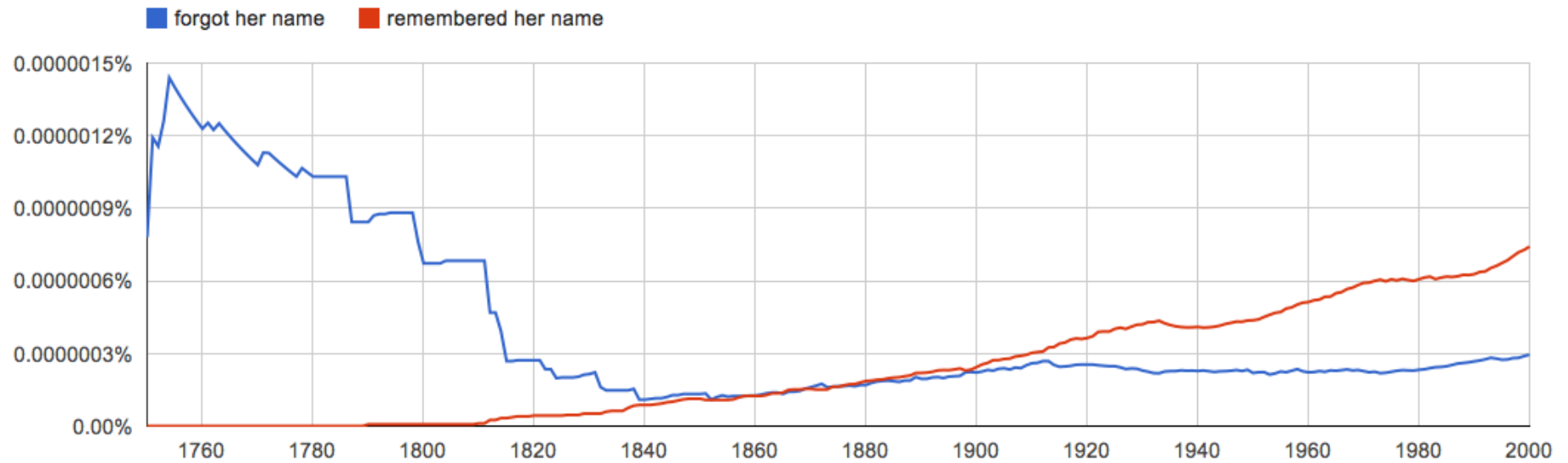
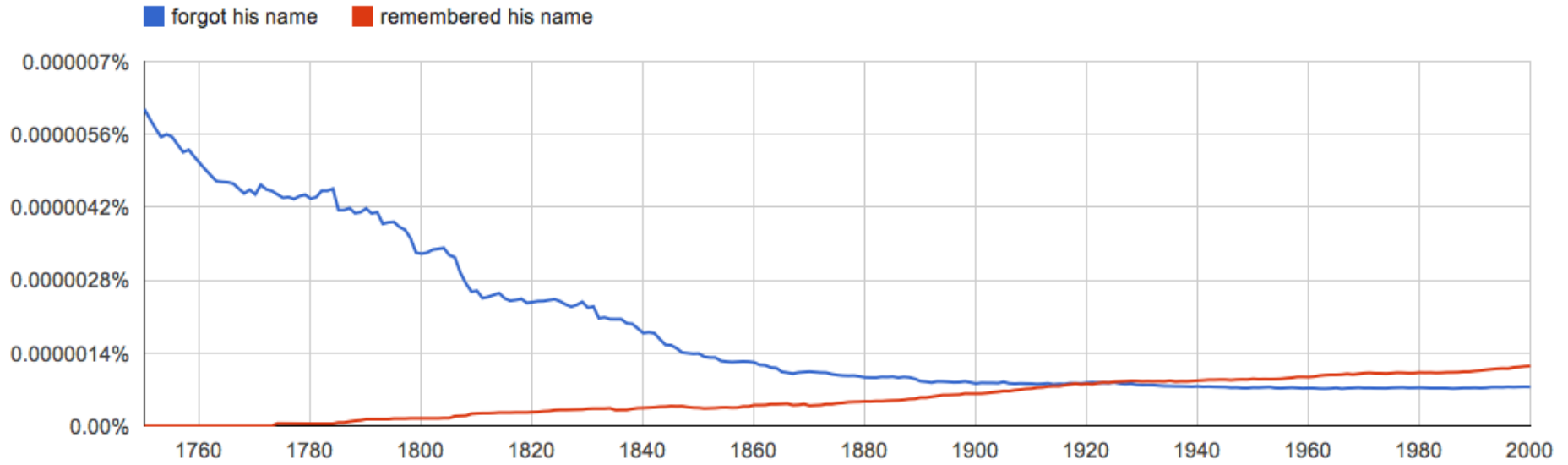
SO

