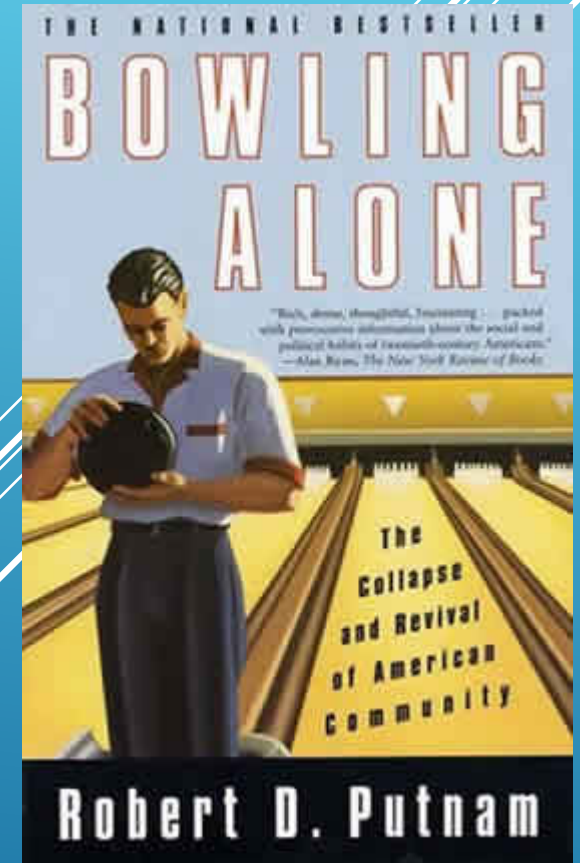


BOWLING ALONE: THE COLLAPSE AND REVIVAL OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Robert D. Putnam, 2000



ROBERT D. PUTNAM

- Professor of Public Policy at Harvard
- National Academy of Sciences
- Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy
- Past President, American Political Science Association
- In 2006, Putnam received the Skytte Prize, the world's highest accolade for a political scientist
- Presented the National Humanities Medal, the nation's highest honor for contributions to the humanities by President Obama.



Social capital ... involves the potential of individuals to secure benefits and invent solutions to problems through membership in social networks. Social capital revolves around three dimensions: interconnected networks of relationships between individuals and groups, levels of trust that characterize these ties, and resources or benefits that are both gained and transferred by virtue of social ties and social participation.

Encyclopedia Britannica

WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?



“If you don’t go to somebody’s funeral, they won’t come to yours.”

Yogi Berra

WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?



- Trends in Civic Engagement and Social Capital
- Why?
- So What?
- What is to Be Done?



Trends in Civic Engagement

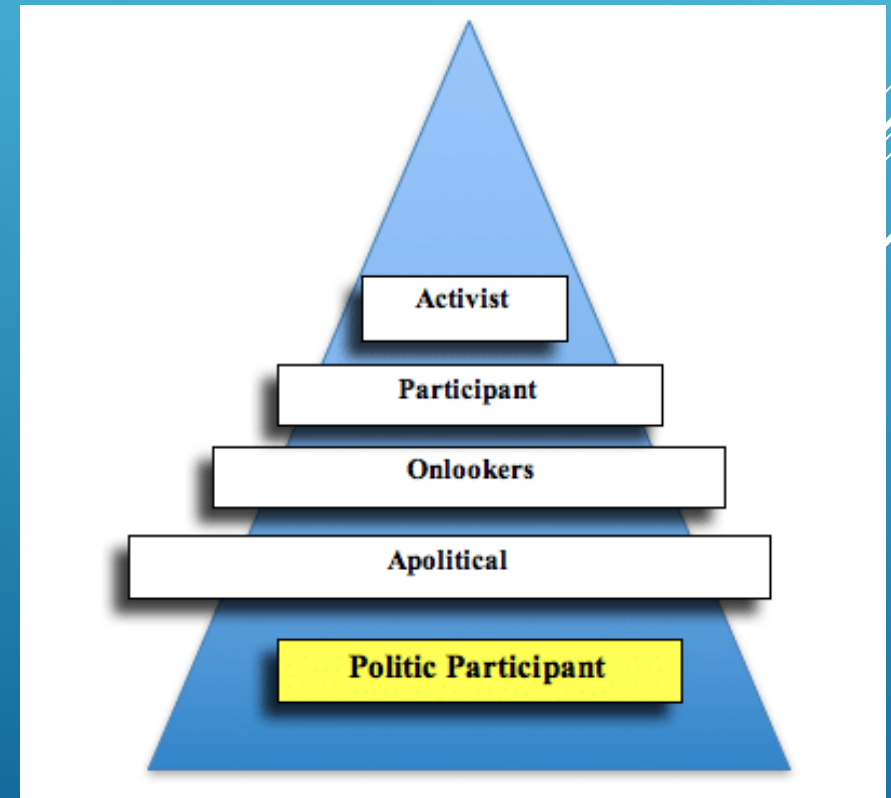
- ▶ Political Participation
- ▶ Civic Participation
- ▶ Religious Participation
- ▶ Connections in the Workplace
- ▶ Informal Social Connections
- ▶ Altruism, Volunteering, and Philanthropy
- ▶ Reciprocity, Honesty, and Trust
- ▶ Against the Tide? Small Groups, Social Movements, and the Net



