Social Computing Capstone

Day 12: Monetization and Social Capital

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Schedule for today's class

- Short lecture, discussion of reading (15 min)

- Quick overview of G5 midterm presentations next Tues (2 min)

- Group work time (60 min)

Monetization and Social Capital

Social Capital

- Social capital is the "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" - Robert Putnam

- An individual can have higher or lower social capital, like they can have more or less financial capital. You can build social capital through working on your relationships.

- If you have higher social capital (you know more of certain kinds of people), you can leverage that to get information, resources, jobs, favors, etc. That is, social capital can often convert to financial capital.
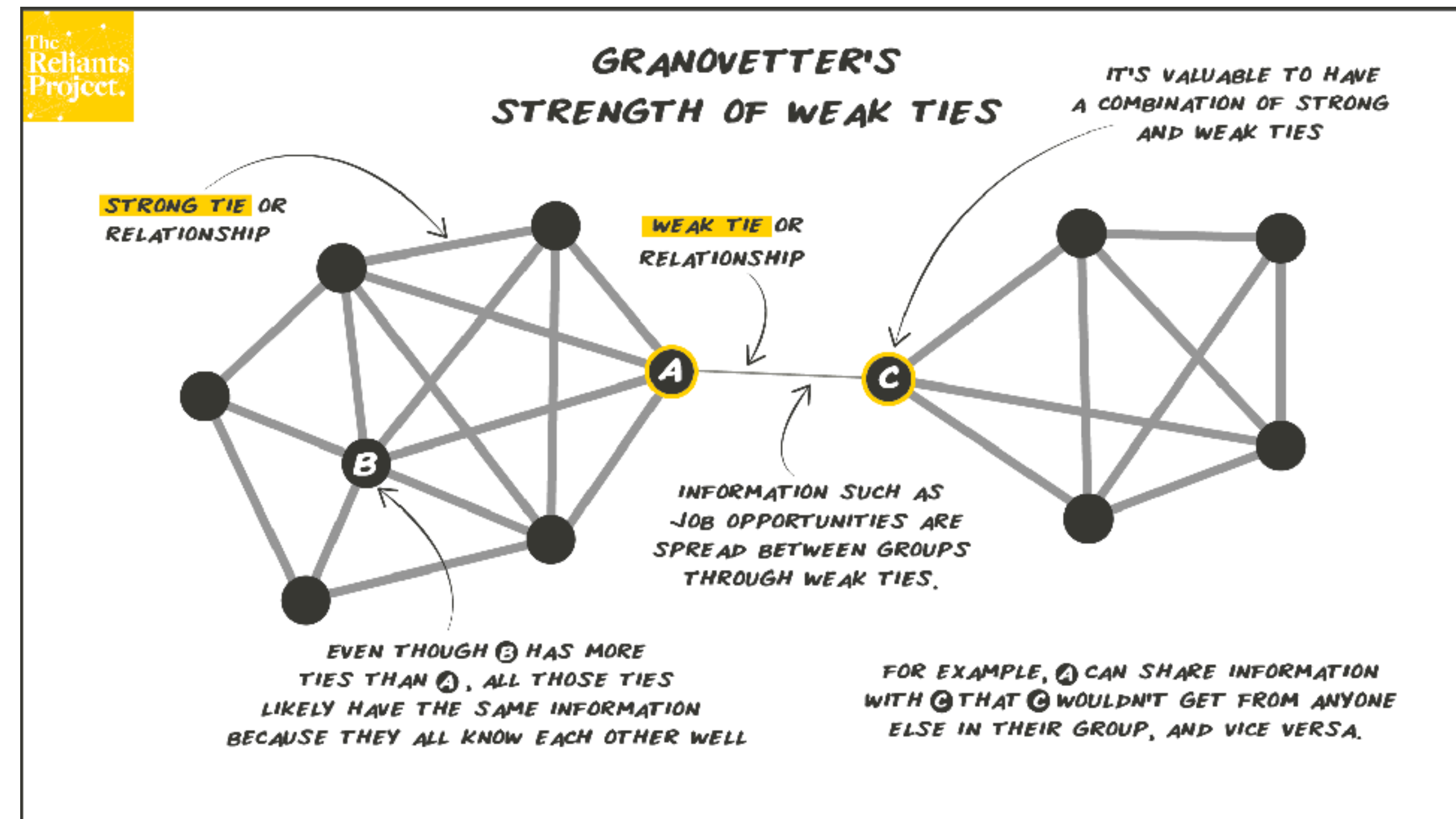
Strong vs Weak Ties

