

Going Solo

The Extraordinary Rise and
Surprising Appeal of Living Alone

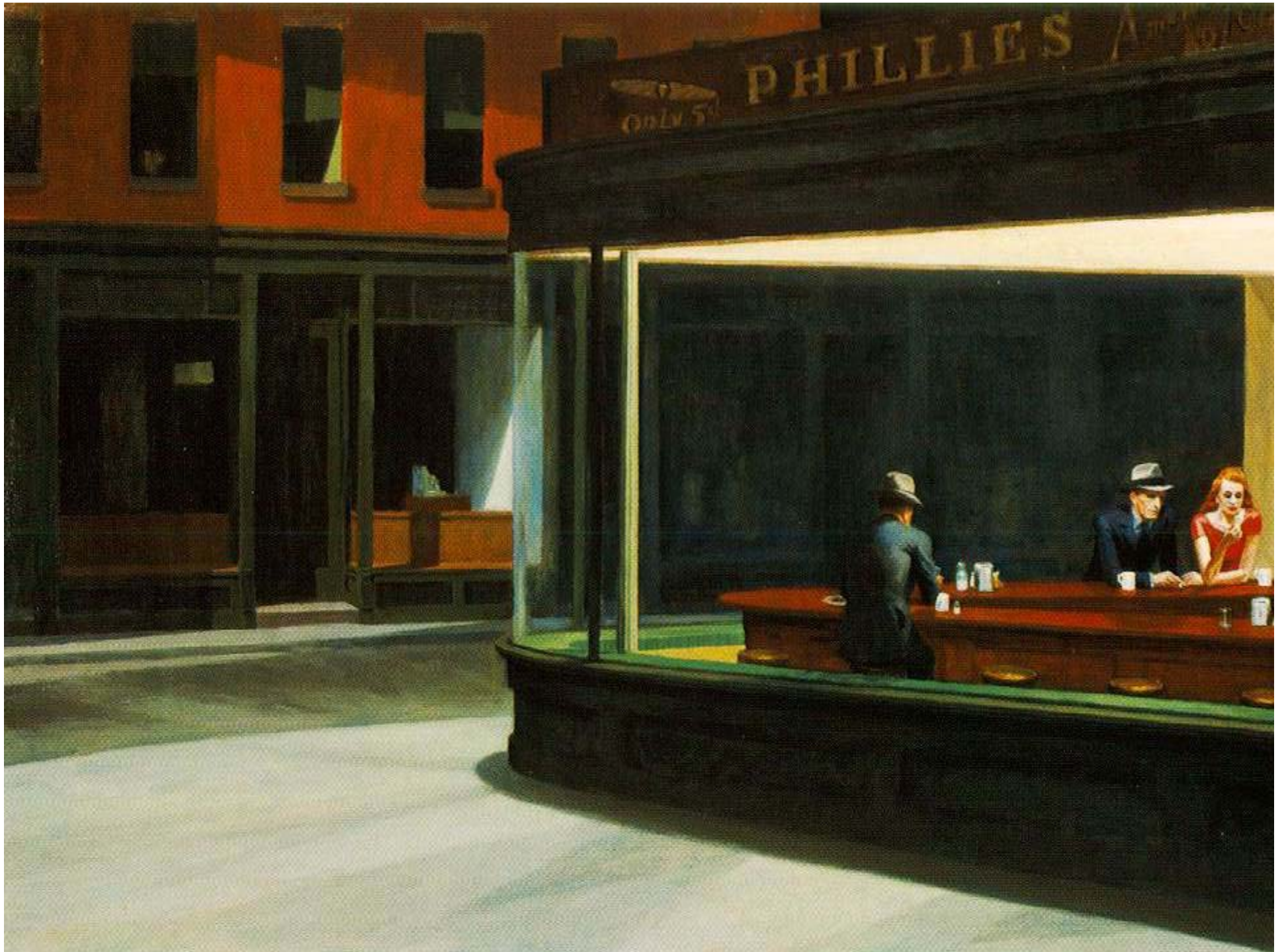
Eric Klinenberg



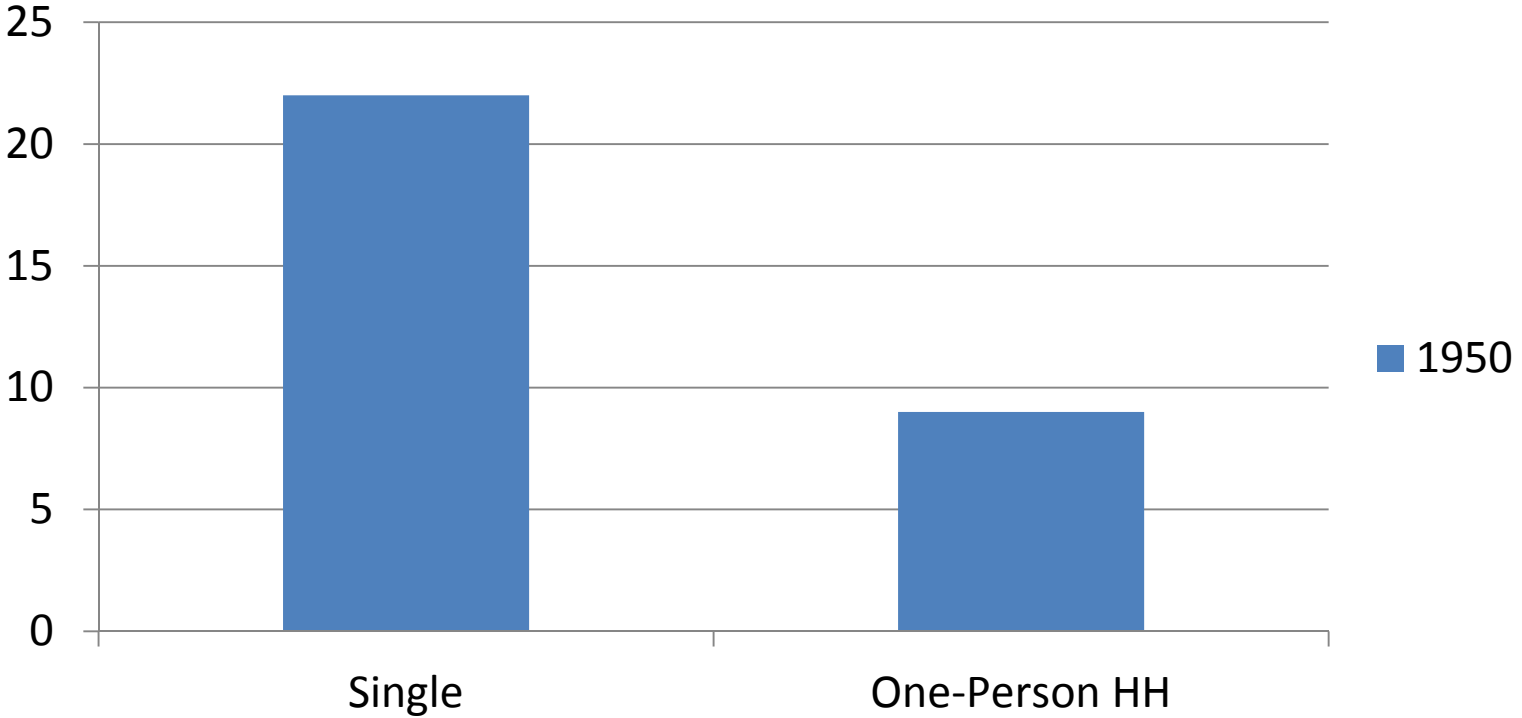
The Rise in Living Alone is the Biggest
Modern Social Change that
We've Yet to Name or Identify