Table 1: Trends in Political and Community Participation	Relative Change 1973-74 to 1993- 94
Served as an officer of some club or organization	-42%
Worked for a Political Party	-42%
Served on a Committee for some Local Organization	-39%
Attended a Public Meeting on Town or School Affairs	-35%
Attended a Political Rally or Speech	-34%
<i>Participated in at least one of these Twelve Activities</i>	-25%
Made a Speech	-24%
Wrote a Congressman or Senator	-23%
Signed a Petition	-22%
Was a Member of Some “Better Government” Group	-19%
Held or ran for Political Office	-16%
Wrote a Letter to the Paper	-14%
Wrote an article for a Magazine or Newspaper	-10%

- ▶ ...since the mid-1960s, ..., despite the rapid rise in levels of education, Americans (are) roughly 40% less engaged in party politics and, indeed, in political and civic organizations of all sorts.
- ▶ We remain, in short, reasonably well informed spectators of public affairs, but many fewer of us actually partake in the game.

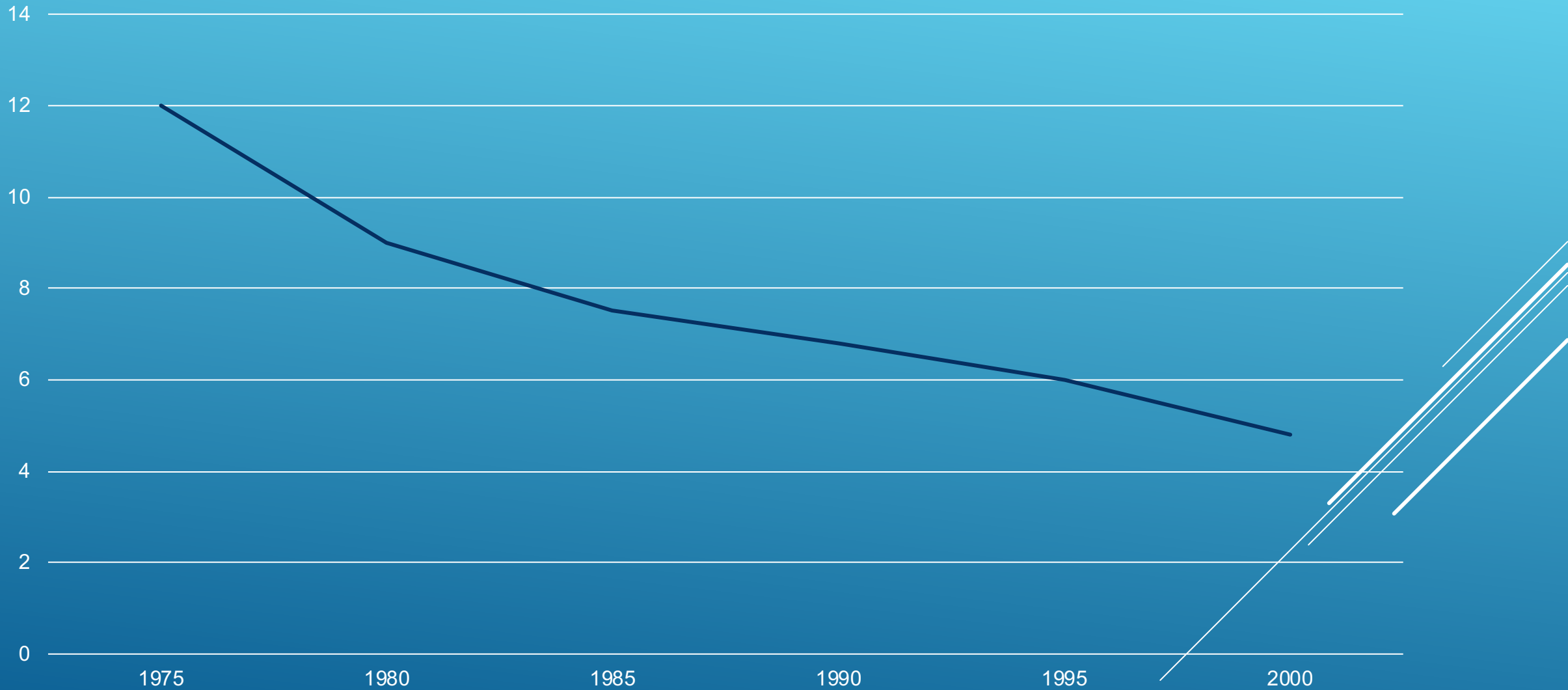
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