- does that mean that people now talk about forgetting names more often?

nope



nope

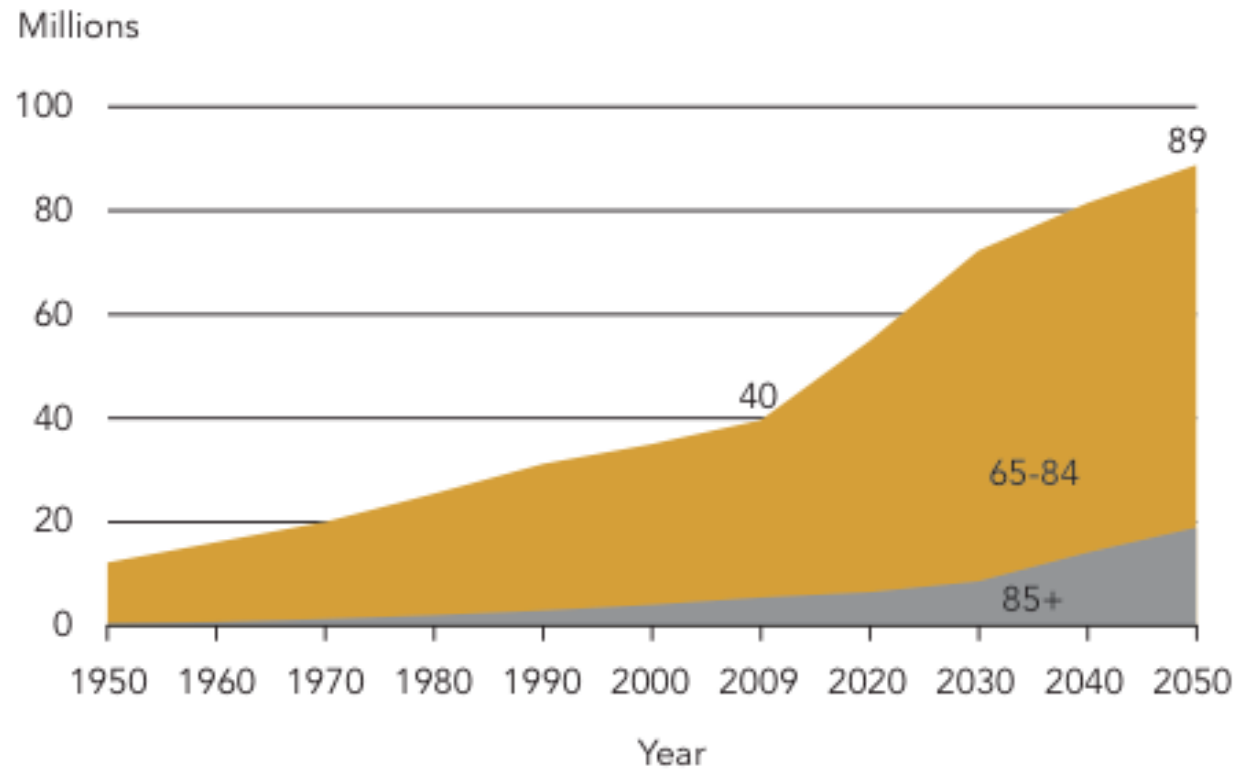


age

- are populations getting older or younger?