It Doesn't Mean What We Think





1950: Percentage of Single Adults, One-Person Households



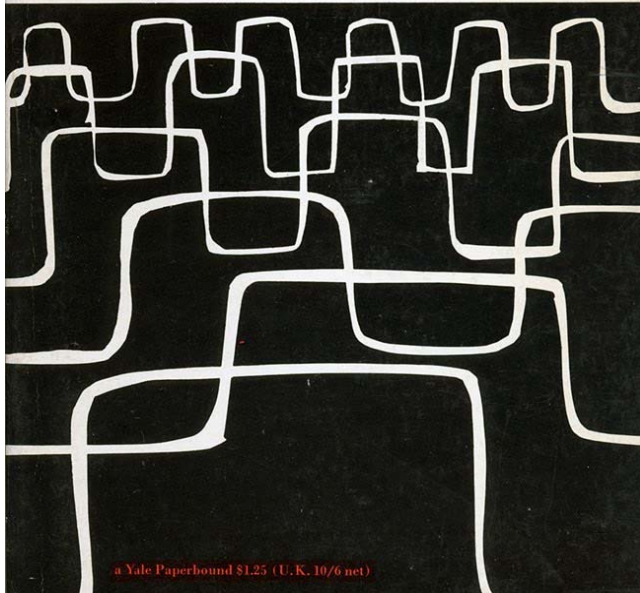
The unmarried:
Sick, Neurotic, Immoral

The Lonely Crowd

DAVID RIESMAN

WITH NATHAN GLAZER AND REUEL DENNEY

abridged edition with a new preface

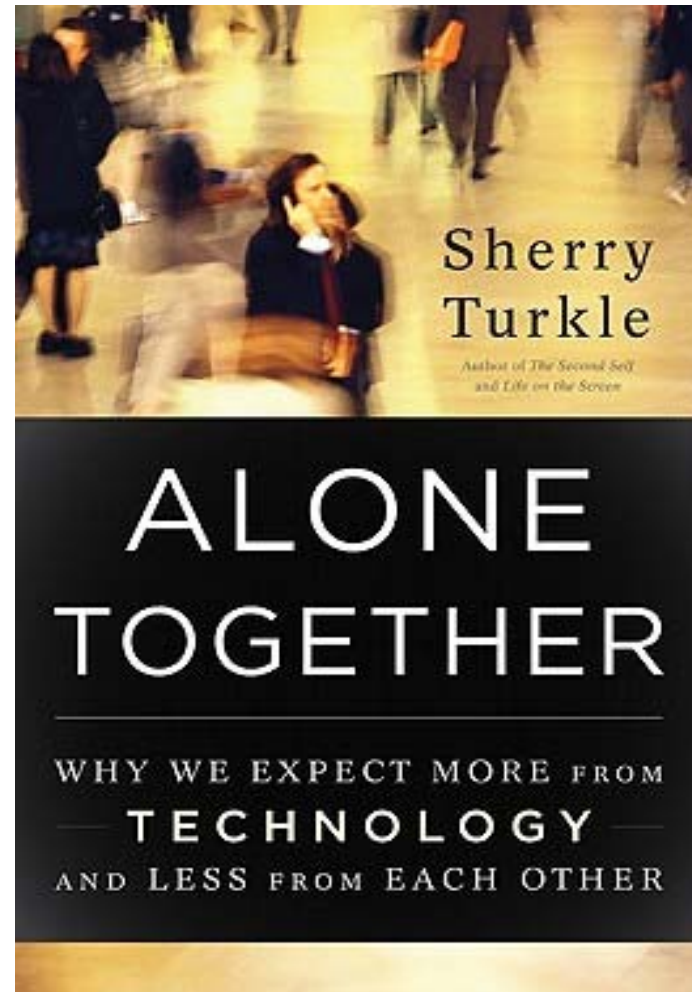
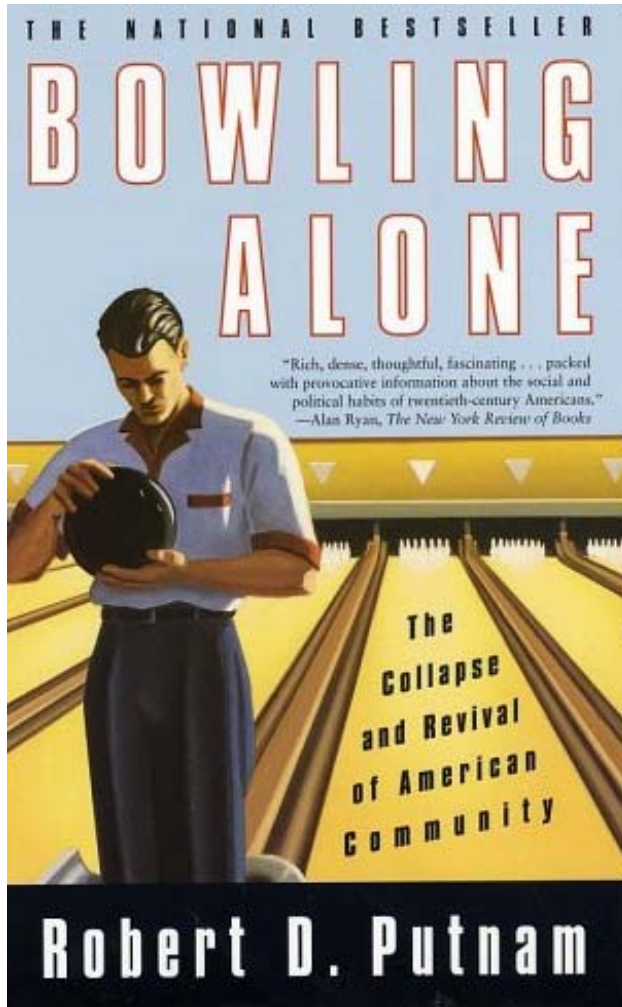