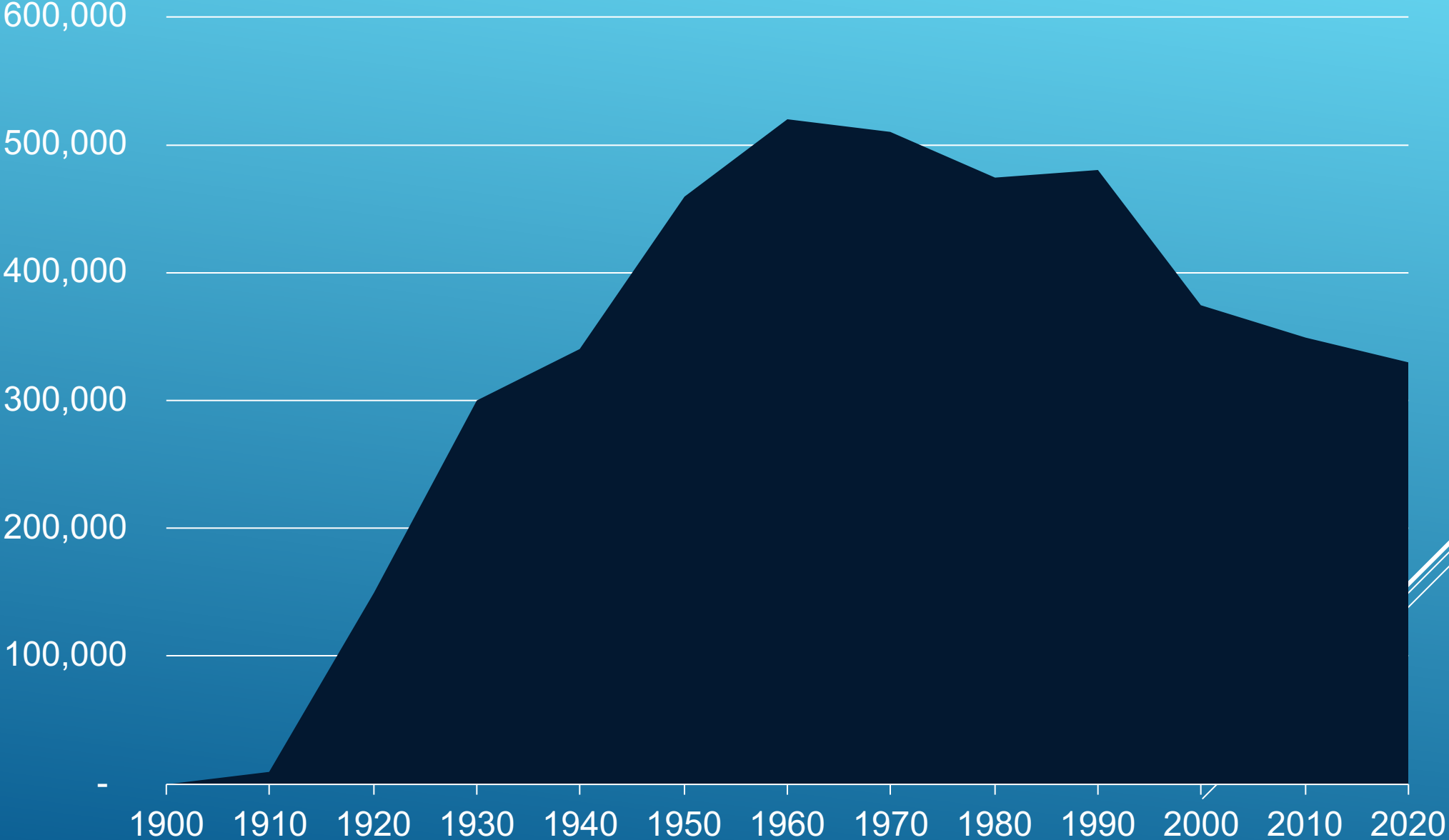
- ▶ In the last third of the 20th century, ...only mailing list membership has continued to expand.
- ▶ ...involvement in face-to-face organizations has plummeted.
- ▶ ...active involvement in clubs and other voluntary associations has collapsed at an astonishing rate, more than halving in most indexes of participation within barely a few decades.
- ▶ ...virtually all of this decline is attributable to generational replacement: Members of any given generation are investing as much time in organizational activity as they ever were, but each successive generation is investing less.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Mean Number of Club Meetings per Year