older

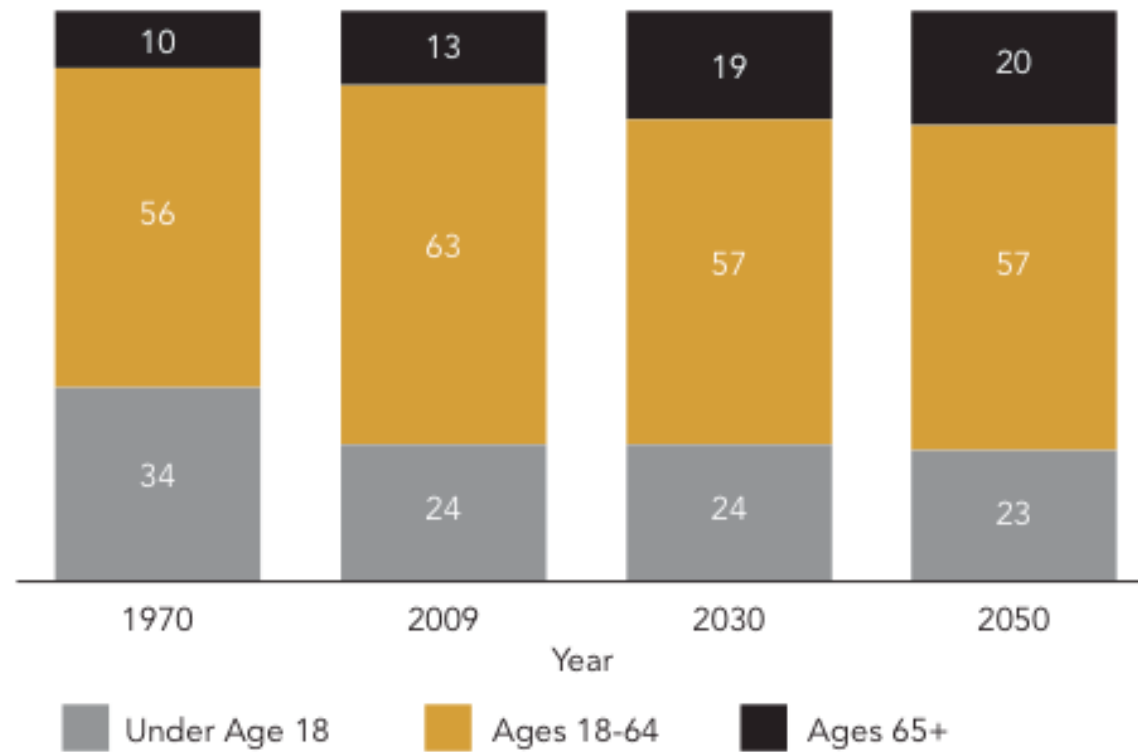
U.S. Population Ages 65 and Older, 1950 to 2050



Source: PRB analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau.

