Barbara Arneil

In his celebrated book, *Bowling Alone,* Robert Putnam points to what he calls the rise and fall of social capital in America over the course of the 20th century arguing that Americans over the last three decades are participating far less in civic organizations than then their predecessors. Putnam uses the pattern of membership in both the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and the Girl Scouts of the United States (GSUSA) as evidence for his thesis. Unfortunately, he combines these two organizations into one variable in his analysis and fails, therefore, to see the profound differences between them and what their different membership patterns might tell us about social capital building more generally. I begin my analysis, therefore, by separating out the Girl Scouts from the Boy Scouts in order to examine both the similarities and *differences* in each organization's membership and policies. While they follow a parallel membership pattern for most of the 20th century - growing exponentially from their inception in the Progressive Era, to peak around1970 and then decline for a decade and a half (consistent with Putnam's thesis of growth and decline) – from the mid 1980's to present both their memberships and policies diverge significantly.

These patterns of decline and divergence raise two interrelated questions – why should they both decline from 1970-85 and why should one grow and the other decline in the years since 1985? The first question is, of course, Putnam's main concern. I will argue, that the causal reasons he provides for the decline do not explain the patterns described above, most particularly the divergence. To answer, the second question, therefore it is necessary to go beyond Putnam's analysis and look at the *variation* between traditional organizations (decline *and* growth). The answers will provide us with insights into social capital building in contemporary American society generally.

The BSA and GSUSA have been critically important organizations within American civil society as evidenced by a number of different indicators, beginning with their relative size. The BSA claims it is the 'largest and most effective youth organization in the world'.[1] Similarly the GSUSA website describes their organization as the 'world's preeminent organization dedicated solely to girls – all girls.'[2] At the beginning of the

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[1] http://www.scouting.org/Media/FactSheets/02-211.aspx Accessed March 31, 2008.
[2] http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/ Accessed March 31, 2008.

1990's, nearly half of American boys had tried Cub Scouting and one fifth had tried Boy Scouts. (Donohue, 1994: 59) GSUSA claims 50 million girls have participated in the Girl Scouts.[3] A second indicator of their importance is the degree to which the elite of American society have connections to each organization. As of January 2001, two thirds of US Senators and 208 members of Congress have belonged to the Boy Scouts. (Stephen, 2001:16) Both organizations are uniquely linked to the highest office in the country. Since William Taft in 1910, the President of the United States has always served as honorary president and since 1917, the First Lady has similarly served as honorary President of the Girl Scouts.

Finally, there is a broader sense in which the American nation sees its own identity interlinked with that of the Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts. Since 1940, the royalties from the quintessentially American patriotic anthem, 'God Bless America' have been paid to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts at the bequest of its composer, Irving Berling.[4] Scouting, particularly the Boy Scouts of America, thus has nearly an iconic status within the United States. As Andrew Stephen comments: 'most Americans believe boy scouts to be....as irrefutably American as apple pie.' (Stephen:16) Consequently, as we examine the growth and decline of these groups, we are tracing something much larger than simply two civic groups amongst many – within this narrative of growth, decline and divergence is the story of America, most particularly its youth over the course of the 20th century.

Let us begin with the data. The Girl Scouts of the United States (GSUSA) grew from 34,000 total members in 1918 to nearly 4 million members by 1970.

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[3] http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/facts/ Accessed March 31, 2008.
[4] 'Irving Berlin Gave the Scouts a Gift of Song'. *New York Times.* William Glaberson, October 14, 2001

GSUSA - Membership 1918-1985
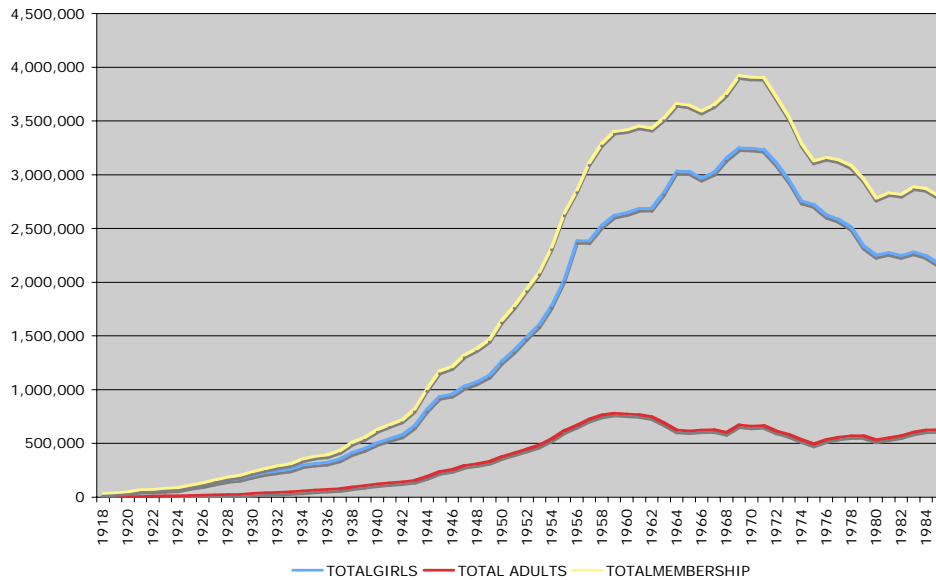
Membership then declined to just under 3 million by 1985. (Chart 1) Adult volunteer membership did not decline nearly as much as girl membership, a fact that Everett Ladd uses in challenging Putnam's theory that all forms of participation in traditional organizations has fallen but overall the picture from 1918-1985 is entirely consistent with Putnam's growth/decline thesis.