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RICHARD SENNETT



THE FALL OF
PUBLIC MAN



“We’ve never been lonelier.”

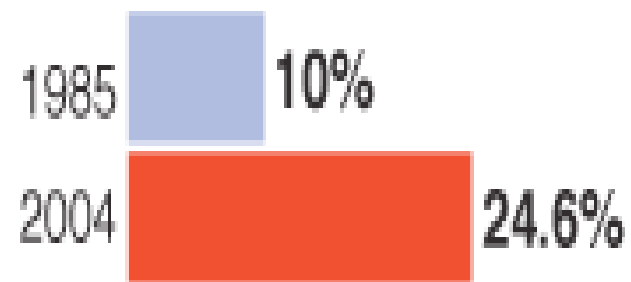


We've never been more isolated



Shrinking social networks

Percentage of Americans with no close friends:



Source: American Sociology Review

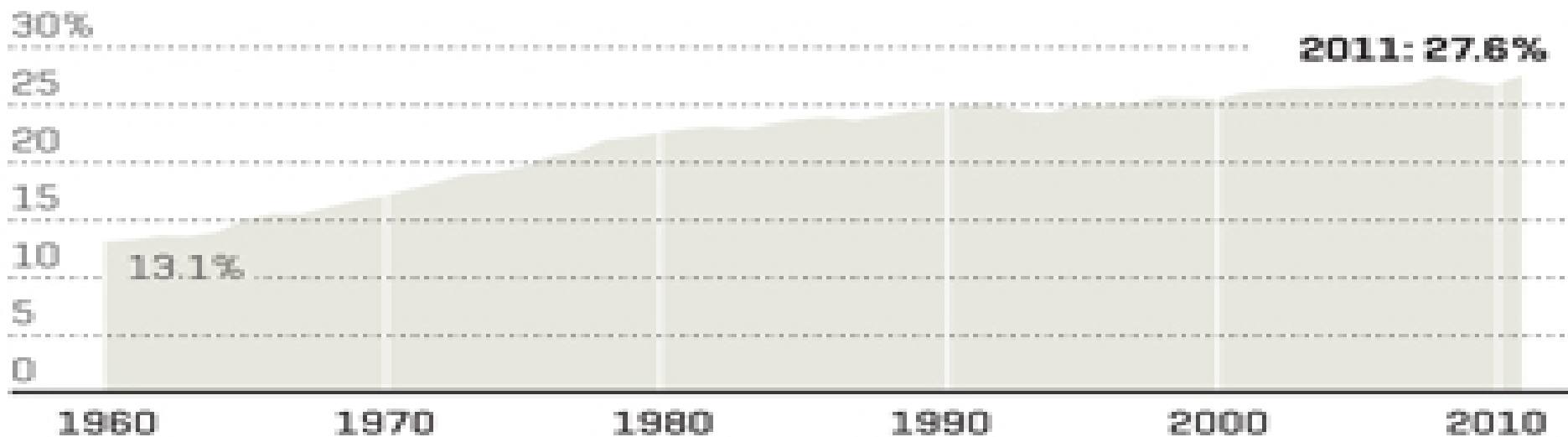
Frank Pempa, USA TODAY

A SOCIAL AUTOPSY OF
DISASTER IN CHICAGO

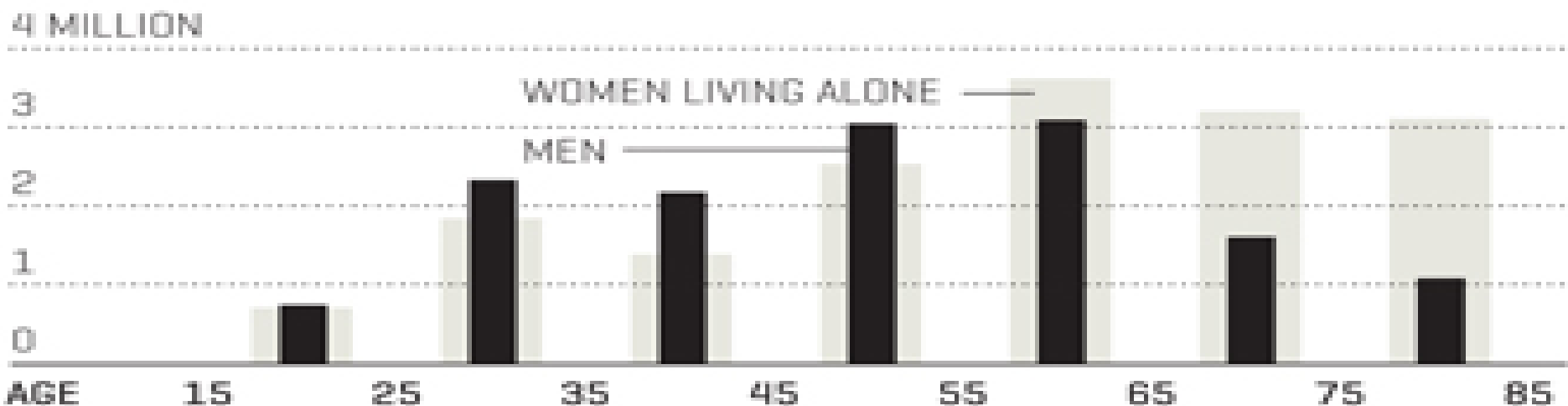
HEAT WAVE

ERIC KLINENBERG

ONE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS

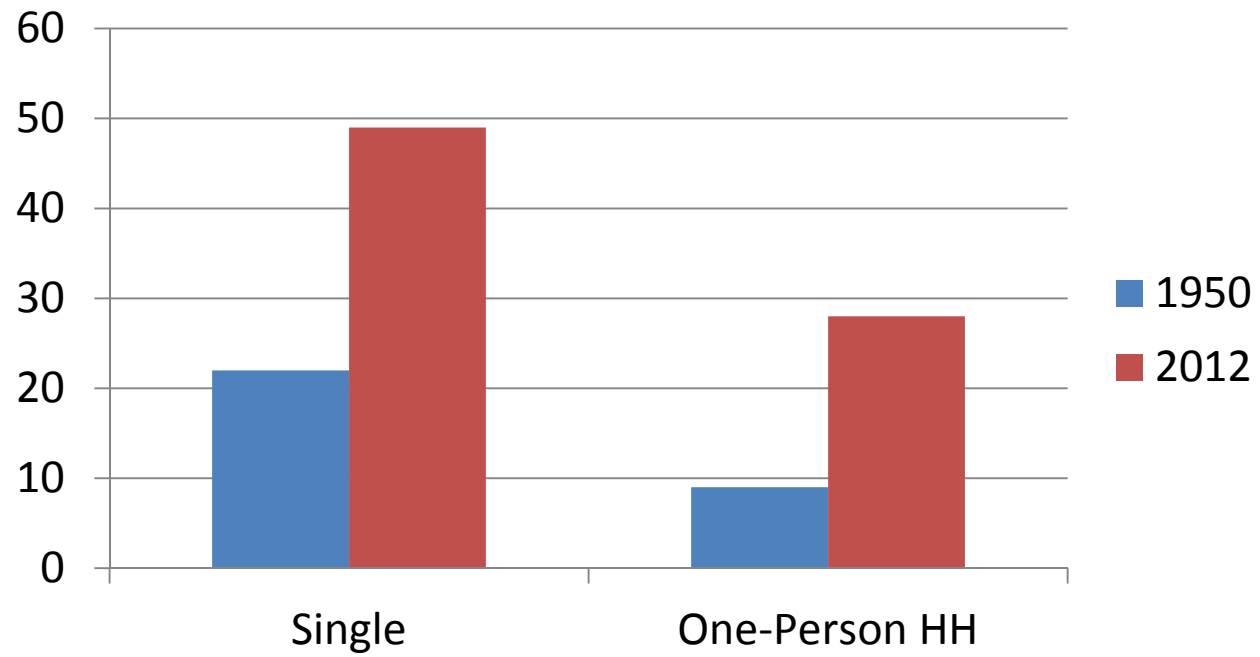


BY AGE (in 2011)