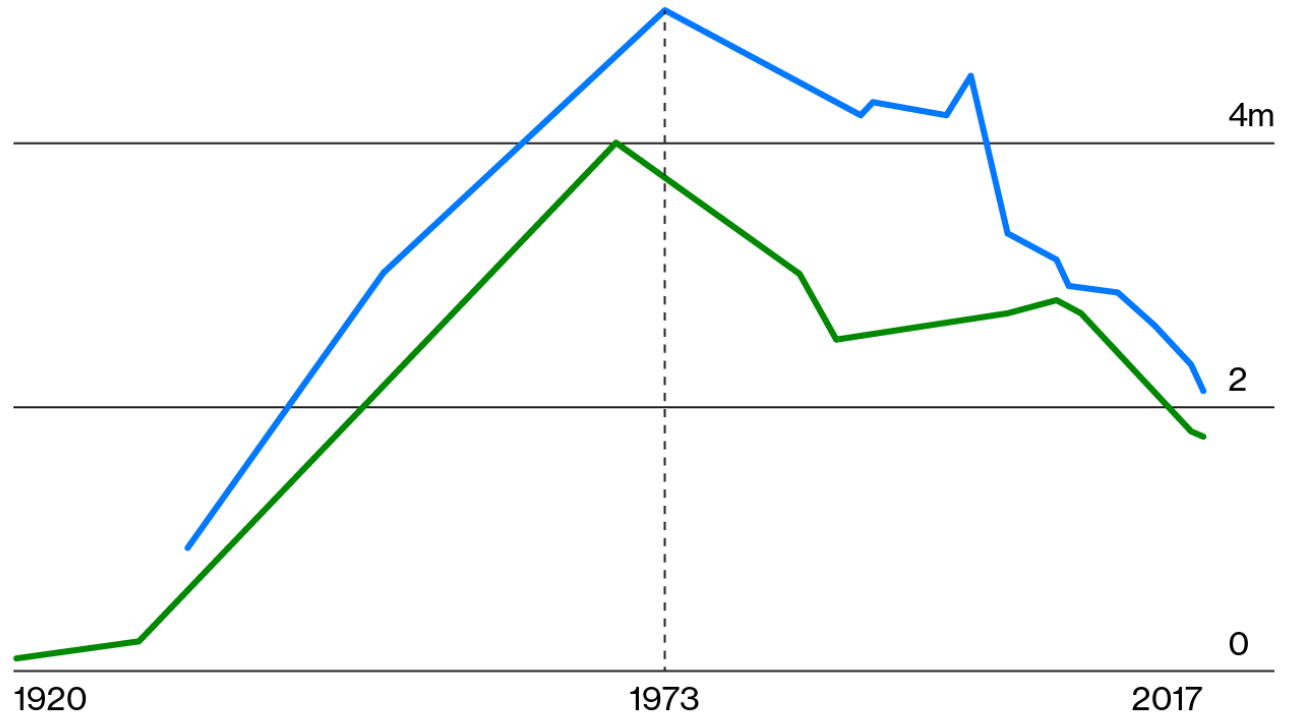
US Rotarians





Membership

Boy Scouts Girl Scouts



Data: Company reports, news reports

SCOUTING MEMBERSHIP

- Rotary...Membership was more than 400,000 in 1995. It's 330,000 today. Only 10% of the members are under 40.
- Masons...They've lost three million members since the 1950s.