older

Percent of U.S. Population in Selected Age Groups, 1970 to 2050

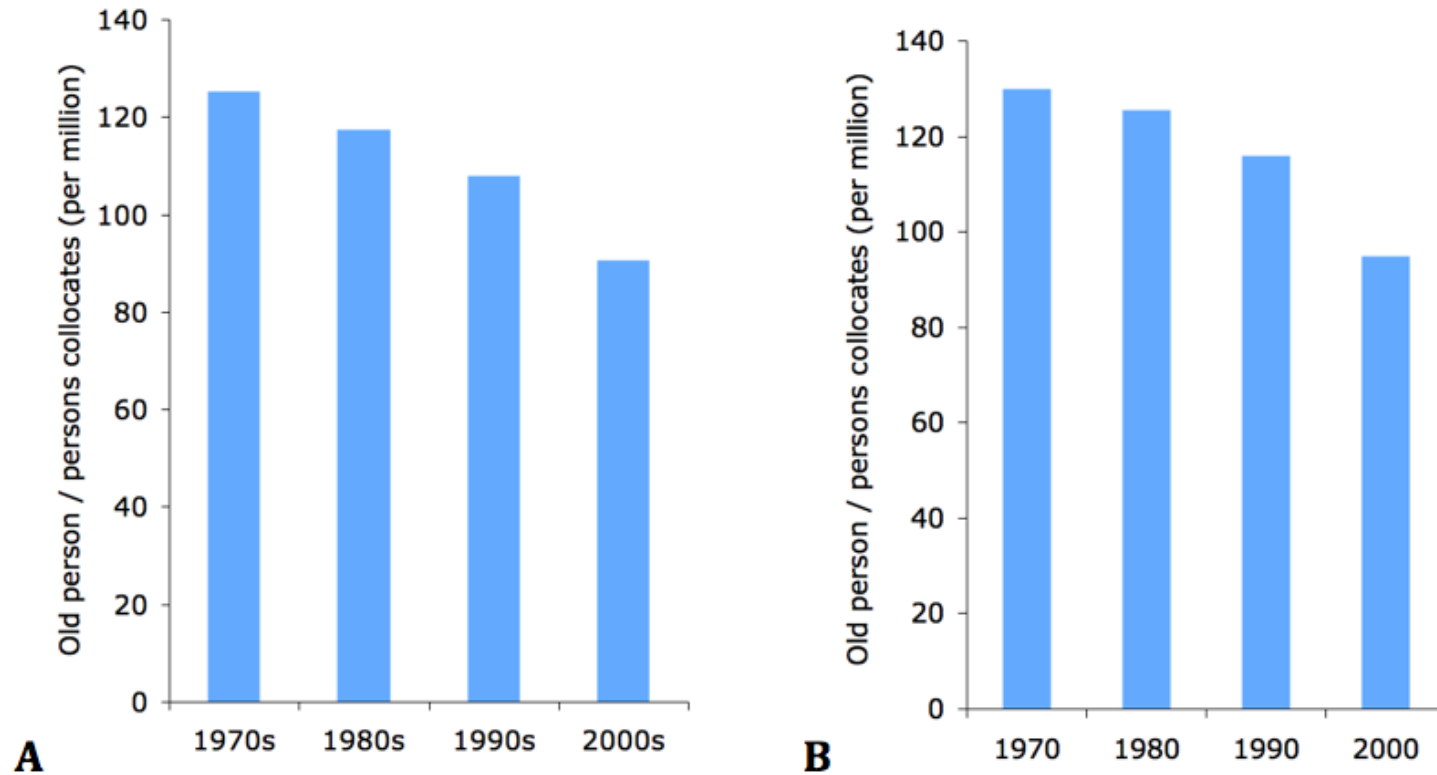


Source: PRB analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau.