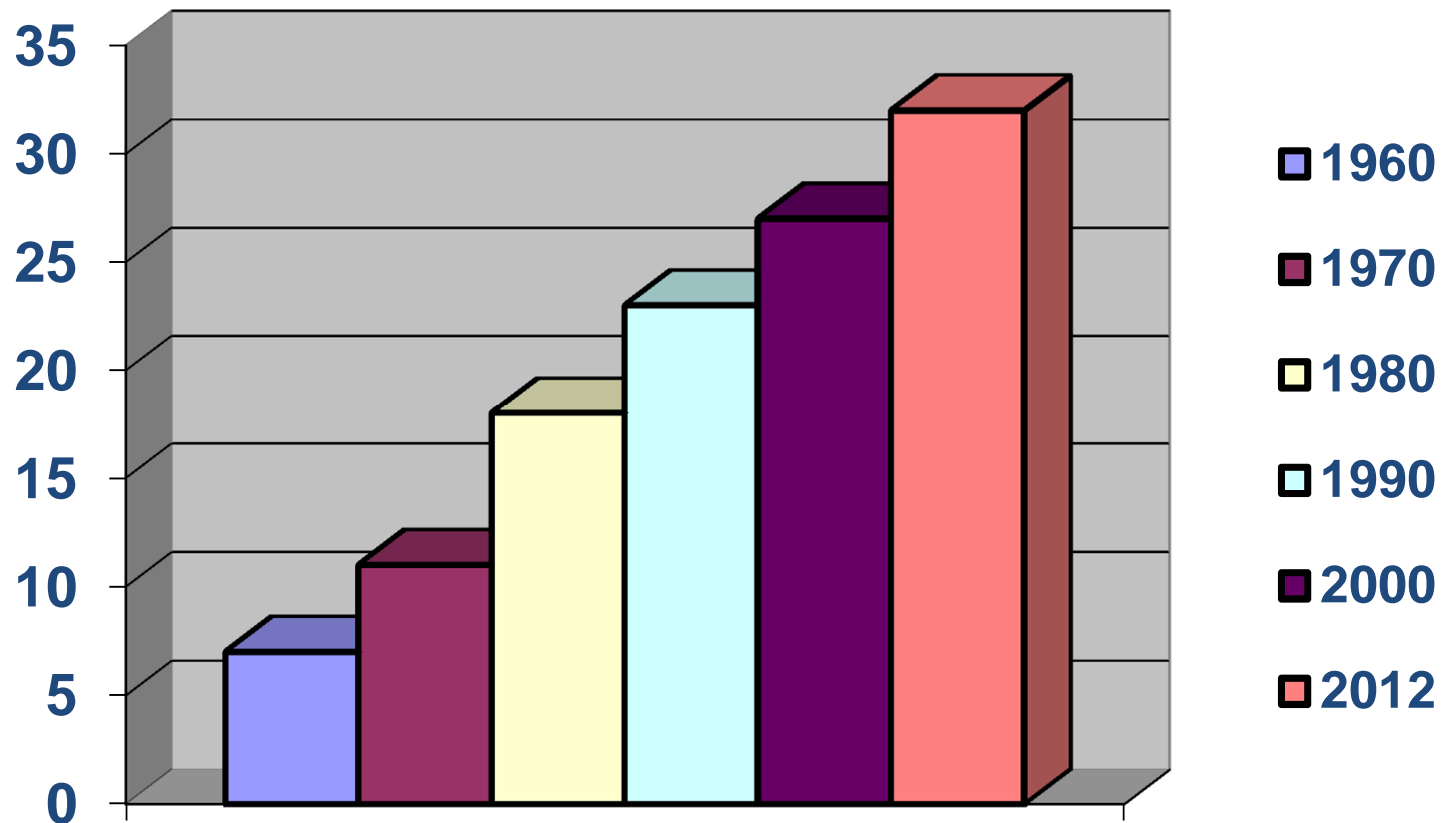


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

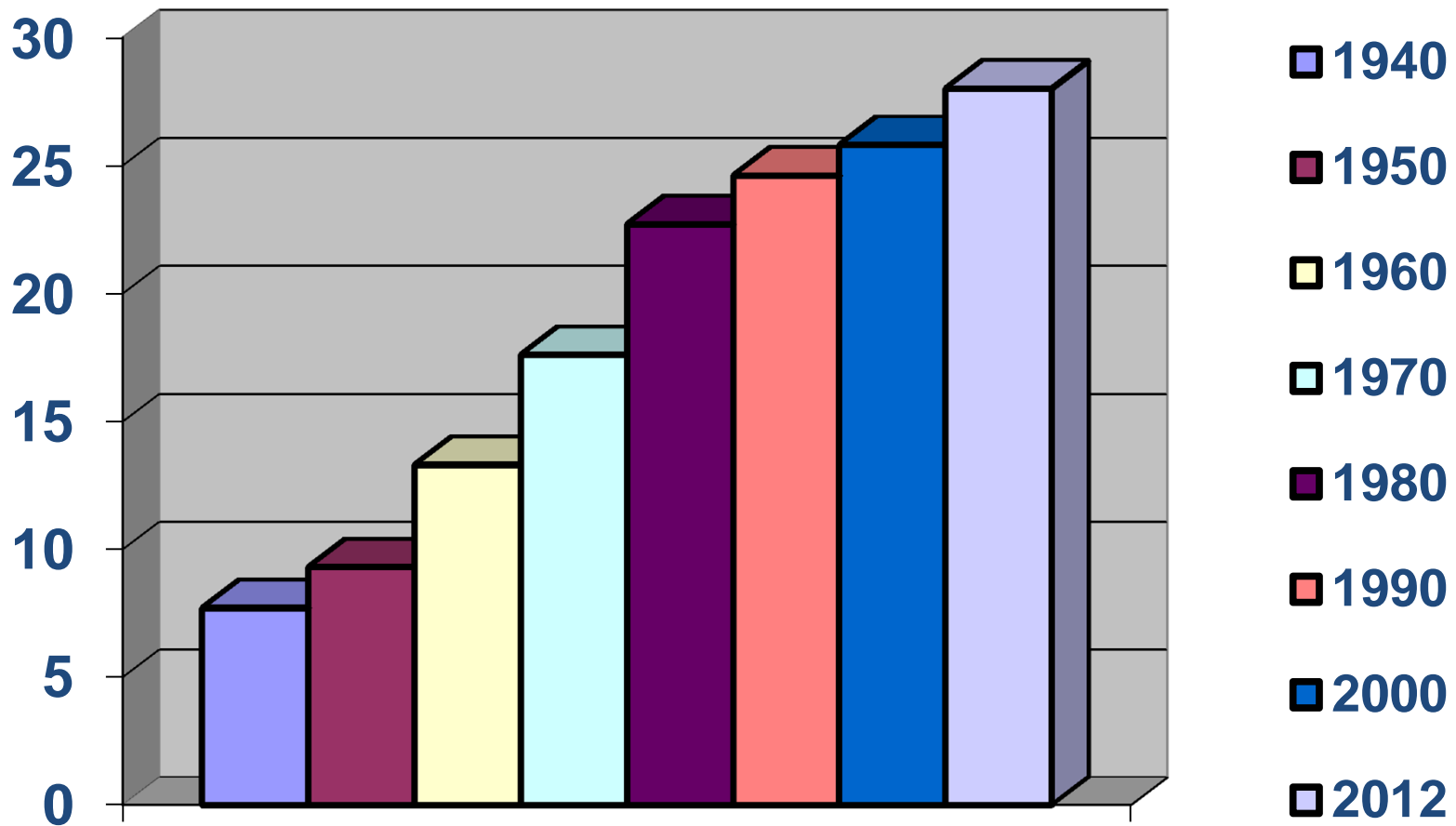
1950/2012: Percentage of Single Adults, One-Person Households