The BSA experienced a similar explosive growth from XX in 1918 to their peak in 1970 and a similar decline in membership from 1970 to 1985. (Chart 2) Ascertaining the decline from 1970 to the present turns out to be quite complicated and in some sense part of the overall story. In the 1970's, the BSA Executive Council began to make changes to the organization in order to try and offset declining numbers that included expanding the age range of traditional programs and the introduction of whole new programs.[5] The BSA also created new programs in the 1990's such as Venturers and

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[5] Thus, in the 1980's, the Boy Scouts expanded the Cub Scouts from a three year to five year program (to include 5 and 6 year olds) and, in 1986, the Webelos Scouts were expanded from a one year program to a

Learning for Life (the first is for 14-20 year olds and takes over from the Explorers program; the second, centered in schools does not require allegiance to the Scouts Oath or Law and anybody can join regardless of gender, sexual orientation or religious conviction). The BSA include all of these new and expanded numbers in their official 'youth membership' figures and hence, while they appeared to have grown, within the same category, they have actually declined.[6]

Thus, the one category that remains constant over the course of the 20th century is the Boy Scouts themselves (boys aged 11-17 years old) and I have used them to chart growth and decline in the BSA since 1960. (Chart 3) As the chart above shows, the Boy Scouts

Chart 3: Boy Scouts (11-17 years old) Membership 1960-2006

Boy Scouts
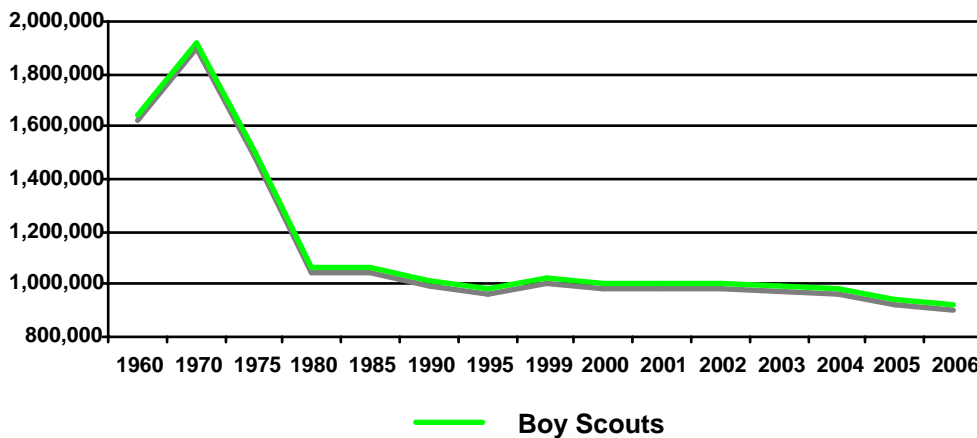
peak in 1970 at about 2 million members and decline to 1.1 million by 1985. Amongst Cub Scouts, although difficult to compare for the reasons described above, the decline

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two year program. In such cases, making comparisons across time in terms of overall growth or decline is difficult since the population for the group actually increases.

[6] In addition, local councils have also inflated membership (in the 1970's when the declines first happened and again in the last few years when the Boy Scouts experienced significant declines) as shall be discussed.

may be more dramatic. After peaking in 1970 at 2.5 million, they drop to 1.5 million by 1985 but climb back up to 2 million by 2000 (due in large part to an expanded age range) but ultimately they still decline to 1.7 million by 2006. According to one scouting organization (BSA-discrimination.org), the total decline in traditional membership from 1986-2005 (Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Explorers /Adventurers) is 40% (4.0 to 2.8 million). The question is why should there be such a precipitous decline in the GSUSA and the BSA in the 1970's and early 80's?

Why the Decline: The 'Civil Rights' versus 'Long Civic' Generations

Robert Putnam (2001) famously argues that the universal (as he sees it) decline in participation in the last forty years is caused by several factors: television (and later computer use) that draws people away from their communities and into their homes, an increase in dual career families (that results in fewer hours for women to devote to the voluntary sector), an increase in suburban sprawl and mobility (meaning people are less connected to their local community and are driving more) and most importantly for Putnam is 'generational change' (by which he means the long 'greatest generation' of the Second World War participated more than the disengaged and cocooned generation of the 1970's and beyond). More recently he has added the idea that increased ethnic 'diversity' causes people to 'hunker down' and disengage from civic society.

While many of these factors no doubt contributed to changes within American civic society, there are a number of problems with Putnam's argument. The first is that he claims he has measured and is therefore explaining a *universal* decline in participation in civic organizations when what he has really demonstrated is a decline in *traditional*

organizations.[7] This decline (in traditional organizations) is offset by participation in new

kinds of civic activity. To use one simple example from my own research (Arneil, 2006)

while the membership in the Women's Christian Temperance Union declined

precipitously after 1960, participation in female sports simultaneously exploded, as a

result of the 1972 Title IX. The story of civic society in America over the last forty years

is thus not so much one of universal *decline* as *change*. But, even if we focus *only* on

traditional organizations, there are still problems. To begin, the causal factors suggested

by Putnam do not explain why there would be a *growth* in some and *decline* in others.

For example, Hadassah and Moose Women (two traditional organizations included by

Putnam in his analysis) actually expanded their membership in the 1980's and 90's (as

did the Girl Scouts as we shall discuss shortly).