SO

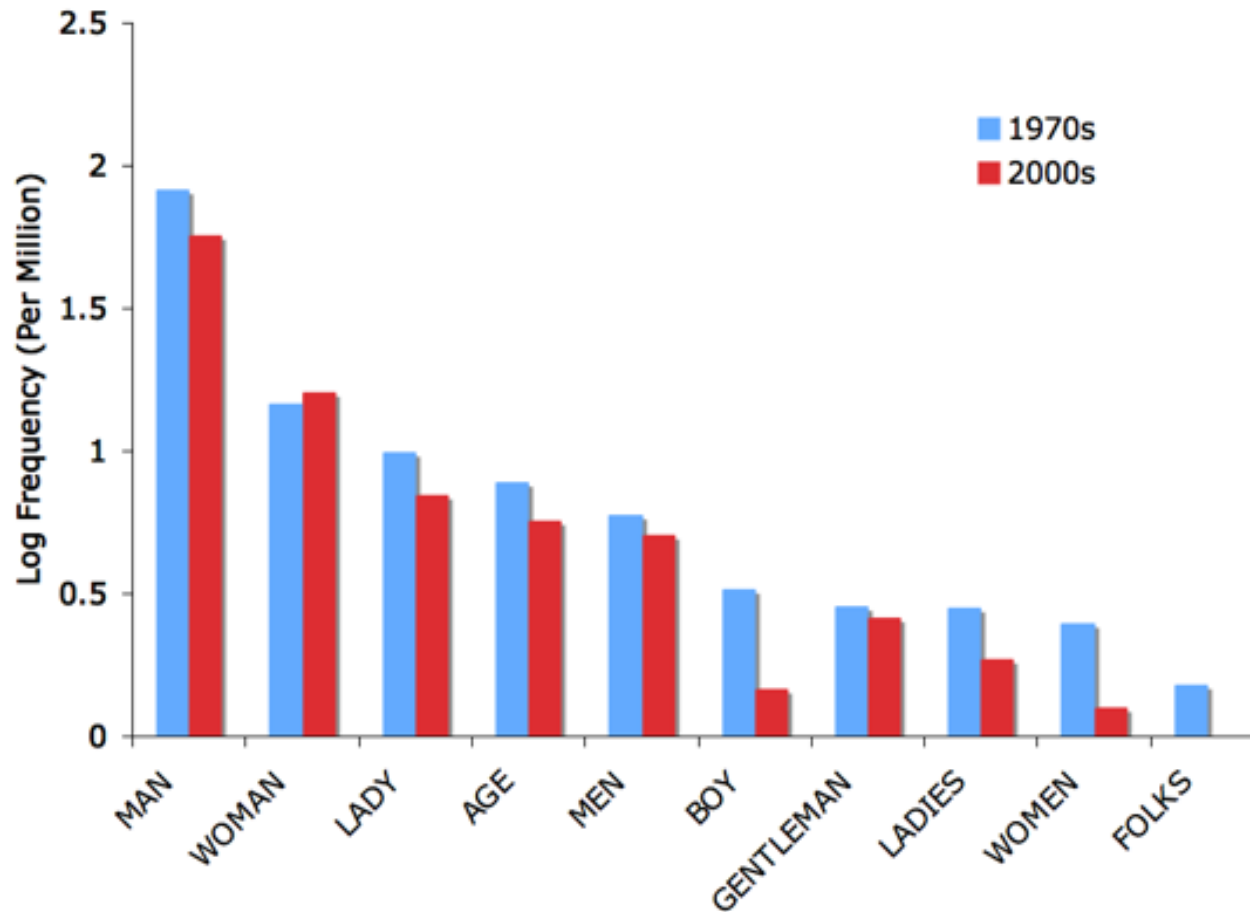
- does that mean that people now talk about old people more often?