Population of Americans Living Alone (in millions), 1960-2012

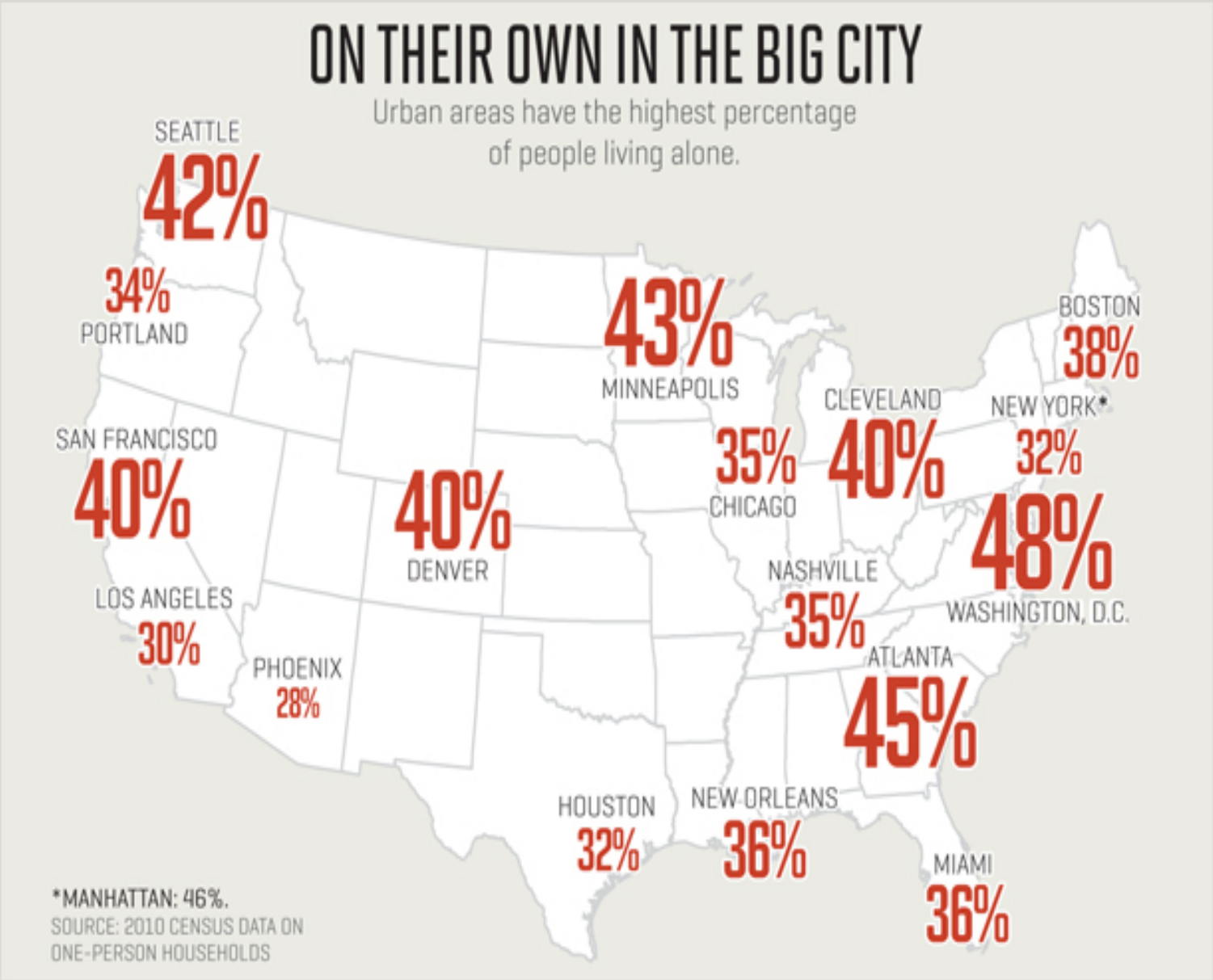


One person households as proportion of all HHs, 1940-2012



ON THEIR OWN IN THE BIG CITY

Urban areas have the highest percentage of people living alone.



*MANHATTAN: 46%.
SOURCE: 2010 CENSUS DATA ON ONE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

Beyond the Numbers





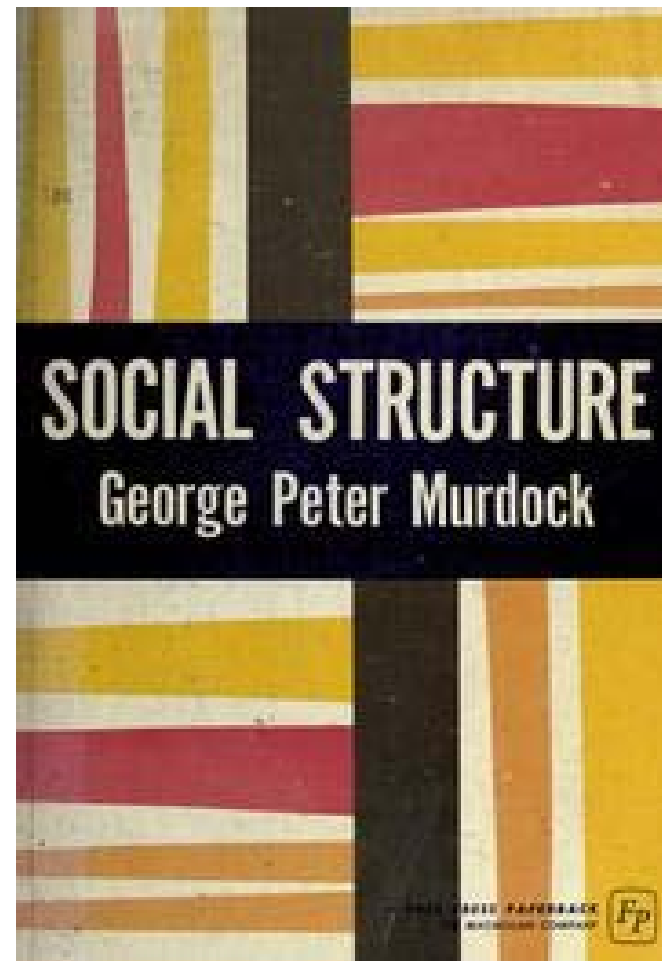
Social Experiment



1949: Family Unit is Universal

“The nuclear family is a universal human social grouping...”

“No exception, at least, has come to light.”



Why do the most privileged people
on earth use their resources to
separate from one another and get
places of their own?