Putnam argues the most important factor amongst the ones listed above is the

change from an *older* 'civic generation' who participated *more* to the emergence of a

younger generation who participated *less*. I would suggest, however, if one is examining

traditional organizations*,* it is not that the younger generation participated less*,* but they

were much more selective about which organizations they joined, rejecting those that did

not reflect their new set of political and civil norms. Thus, the hypothesis I wish to

advance is that it is the key factor for the decline is the rise of the 'civil rights generation'

as they challenged the existing norms of American society including those governing

traditional organizations. Thus, in ever increasing numbers in the 1970's, young people

refused to join organizations they viewed as outdated and opted instead for civic, political

[7]As Peter Hall (1999, 2002) demonstrates in his analysis of the UK, the only decline in participation since 1970 was amongst 'traditional housewives' organizations'; concluding that overall women's participation in civic society, due to increased levels of post-secondary education, actually *doubled* in the last forty years.

and social activity more consistent with the goals of democracy, gender and racial equality.[8] If some organizations, like Hadassah and Moose (Women) were able to adapt to these new demands and begin to reflect back to this new generation some of their own values, it explains why some might grow but others decline. The issue thus becomes how well do traditional organizations, particularly *youth* organizations, respond to the changing demands of this younger generation of Americans?

       In the remainder of this paper, I will test this general hypothesis (the impact of the civil rights generation and how each organization responded to them) against the membership patterns in the BSA and GSUSA organizations between 1960 and the present. While my analysis uses two out of hundreds of possible examples, I hope the lessons drawn here will more broadly explain social capital decline and growth in traditional groups more generally. I will begin my analysis by examining the origins and historical development of both the BSA and GSUSA because in order to measure the degree to which either may be at odds with the values of the civil rights' generation, we must first understand what each stood for in the first place and how they evolved over the course of the twentieth century.

The Boy Scouts: Origins and Evolution

       The BSA has long been identified with America itself as discussed in the introduction of this article but, in reality, their earliest roots are in imperial Britain and more specifically in the mind of Robert Baden Powell at the turn of the 20th century.

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[8] Thus, of the 32 key civic groups Putnam uses as his barometer of civic decline, all were created at a moment in history when segregation was an accepted norm of civic life and women were excluded from mainstream economic and political participation. In my own analysis (2006) of the eleven *women's* organizations (out of the 32 total) selected by Putnam for his barometer of civic growth and decline, they are all traditional organizations - targeted at 'housewives' and created by and for women who did not have direct access to political and economic power and racially segregated until after the Second World War.

Baden Powell was a military officer in the British empire in both Africa and India and after his own famous victory in Mafeking, South Africa, he wrote *Scouting for Boys* in 1907, the original handbook for Boy Scouts. Using a military scout as his model, Baden Powell argued that the current generation of British boys was in need of a new kind of training. Deeply concerned that boys were becoming 'soft' as the result of city life, Baden Powell developed a program by which boys would be uniformed and toughened up through outdoor activities with the ultimate purpose to create men capable of defending their 'race' and empire.

Thus, from its inception scouting was born out of anxieties about the loss of 'masculinity' on the one hand and 'empire' on the other – two concerns intertwined in Baden-Powell's own mind: 'The closing chapter of *Scouting for Boys* does not cease to press home that the 'deterioration of [the] race' is reflected in the physical breakdown of the 'rising generation', and by implication, the reduction in their masculinity.'[9] As Baden Powell himself writes in the conclusion of *Scouting for Boys*: 'Wishy-washy slackers without any go, patriotism in them' will lose the 'Empire' for Britain. (278)

The degree of imperial racism within the foundations of the Boy Scouts is made explicit by the vignettes in the first edition of *Scouting for Boys* written by Baden-Powell and to be performed by Boy Scout troops (complete with stage directions and make up hints). Under the subtitle 'How the Empire Must be Held' in the chapter entitled 'Patriotism', Baden-Powell includes a short 'display' for boy scout troops to reenact the story of the humiliation of Mehtab Singh, a Sikh leader, at the hands of a British imperial leader John Nicholson, who forced Singh to remove his shoes in the company of his

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[9] Elleke Boehmer (Introduction) *Scouting for Boys: The Original 1908 Edition.* (2004) See also Robert MacDonald 1993*;* Michal Rosenthal,1986.

English superiors in order to demonstrate his racial inferiority. This 'display' is designed to help boys learn 'the might of Britain [to be] powerful for [the] good of the world'. (279-80)

A second play, suggests that boys should reenact the 'triumph' of John Smith over the American 'Indian', in which Smith describes the colonization of the indigenous peoles as a 'duty to my King and God' (the first sentence of the Scout's oath) and 'our [the British imperial] mission… is to *clean* the world!' Clean is an interesting choice of word since it will become one of the 'laws' of the British Boy Scouts under Baden Powell and take on enormous importance nearly a century later when the BSA uses it in various court cases to defend their right to exclude gay men and boys from the organization, as shall be discussed. Thus, the Boy Scouts were from their inception a fundamentally defensive organization, defending 'God and Empire' from various threats through a kind of 'muscular' masculinity and a military style top-down organization.