nope



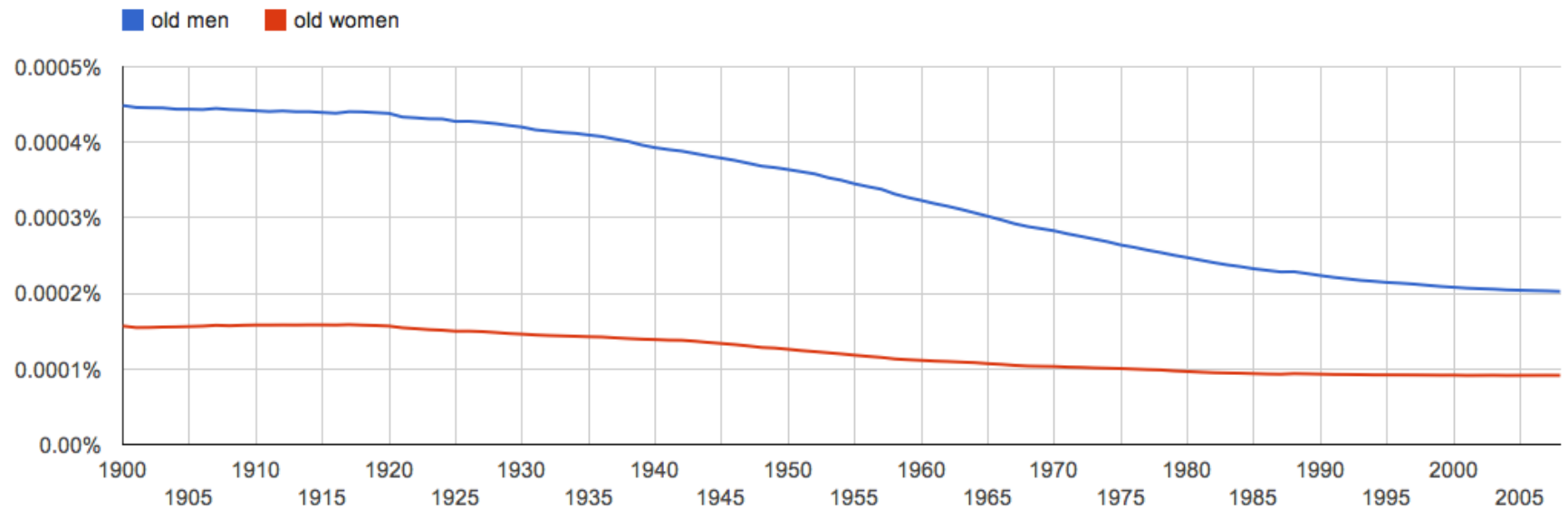
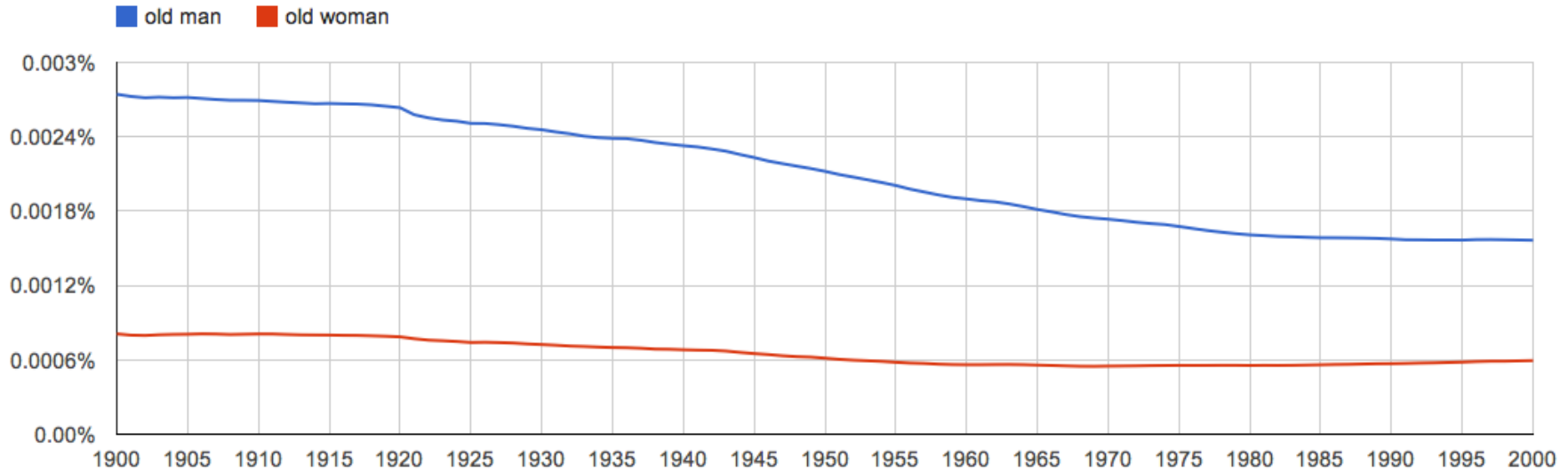
Cumulative collocations frequencies (per million) for person words (*man, woman, folks, etc*) following *old*, 1970-2010. **A** 10 most frequent collocates in 3 word window following 'old,' **B** In 30 words immediately following 'old.' (Counts taken from COHA)

nope



Collocation rates ($\text{frequency}(\text{old man}) / \text{frequency}(\text{man})$) for the most frequent *old* – *person* word pairs in 1970s vs 2000s. (Counts taken from COHA)

nope



“dog bites man” or “man bites dog”?

- what are the facts?
 - names are getting **harder to remember**
- what are the frequencies?
 - we have become **less** likely to talk about forgetting names

“dog bites man” or “man bites dog”?

- what are the facts?
 - the population is getting **older**
- what are the frequencies?
 - we have become **less** likely to talk about old people

“dog bites man” or “man bites dog”?

- why do people talk?
 - and what does “frequency of mention” tell you about what they care about?