Freedom
Personal Control
Self-Realization
Solitude
Connection

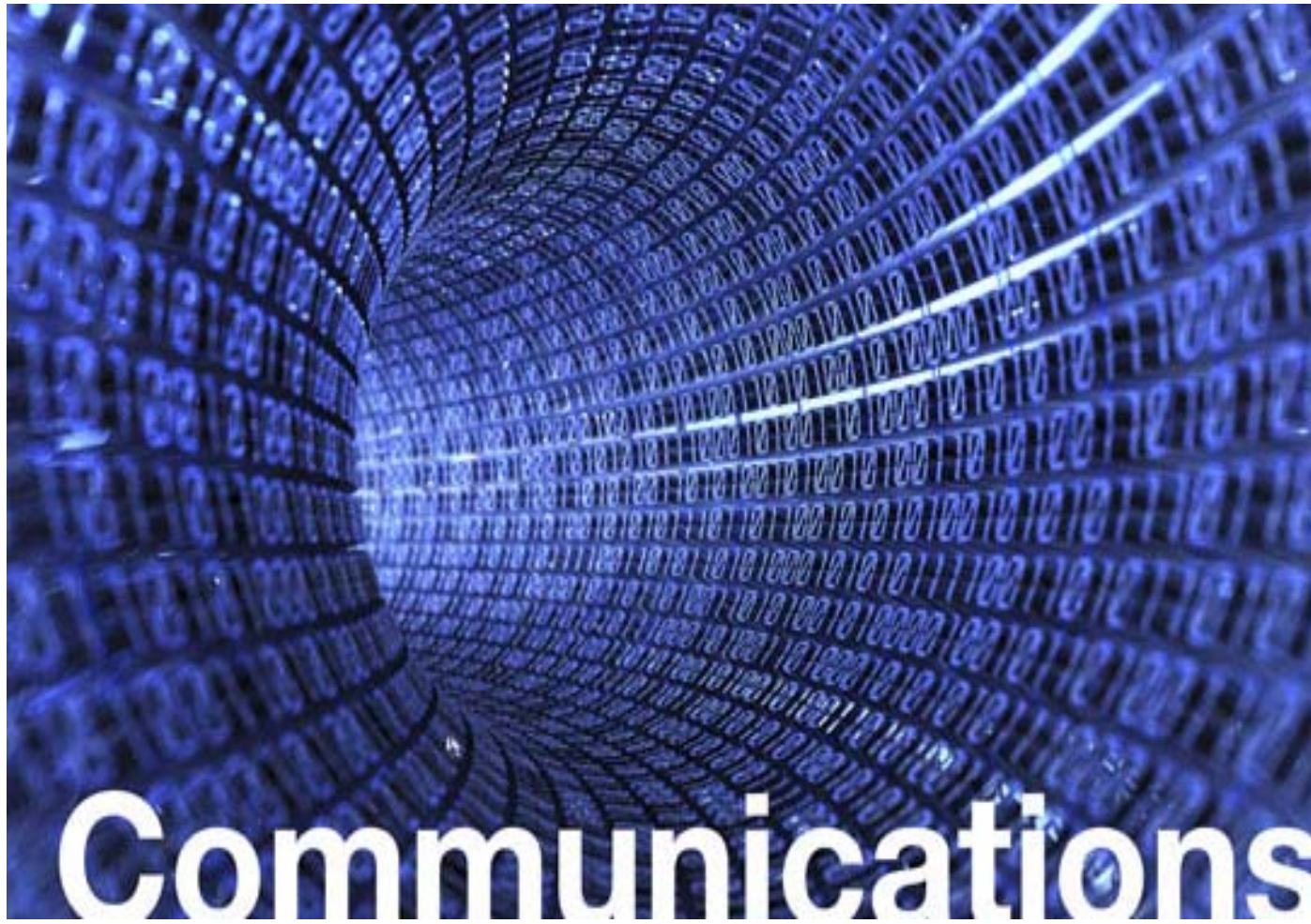
WELFARE



STATE



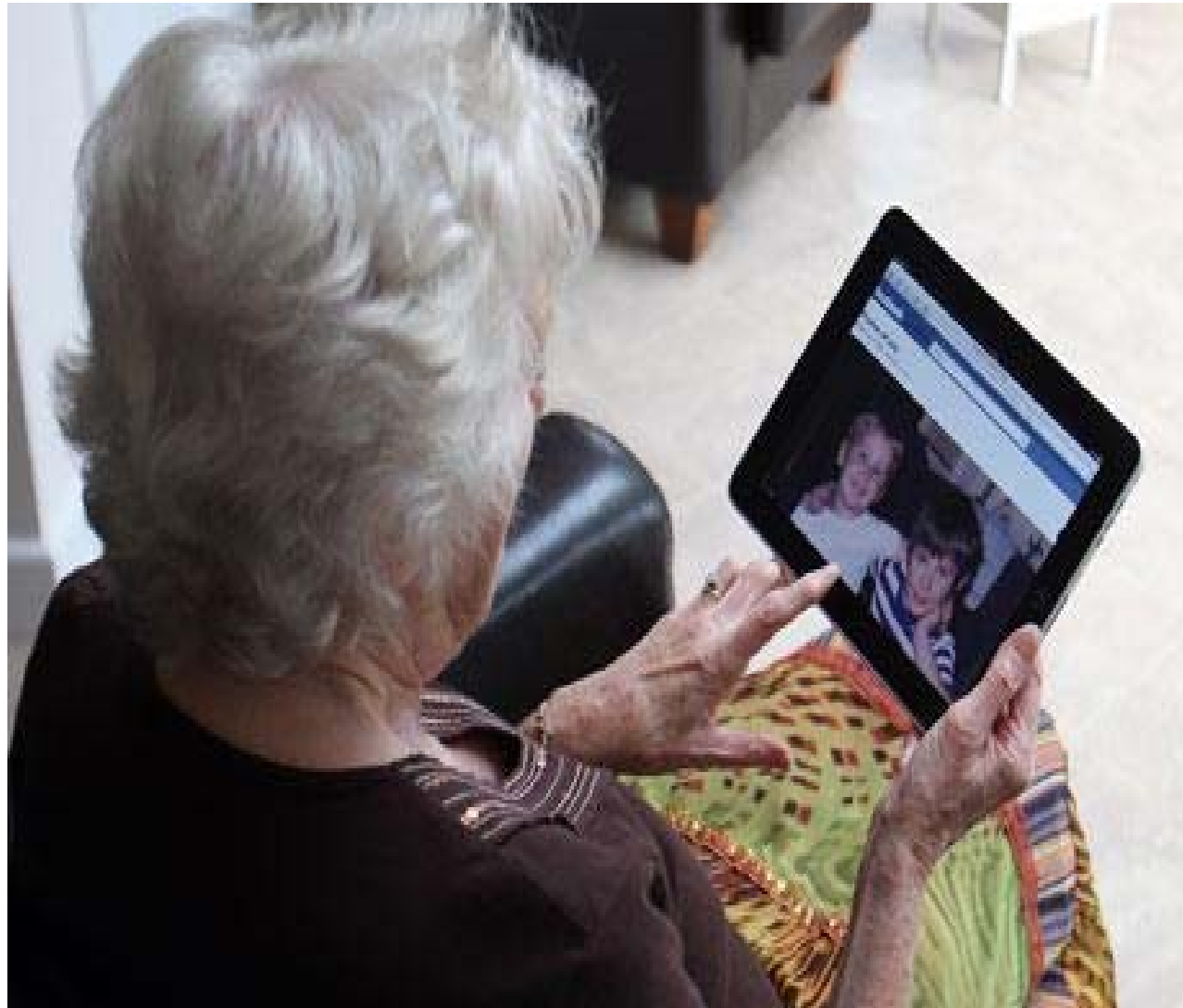












Loneliness



“There’s nothing lonelier than living with the wrong person.”