The Boy Scouts of America: Defending God, Country and Masculinity

The *American* Boy Scouts were founded in 1910 and, like their British counterparts, were created as the result of general anxiety over 'masculinity' and frontier America by such threats as urbanization, feminism and waves of immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century. As David Macleod in his history of the BSA comments, these last two concerns were intertwined in the minds of early supporters of the BSA, including Teddy Roosevelt:

Fears concerning women added to the masculine sense of confinement…

Women's rights did begin to undercut the simplistic equation of masculinity and

power. Women invaded the white-collar world, trebling in numbers there from

1900 to 1920. Male anxieties were exacerbated by the "race suicide" panic of the early 1900s, as alarmists led by Roosevelt blamed women for reducing birthrates to levels which would leave the old stock too weak to hold its own against immigrants. (Macleod: 46)

If in Britain, the specific catalyst for anxiety over masculinity was the decline of empire, in America, it was the loss of the western frontier. 'In Britain, upper-class fear of rival empire gave Boy Scouting its initial impetus. In America… the purported closing of the frontier by 1890 punctured the dream of endless space for manly self-assertion. Yet to an era rife with notions of survival through superior fitness, wilderness appeared a vital source of virility and toughness.' (Macleod: 45) Philip J. Deloria expands on this point, arguing that two of the founders of the Boy Scouts, Ernest Seton and Daniel Beard 'set out to re-imagine the frontier experience through scouting, wilderness, and nature study'. (101) The 'outdoor' aspects of the BSA scouting camps and badges were thus meant to offset the enfeebling impact of urbanization that had made boys 'soft'.

James West became Chief Scout Executive of the BSA in 1911 and remained in the position until 1943. Like Baden-Powell, he sought to shore up 'masculinity' against the forces that threatened it and to directly link early boyhood development with military training, out-door activity and obedience to an overarching set of laws and an oath. Under West, the BSA Oath and Law were both created. The BSA oath was the same as the British (duty to God and country, obeying the laws and helping others) with one additional sentence: 'To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight'. This addition reflects a moral dimension of American scouting different from the British organization; the belief that 'social order depended upon the moral behaviour

of self directing individuals' - moral 'straightness' a kind of American Puritan sensibility mattered more to the American organization and 'obedience' mattered more to Baden-Powell to maintain authority in society.

West also created an organization that was highly centralized and top-down by ensuring that the BSA executive was financed independently of the money collected from local councils and by ensuring each Boy Scout troop had to register annually with the BSA executive in order to continue to exist. As West wrote of this decision: 'Oh how fortunate it is that we put that last provision in…[the] burden of proof was alawys on the other fellow to show why the commission should be renewed'. (Macleod, 152) This highly centralized top-down form of governance resonates to the present day and in contemporary debates.

Finally, the BSA was for it first half century a largely racially segregated organization. From the beginning, questions were raised about the inclusion of African American boys in troops. Despite the advice of William Boyce (the founder of Boy Scouts) to the contrary, the BSA executive under James West, decided that school policies with regard to segregation should also apply to Boy Scout troops. While some troops were desegregated in the north earlier, in the South most troops remained segregated until the 1960's.[10]

Thus, the BSA, thinking boyhood was being threatened by a loss of frontier, first wave feminism, a flood of immigration and city life created a program that would defend the existing order through a racially segregated training for boys in which masculinity, America and God were deeply intertwined. This order could only be defended,

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[10] http://www.aaregistry.com/detail.php?id=2781 The African American Registry.

particularly in America, if individual boys and men lived in accordance with a specific

set of moral strictures that left little room for diversity of moral beliefs or local

democracy. The Oath and Law (which have remained unchanged) represent the last line

of defense for the BSA executive in this battle from its inception until today.

The Decline of the BSA and the Civil Rights Generation

Given the historical roots and 'identity' of the BSA as described above, it should

not surprise us that a new generation marked by democratic impulses, second wave

feminism and civil rights would reject many of the tenets of the BSA: an oath to be loyal

to the state in defence of its interests worldwide, the militaristic roots of scouting

(reflected in the uniforms, insignia, badges), the traditional notions of masculinity in light

of gender equality, a non-democratic and historically segregated organization in light of

civil rights. Even the staunchest defenders of Boy Scouting concluded that the 'culture

wars' of the 1960's and 70's were the primary reason for the demise of the BSA's

membership. Heather MacDonald comments:

> The 1960s counterculture and the Boy Scouts of America were a train wreck
>
> waiting to happen. Here was a supremely patriotic, service- and family-oriented
>
> institution suddenly up against a movement celebrating rebellion …The official
>
> scout response to the assault on everything the scouts stood for was
>
> understandably confused. Though a 1968 annual report scoffed at the "impractical
>
> flower world of the Hippie," officials worried deeply about that bogus sixties
>
> concept, "relevance." They commissioned a survey that asked, "Is Scouting in
>
> Tune with the Times?"—and, not surprisingly, learned that the answer was no. In

1969, membership dropped for the first time in history; it nose-dived throughout

the 1970s. (MacDonald, 2000)

As the civil rights generation rejected the norms by which the BSA was governed, they

chose not to join the Boy Scouts in increasing numbers over the 1970's, in comparison to

the generations of youth that had preceded it.

Girl Guides: Origins and Evolution

What about the Girl Scouts? While their birth occurred simultaneously to that of

the Boy Scouts in Britain, their moment of self-creation was profoundly different. The

very first scout rally organized by Baden-Powell in 1909 at the Crystal Palace in London

that launched the Scouting movement was meant to be for boys only, but at the tail end of

the march of 10,000 boys, girls appeared declaring their interest in becoming 'scouts'.

The Girl Guide History of Canada records the moment in the following way:

Great astonishment was caused by a group at the end of the long parade – girls!