- Elks...Membership has declined by 50% since 1980.
- Shriners...Membership has dropped by 50% since 1990.

Are Service Clubs Dying? By Brian Cabell, Word on the Street, July 4, 2017.



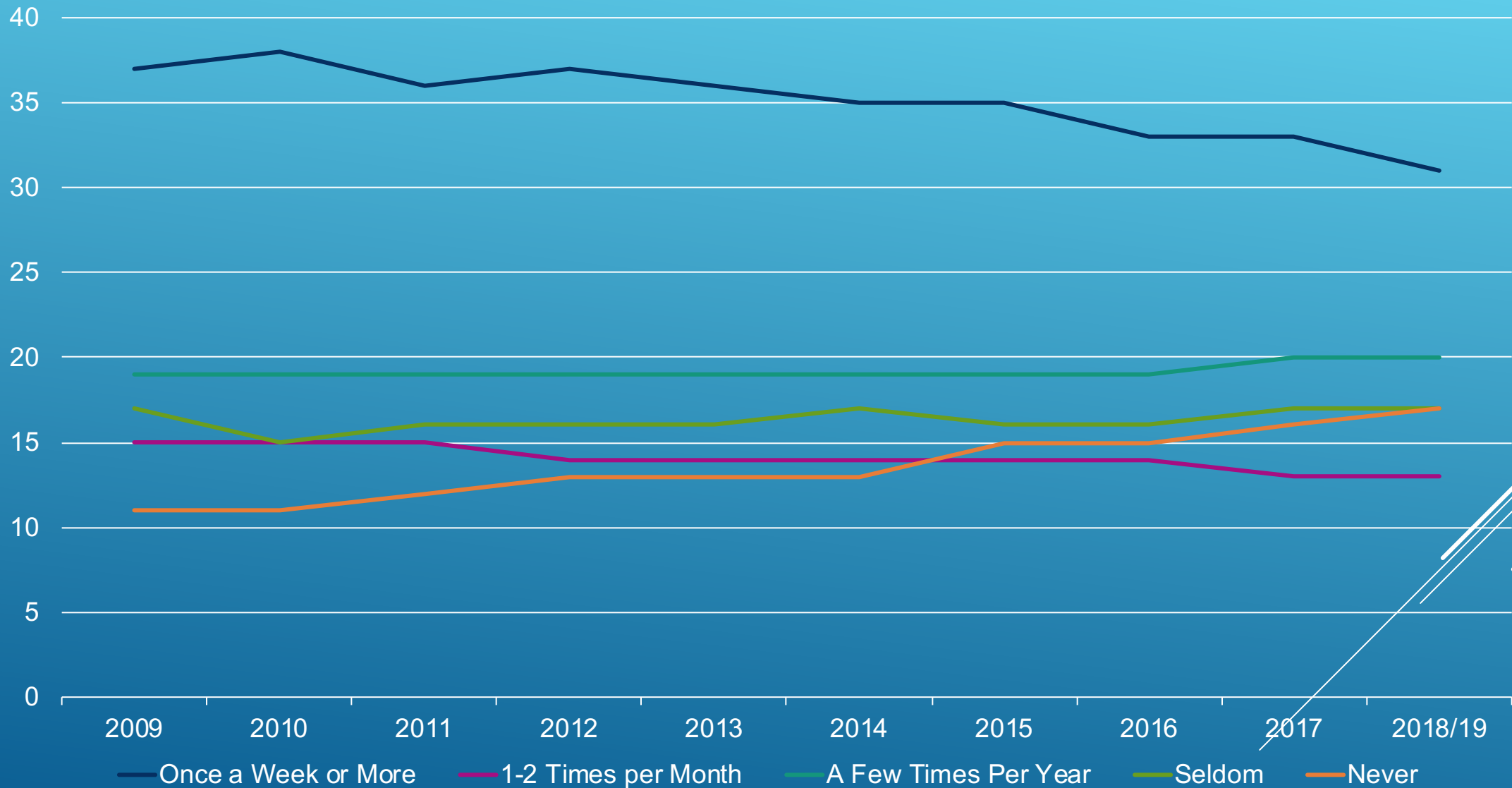
Faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America.