Matthew Brashears,
Co-author, Cornell U:

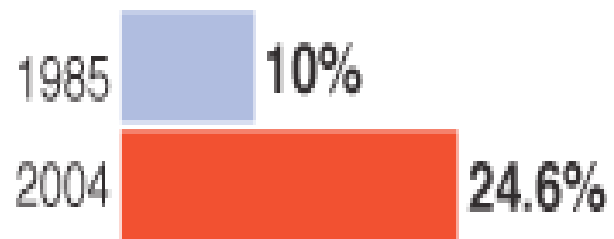
**“I certainly don’t
think it’s
reliable.”**

Chronicle of Higher
Education.

Feb 3, 2012

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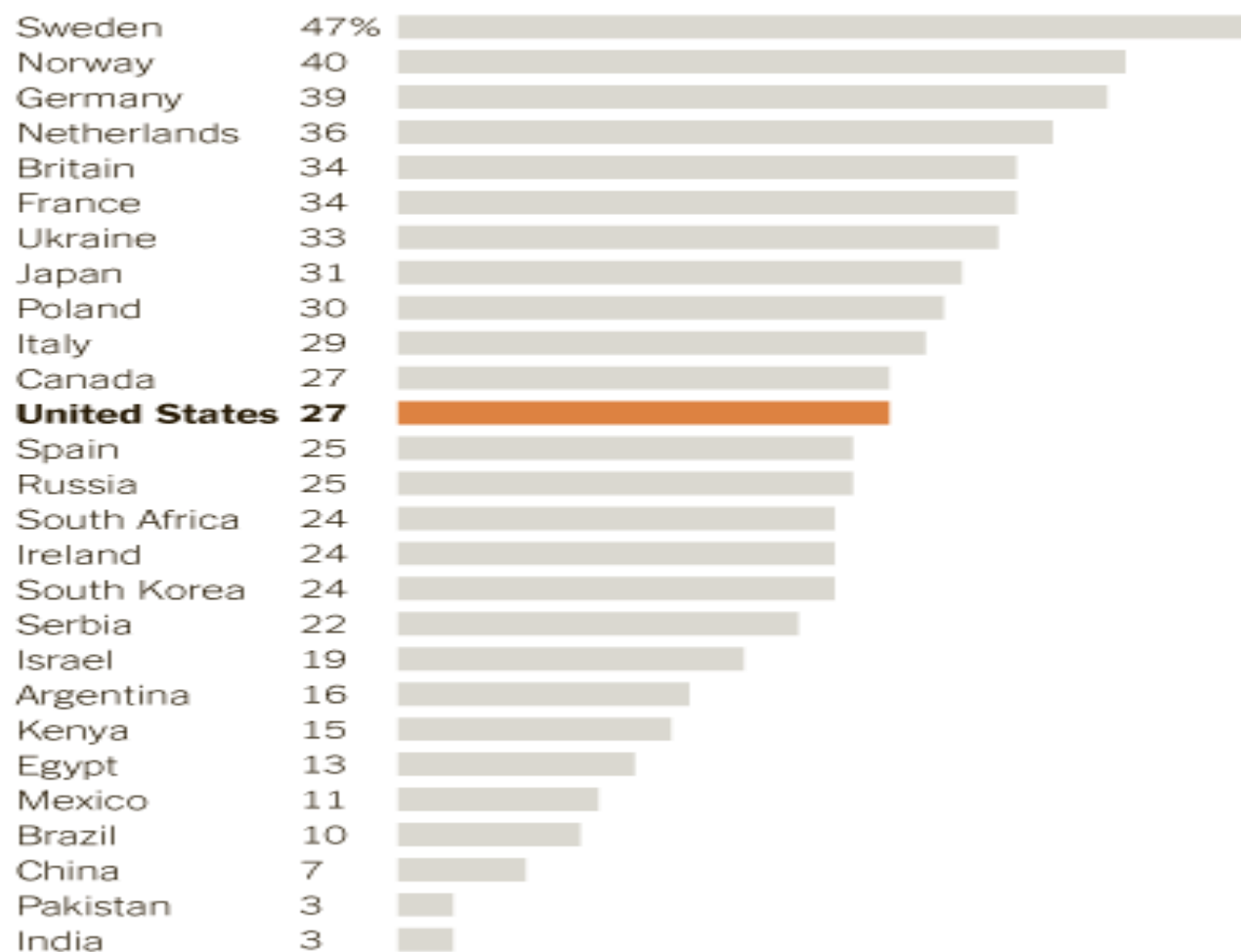


Source: American Sociology Review

Frank Pompa, USA TODAY

... And Even More Abroad

Percent of households with only one occupant.



@ericklinenberg

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Surprising Appeal of Living Alone

Eric Klinenberg



Am Journal Epid 2011: “The rising relative risk of mortality for singles”

- Never-married persons (singles) constitute a growing demographic group; yet, the magnitude of the all-cause relative mortality risk for nonelderly singles is not known and important moderating factors have not been explored. The authors used meta-analysis to examine 641 risk estimates from 95 publications that provided data on more than 500 million persons. **The comparison group consisted of currently married individuals...** The results also showed that the hazard ratio decreased with age and that study quality has an important relation to hazard ratio magnitude.
- **Conclusion: Getting married is good for your health and increases longevity. Being single is dangerous, even deadly.**

Am Journal Epid 2011: “The rising relative risk of mortality for singles”

- **Meta-analysis of 90 studies of varying quality**
- **Currently married v never-married**
- **Not included in study:**
 - **Divorced**
 - **Widowed**
- **No comparison of all people who were ever married v all people who are single**
- **No basis for conclusion: Getting married is good for your health and increases longevity. Being single is dangerous, even deadly**