While their brothers had been busily occupied with Scouting, these girls had been

copying them, usually in secret. Girls at that time were expected to be *ladylike*,

doing needlework and art. Their place was definitely in the home, not outdoors

dressed in outlandish costumes…..Both their mothers and the general public were

shocked and horrified at the girls' escapades and appearance – skirts hiked up,

wearing Scout hats, carrying stout broomsticks, hung about with whistles, knives

and enormous haversacks decorated with large red crosses. These daring girls

pleaded with Baden Powell to be allowed to join the Scouts.[11]

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[11] 'History of Guiding' Girl Guides of Canada http://www.girlguides.ca/default1.asp?ID=1183

Thus, while 'boy' scouting might have fit well with a particular kind of defensive 'masculinity' as has been discussed, it was an awkward fit with dominant Edwardian notions of femininity. Because of his own identification of scouting with boys, Baden-Powell initially resisted the inclusion of girls within scouting but eventually yielded and asked his sister Agnes to lead the Girl *Guides* (using the word 'guide' to imply a more supportive role).

Thus the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, known as Guides in Britain, were born at the same time but in a very different manner. Whereas the Boy Scouts were constructed in order to reinforce traditional notions of masculinity and patriotic service against perceived threats to the existing order, 'Girl Scouts', to exist at all – had to challenge their own gender-defined roles *and* existing norms of membership – these different origins will continue to shape both organizations in profound ways in America a century later. The Girl Guides had a handbook, originally penned by Robert Baden Powell's sister Agnes in 1911 entitled 'How Girls can Help to Build the Empire' which included sections from *Scouting for Boys* but added new ones emphasizing women's 'domestic role' including the care of children, nursing and housework. As such the Girl Guides (as they were known in Britain) were from their infancy, defined by a paradoxical commitment to challenging existing norms of membership gender-defying activities while embracing a traditional defense of empire and feminine values and roles.

Girl Scouts of the United States: Contradictions in Identity

The Girl Scouts of the United States were created in 1915. Like Baden-Powell only more so, James West believed 'scouting' was something only *boys* could do and resisted the creation of the Girl Scouts for a long time, arguing if scouting was designed

to create a particular sort of masculine character in boys it was singularly ill-suited for 'girls' and would tend to turn them into 'tomboys'. Juliette Low-Gordon ignored this advice and began the Girl Guides in 1912 changing the name to Girl Scouts by 1915. West fought the use of the word 'scouts' and created a rival organization called 'Camp Fire Girls'.

Perhaps what characterized the GSUSA most, like their British counterparts (and unlike the Boy Scouts) was a fundamentally contradictory nature. On the one hand, traditional values, obedience and loyalty to God and state were emphasized through the Promise and Law along with traditional feminine qualities; on the other hand, traditional gender roles were challenged and even defied (by insisting on the right to be called '*Scouts'* in the first place, but also by engaging girls in various rugged outdoor activities and awarding badges for traditionally masculine activities). While the first GSUSA handbook called on girl scouts to be 'womanly', meaning 'sweet and tender' and to be 'good mothers' it also suggested by the 1920 edition that 'housekeeping should [not] take up all a woman's times'. (Auster, 364) Similarly, early GSUSA badges emphasized traditional domestic duties ('cooking', 'dairy maid', 'invalid cooking'), but also included such things as 'rifle-shot' and 'artist'. (Auster, 363-365) The GSUSA's emphasis on patriotic service and citizenship in its early years reflected traditional values in the sense of 'loyalty' to the state; but was also somewhat radical, given that women were not yet allowed to formally participate as citizens in politics (indeed the BSA resisted the idea that the GSUSA should be involved in the first world war effort). Finally, the GSUSA did not add an additional sentence to their 'promise' as the BSA had done (the sentence that required boys to be 'physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight'). These two

decisions suggest, perhaps an important difference as to how gender is perceived in early 20th century America. While the GSUSA decided that girls did not need to be specifically reminded, through their promise of the need to obey particular moral strictures, the BSA seemed more concerned that boys, without this admonition, might easily wander from the straight and narrow.

The Decline of the GSUSA and the Civil Rights Generation

By the 1970's, the GSUSA, like the BSA was experiencing significant declines, as the new generation rejected many of its traditional tenets. If the GSUSA stated its purpose was to inspire girls 'with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service that they may become happy and resourceful citizens', (Lipsitz, 2005: 174) it should not surprise us, as protests against the Vietnam War and conscription grew, young people would question this conceptualization of an uncritical loyalty to country, traditionally understood. Also, like the BSA, the GSUSA's military style of uniforms, dating back to Baden-Powell's original South African scouting inspiration, further distanced the GSUSA from a younger generation.

In addition, the GSUSA faced a new generation of girls and women who, under the influence of second wave feminism, questioned the traditional feminine norms of Girl Scouting reflected in the duty to be always 'cheerful' and 'obedient' (GSUSA laws), and badges that rewarded feminine virtues and domestic skills. In an article written in the *Washington Post* in 1984, the GSUSA saw these issues as key to their own decline:

> Like the leaders of the Boy Scouts and other youth organizations whose
>
> memberships suffered comparable declines, Girl Scout organizers point to rapid
>
> and dramatic demographic and social changes to explain the drop. 'The whole

society was in turmoil,' says Frances Hesselbein, national executive director of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. As the children of the baby boom became adults…many women and girls who had grown up on the antiwar and women's movement found the old image of the cheerful, obedient, uniformed girl less than inspiring. Like other youth organizations, GSUSA seemed to have lost touch with the times. (Kastor, 1984: B5)[12]

While it is clear that the decline in both organizations in the 1970's was largely due to the changing values of a new generation, the question remains: what will the long-term impact of these social and cultural changes be? We turn, therefore to consider, the changing patterns of membership in light of the challenge of the civil rights generation to both organizations and the response of each.