As a rough rule of thumb, our evidence shows, nearly half of all associational memberships in American are church related, half of all personal philanthropy is religious in character and half all volunteering occurs in a religious context.

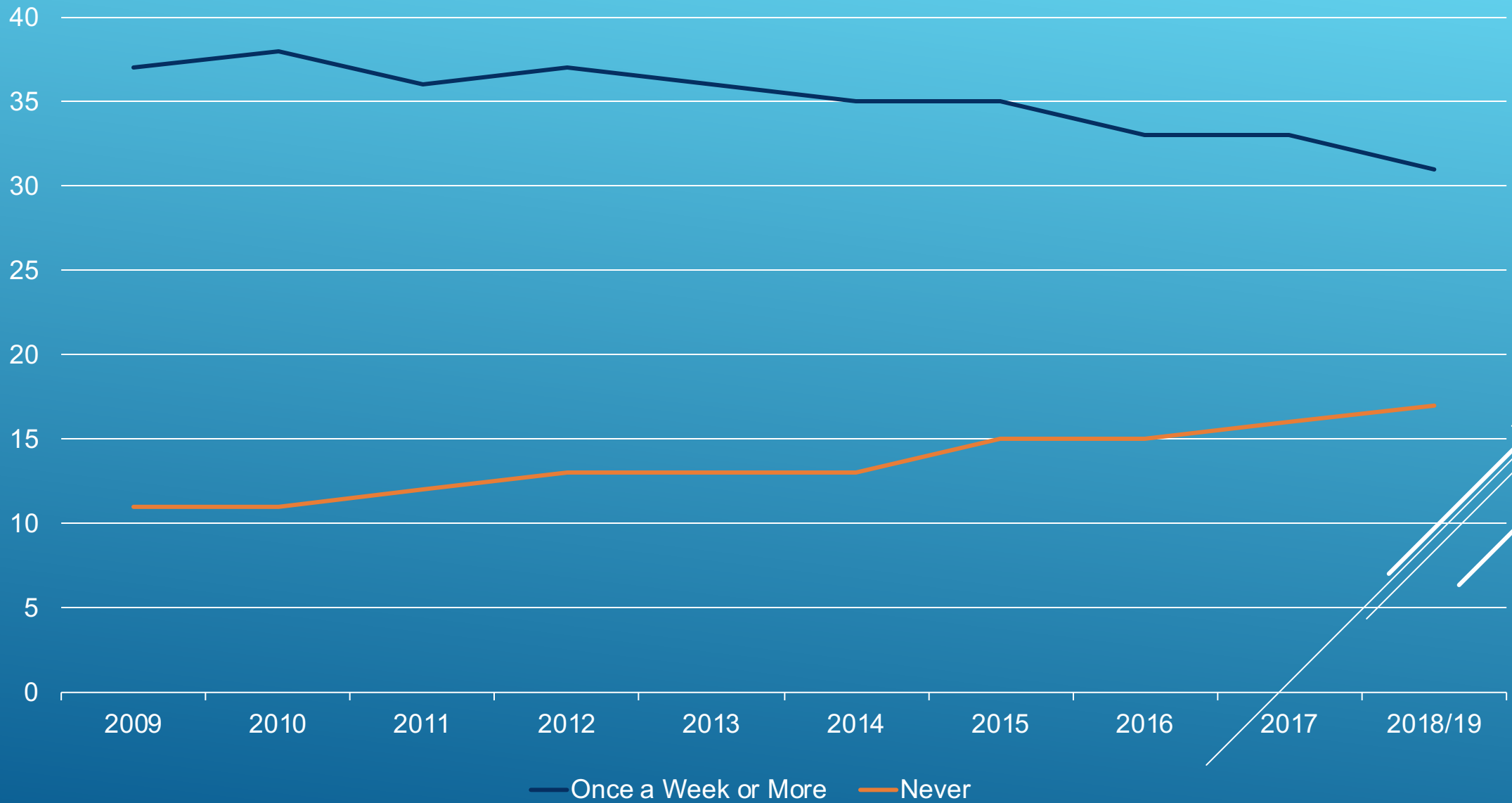
RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Church Participation