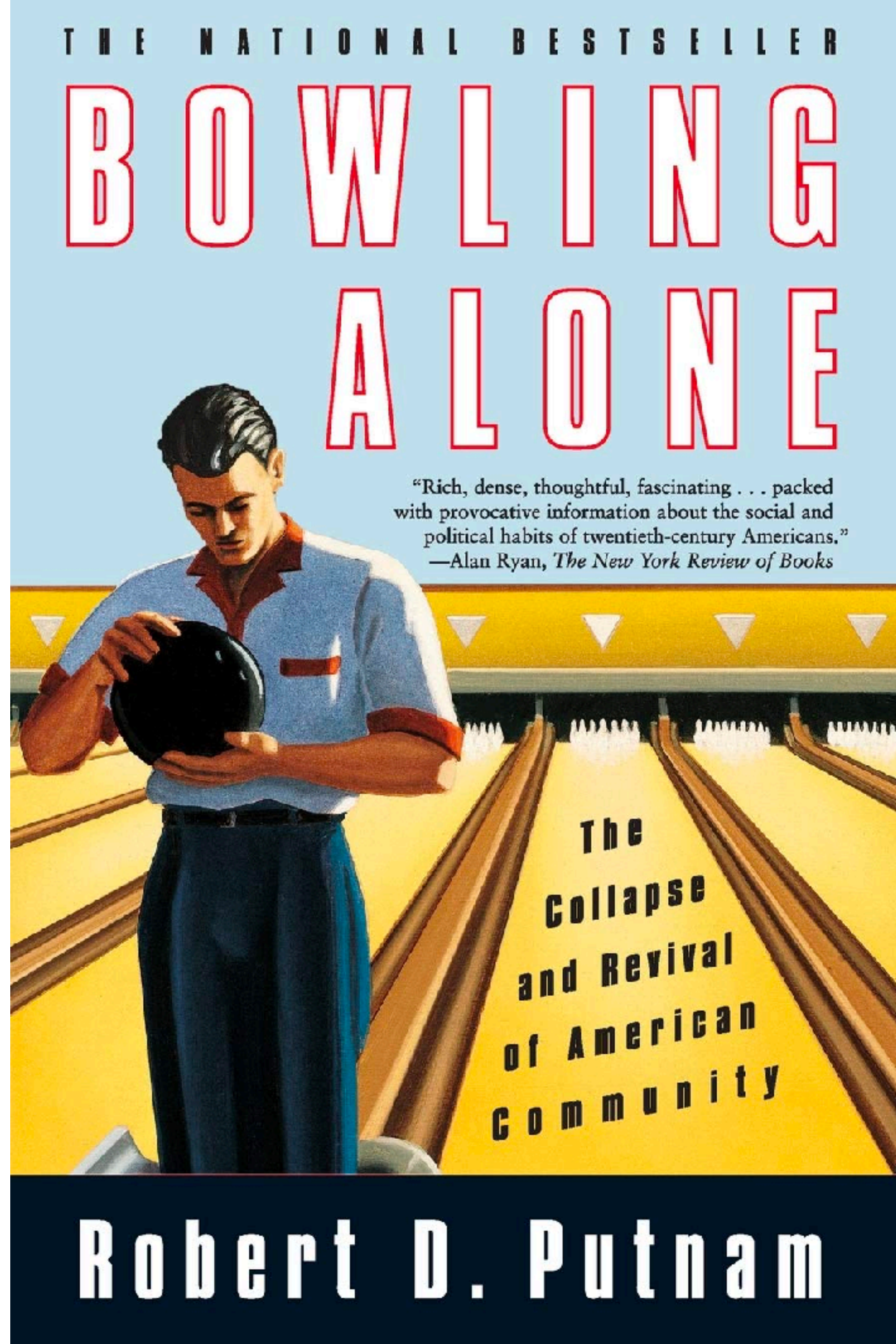There are different kinds of social connections that make up one's social capital though.

Social relationships can be:

Strong ties (close friends and family)

Weak ties (acquaintances, e.g., classmates, coworkers, neighbors, etc.)

The strength of weak ties (Mark Granovetter): infrequent, arms-length relationships are more beneficial for employment opportunities, promotions, and wages than strong ties. They are a key source of diffusion of influence and information, mobility opportunity, and community organization. Most of what makes up our social capital is due to weak ties.

The Reliants Project.

GRANOVETTER'S STRENGTH OF WEAK TIES

IT'S VALUABLE TO HAVE A COMBINATION OF STRONG AND WEAK TIES

STRONG TIE OR RELATIONSHIP

WEAK TIE OR RELATIONSHIP

INFORMATION SUCH AS JOB OPPORTUNITIES ARE SPREAD BETWEEN GROUPS THROUGH WEAK TIES.

EVEN THOUGH B HAS MORE TIES THAN A, ALL THOSE TIES LIKELY HAVE THE SAME INFORMATION BECAUSE THEY ALL KNOW EACH OTHER WELL

FOR EXAMPLE, A CAN SHARE INFORMATION WITH C THAT C WOULDN'T GET FROM ANYONE ELSE IN THEIR GROUP, AND VICE VERSA.

- Robert Putnam wrote this book in 2000 to argue that **social capital** has been declining in the US since 1950.

- Looking at a societal level, social capital is the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. Unlike traditional forms of capital, social capital is not depleted by use. In fact it is depleted by non-use!

- Putnam used **bowling** as an example to illustrate this; although the number of people who bowled had increased in the last 20 years, the number of people who **bowled in leagues** had decreased. If people bowled alone, they did not participate in the social interaction and civic discussions that might occur in a league environment.

From "bowling alone" to "bowling online"?

- Along with the decline in local organizations has come the rise in social interaction online. Are we more or less alone today? What's different about the kinds of social encounters and connections we have online, and what are the implications for our society?

  - Online social spaces make it easier to encounter strangers in low-trust environments, or where trust is maybe scaffolded by the platform (e.g., eBay, Tinder, FB Marketplace).

  - Parasocial relationships are more common online, and can be highly interactive, or at least appear to be so to the follower.

  - Social capital can convert to financial capital more easily online, with certain platforms that directly build this in (e.g., Patreon, OnlyFans, sponsored posts on Instagram).

G5 - Midterm presentation

- 3-5 min presentation in class on Tuesday

- Can build from what you shared in G2 to what should now be a more narrow pitch that also spends more time on your solution. Use this time to practice the story and motivation behind your proposed solution, which you will do again in G8 (video demo) and your final presentation.

- Also give an update to the class on your project so far, including a summary of your code and design specification, and getting class feedback on your proposed direction. Ask questions!

- 5 min for audience questions and feedback