Divergence in Membership (1985-2006)

Between 1985 and 2006 the date suggest that membership diverges quite dramatically. While the Boy Scouts (11-17) plateau at around 1 million from 1985 until the end of the 1990's, they decline again to around 900,000 members between 2000 and 2006 (10% drop). (Chart 3) The younger scouts (Cub Scouts, Tiger Scouts and Webelos Scouts) - who can now be compared since the category does not expand during this time period - decline even further from 2.18 million in 1999 to 1.7 in 2006 (13.5% drop). (Chart 4)

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[12] Kastor, 1984, B5.

Chart 4: Cub Scouts (Grades 1-5) 1999-2006
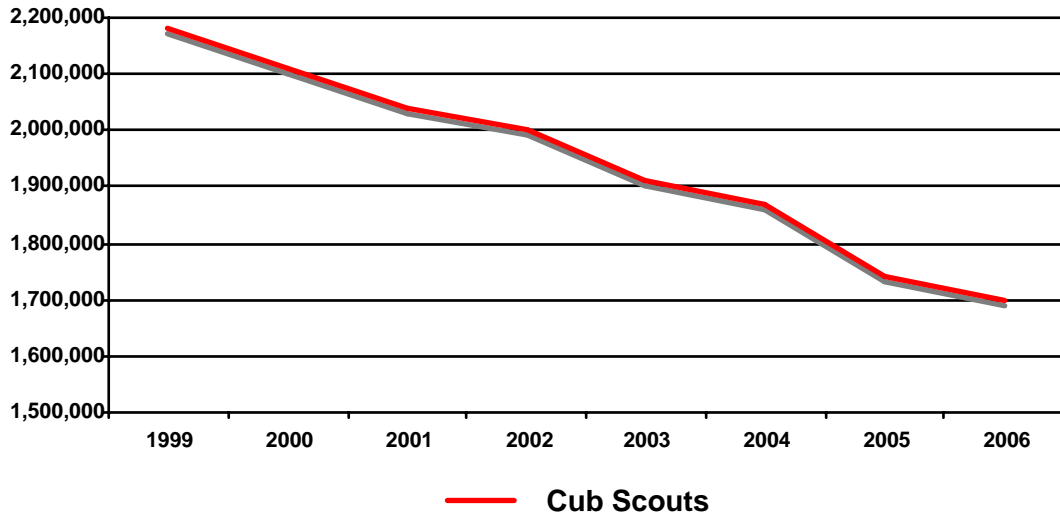
The decline in the BSA in the last decade may be even more dramatic than these figures suggest, because there are cases, currently under investigation, in which local Boy Scout councils have allegedly inflated numbers. Eleven Texas counties, for example, have admitted to inflating numbers since 2000.[13] The Greater Alabama Boy Scout

Chart 4: GSUSA Membership (1960-2003)
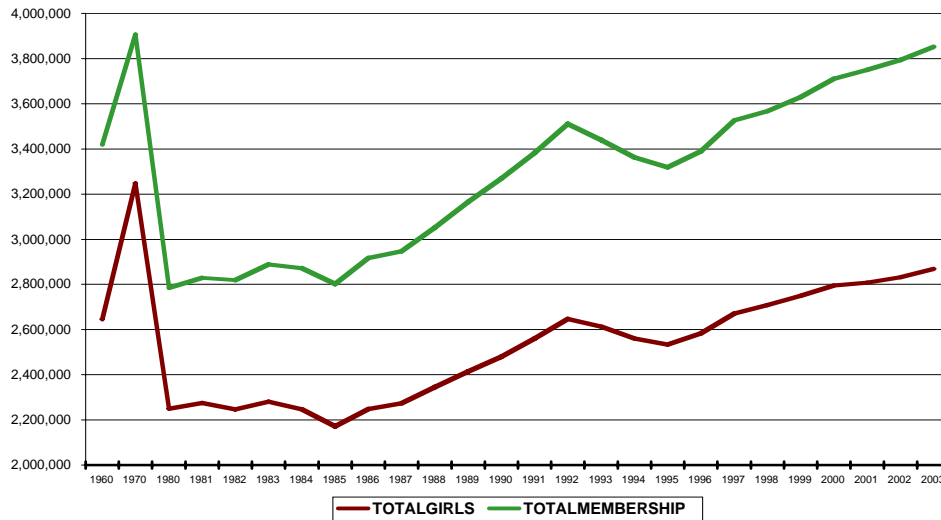
Council is also being investigated by the FBI as to whether they too had 'padded their membership rolls'.[14]An internal audit revealed that the numbers were inflated by more than 13,000 memberships over three years.[15][16] Whatever the real figures are, the percentage decline in youth members in the BSA is at least 12% over six years and likely much more, possibly as much as 23%. The Girl Scouts, on the other hand, grew after 1985, reaching close to their largest membership ever in 2003 (Chart 5).

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[13] Todd Bensman, 'Scout Exec Admits Rolls Falsified – Official signed Rosters Under Orders, Lawyer Says'. *The Dallas Morning News,* May 24, 2000.

[14] *New York Times*. 'National Briefing: South: Alabama: Inquiry Into Scouts' Rolls. January 26, 2005.

[15] 'Scouting Group Inflated Roster, Inquiry Shows', *New York Times*, Associated Press, June 4, 2006.