Church Participation



- ▶ ...the broad oscillations in religious participation ... mirror trends in secular civic life...fading over the last three or four decades.
- ▶ ...this disengagement appears tied to generational succession.
- ▶ ...more dynamic and demanding forms of faith have surged to supplant more mundane forms. At least so far, however, the community-building efforts of the new denominations have been directed inward rather than outward, this limiting their otherwise salutary effects on American's stock of social capital.

RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION

- ▶ Declining Social Capital: Trends over the last 25 years
 - ▶ Attending Club Meetings: 58% drop
 - ▶ Family dinners: 43% drop
 - ▶ Having friends over: 35% drop

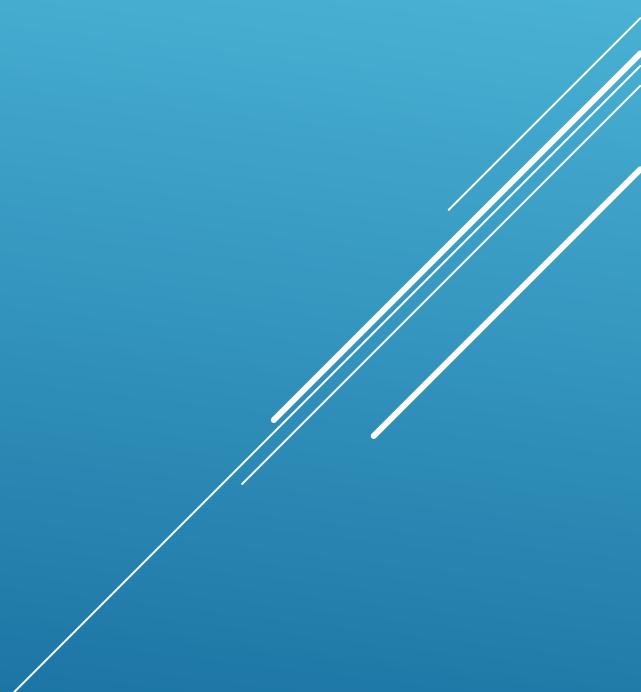
- ▶ Pressures of Time and Money: 10%
- ▶ Mobility and Sprawl: 10%
- ▶ Technology and Mass Media: 25%
- ▶ From Generation to Generation: 50%


WHY?

- ▶ Watching commercial entertainment TV is the only leisure activity where doing more of it is associated with lower social capital.
 - ▶ Every ten minutes of commuting reduces all forms of social capital by 10%
- 

- ▶ Education and Children's Welfare
- ▶ Safe and Productive Neighborhoods
- ▶ Economic Prosperity
- ▶ Health and Happiness
- ▶ Democracy
- ▶ The Dark Side of Social Capital

SO WHAT?



- ▶ Joining and participating in one group cuts in half your odds of dying next year.
 - ▶ Regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or church attendance is the happiness equivalent of getting a college degree or more than doubling your income. Civic connections rival marriage and affluence as predictors of life happiness.
 - ▶ If you smoke and belong to no groups, it's a toss-up statistically whether you should stop smoking or start joining.
- 

“What we need is not civic broccoli—
good for you but unappealing—but an
updated version of Scouting’s ingenious
combination of values and fun.”



The Beatles got it right: we all
“get by with a little help from
our friends.”