[16] According to the scouting organization, BSA-discrimination.org, the overall decline in membership in traditional scouting has been much steeper in the last decade than the BSA's official figures suggest. They claim the real decline in traditional scouting is 23.5% between 1998 and 2006; and that the Cub Scouts were at their lowest number of members since 1954 in 2005, even with the age category expansion in the 1980's.BSA-discrimination.org: www.bsa-discrimination.org/html/bsa_membership.html (accessed March, 08)

The GSUSA's total membership increased from 2.8 to 3.85 million (38%) during this period, (girl membership from 2.1 million to 2.8 and the adult volunteers from 600 thousand to 900 thousand). Thus, if you compare charts 3 and 5, there is a clearly contrasting picture of growth (Girl Scouts) and decline (Boy Scouts). Thus we come to our second question: Why should there be such a dramatic divergence in membership?

Responding to the Civil Rights Generation and Beyond

The BSA, in response to the precipitous decline in membership, tried in the 1970's to make itself more in 'tune with the times', by dropping the duty 'to be square' in the Cub Scouts promise, by removing the word 'boy' so the organization became known as Scouting USA (a title which later changed back to Boy Scouts of America), by replacing the traditional commitment to outdoor activities with a new emphasis on 'urban survival', in order to attract more inner city youth (particularly racial minorities). Despite these measures, however, membership continued to decline.

Those opposed to the changes introduced by the BSA National Council in the 1970's argued that it had accelerated the membership decline rather than stemming it. MacDonald comments: 'Traditional scoutmasters left the movement in droves. Scouting executives realized that running after America's convulsive cultural changes was a losing game'. (2000) Hans Ziegler likewise argues: 'With its attempt at a new modern look and initial rejection of select Boy Scout traditions, Boy Scout membership dropped drastically by the late 1970s.' (Ziegler, 34) It follows, from this perspective, that in order to renew

membership what was necessary was to go back to traditional scouting – this was the argument that won the day.

Zieger concludes once traditional scouting was revived in the late 1980's and 90's, the membership crisis stabilized: 'After coming to grips with reality, Scout executives decide to stick with the popular, traditional Scouting program…Within a short period of time, Boy Scout membership has stabilized.' (35) But while this explanation might explain why membership stabilized during the 1990's (but not why the numbers remain much lower than previous decades) it definitely cannot explain why the BSA declined significantly from 1998 until the present.

What happened to the BSA between 1998 and 2006 that would explain the declining numbers as described above? The answer, I believe lies in the decision of the BSA executive to wholly reject the civil rights generation and return to defend a closely interwoven traditional and narrow notion of masculinity and God from perceived 21st century threats (homosexuality and atheism) as it had done at the time of its birth a century before. It uses the exact same oath and law as its last line of defense. Thus, for most of the past two decades, the BSA has defended itself in a series of court challenges over whether it can exclude gay boys/men or atheists from their membership. What characterized the BSA's response to these two 'cultural' challenges, from 1985 onwards, was both a rigidly exclusionary policy towards both groups of Scouts (rooted in the Boy Scout 'Oath' and 'Law') and a top-down hierarchical enforcement policy which required *all* local councils to follow in lock-step. There was to be no variation or grass roots decision making on such issues – the policy was unequivocal and universal as far as the national council were concerned. Thus, as we examine each of these issues in more

detail, it seems as if the Boy Scouts' foundational identity in Britain as an organization that defended a certain kind of muscular masculinity intertwined with both God and country against various threatening forces that could unravel it all, reasserts itself a century later in America.

The issue of homosexuality in the BSA emerged in 1980 when Tim Curran applied to be an Assistant Scout Master but was refused based on his sexual orientation. Curran sued the BSA arguing that the policy violated the Unruh Civil Rights Act of 1959 and the case wound its way through the California court system. A second case involving a Scoutmaster, James Dale began in 1990, when the Monmouth Council of the Boy Scouts of America sent a letter to Dale informing him that they had revoked his registration based upon his sexual orientation. The BSA in both cases defended their right to exclude homosexuals based on the principle that they were a private organization whose freedom of expression and religion as articulated in the 'oath' and 'law' would be violated if gay boys or men were allowed to be members.

An internal memorandum from the National Director of Relationships/ Marketing in 1991 articulates the executive's position with respect to homosexuality:

> We believe that homosexual conduct is inconsistent with the requirements in the Scout Oath that a Scout be morally straight and in the Scout Law that a Scout be clean in word and deed, and that homosexuals do not provide a desirable role model for Scouts. Because of these beliefs, the Boy Scouts of America does not

accept homosexuals as members or as leaders, whether in volunteer or

professional capacities. [17]

Thus it is the obligation to be 'morally straight', the sentence added by the American Boy Scout organization to the original British oath that is critical here and returns us to the idea that, unlike the British Boy Scouts who tended to rely on strict 'obedience' to maintain order and authority, the American BSA believed that 'social order' was dependent on *men* obeying specific moral strictures, in this case, to be heterosexual. Thus the morally straight stricture represents the American puritan sensibility by which only certain sexual orientations (heterosexual) are deemed to be 'moral' and the deeply libertarian sensibility that if individuals do not follow these strictures absolutely, somehow Scouting itself will come unraveled.

The second line of defense (the BSA's reference to the scout's obligation to be 'clean') is perhaps even more disturbing, given that Baden-Powell added this to the original laws in 1911, and conjoined it in the law to the obligation to avoid 'doing anything dirty'. There is an implicit association, therefore, in the BSA's arguments that homosexuals, or homosexuality is somehow 'dirty'. The ascription of 'dirt' to certain groups of people has had a long and very ugly history. For example, in the vignettes described above, Baden-Powell uses the word 'clean' to define the British empire's mission with respect to the indigenous people of America implying a stereotypical and racist image of 'dirty Indians'. Such dehumanizing language can be found across a broad spectrum of people rooted in religious, racial or cultural differences.

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[17] (Internal Memorandum of the Boy Scouts of America, June 24, 1991 to Regional Directors, Area Directors, Scout Executives and Division Directors from J. Carey Keane, National Director of Relationships/Marketing) http://www.bsa-discrimination.org/html/bsa_gay_policy.html#1991

For example, Driedger and Mezoff, conclude in their study of Winnipeg schools that the most common negative expression experienced by Jewish students (about half) was the aphorism 'dirty Jew'. (Driedger and Mezoff, 1981:14) Similarly John Hofman shows in his article that 'dirty Arabs' is a term used in Israel against Arab youth. Finally, Rudi Colloredo-Mansfield analyzes what he calls 'hygenic racism' in Ecuador, in which the state becomes 'preoccupied with the pernicious stereotypes of 'dirty Indians''. (1998: 185) This contemporary reference brings us back to both Baden-Powell himself in his imperial vignette and to the 21st century arguments made by the BSA against homosexual men. By using the word 'clean' to defend their right to exclude gay men and boys from participation in the Boy Scouts, the BSA go beyond simply making an argument rooted in religious belief to partaking in a long tradition of discriminatory, hate-based language.

Atheists posed a second legal challenge for the organization. In 1985, Paul Trout of Charlottesville, Virginnia was told that he 'should be expelled from the Scouts because he doesn't believe in God'. Again the BSA pointed to the Scout Oath and Law, the need to be 'loyal to God' in the oath and to be 'reverent' in the law. Two more cases emerged in the 1990's (Mark Walsh of Chicago and two nine year old twins, Michael and William Randall of Anaheim, California). All of these cases ended up in lawsuits before their relevant state courts.

The *New York Times* suggested at the time, that the strong position taken by the Scouts was the result of the Mormon and Catholic churches being the largest and fourth largest sponsors of the organization respectively. But Jay Mechling (2001) suggests, referring to the early founders of the Scouts, most particularly James West, that the true answer to the muscular defense of 'reverence' lies not in money but in 'the historical

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connection between Christianity and an aggressive version of masculinity'. He argues that this became more pronounced in America in the post-world war two period, as religion became more entangled with national identity (as evidenced by the change in the national motto from 'e pluribus unum' to 'In God we Trust' at the height of the McCarthy era). The BSA from the 1950's to 80's increasingly defined themselves in religious terms as they continued to see themselves as an organization that defended God and country from what was perceived to be the greatest threat at that time, the 'Godless communists'. It was this Cold War marriage of religion and national identity that was carried into the debates that emerged in the 1990's even as the USSR disintegrated.

The immediate trigger for the BSA's reaction, however, was likely the so-called 'culture wars' in America itself between as James Hunter (1991, 1994) famously describes it one group of Americans whose identity was inextricably tied to an external immutable transcendent authority versus another group who was equally intertwined with a belief in secular humanism and 'progress'. Not surprisingly, given their history, the BSA easily fell into the former camp and could not compromise on the atheist challenge any more than the homosexual challenge – both were threats to the very meaning of what it was to be an American citizen and a real man, from the perspective of the BSA national council. Again, it is the intertwining of masculinity, God and country that makes changes within the BSA so profoundly difficult. Mechling concludes: 'if religion, masculinity, and citizenship are as tangled as the rhetoric of the Boy Scouts…make them…in which white males feel like the beleagured class, then it makes sense that the men running the Boy Scouts see the atheists…as agents of an assault upon masculinity.' Thus, the BSA,

was feeling as defensive about masculinity, God and country at the turn of the 21st century as James West had done a century earlier.

In February 2002, the BSA executive at the annual meeting of the National Council issued their own resolution reaffirming their exclusionary position towards both atheists and homosexuals from which 'local councils' *will not* deviate:

> The BSA reaffirmed its view that an avowed homosexual cannot serve as a role model for the traditional moral values espoused in the Scout Oath and Law and that these values cannot be subject to local option choices. In affirming its existing standards of leadership, the board also agreed that duty to God is not a mere ideal for those choosing to associate with the Boy Scouts of America; it is an obligation, which has defined good character throughout the BSA's 92-year history.

Thus, once again, the rigidly hierarchical organization that both Baden-Powell and West envisioned for the Boy Scouts is reinforced and articulated in these documents. Rather than allowing a degree of local democratic decision making in such cases, the BSA make clear that each council is completely 'subject' to national policy.

Thus, having flirted with the possibility of change, the BSA ultimately became by the 1990's an organization that stood for one defining principle: it will not change in response to society's evolving moral values because to do so would be to give in to the very threats that define its identity in the first place. There is perhaps, no better metaphor for what the BSA stands for in America at the beginning of the 21st century than the image of 'bedrock' as articulated in the 'Bedrock of Scouting Values' speech in 2001. Bedrock is not only something that cannot change over time but it is something that

anchors every single thing built on its foundation. Put simply, bedrock suggests that the BSA has a unitary conception of itself that closely weaves together a specific understanding of masculinity, God and country that must remain the same across time and space. The oath and law provide the essence of this identity as well as the last line of defense against any perceived threats from the so called cultural wars.

The GSUSA provide a very different picture of organizational values and practices (as well as membership) over the same time period (1985-2006). In an article in the *National Review,* Kathryn Lopez argues 'The Girl Scouts of America have avoided the beleaguered status of the Boy Scouts only because the organization has surrendered to exactly the cultural forces the Boy Scouts are resisting.' (2000:30) Lopez is critical of this evolution, charging the Girl Scouts with 'going PC' and creating 'shock troops' for 'an ongoing feminist revolution'. The GSUSA's decision to be more inclusive and change with the times reflects their different foundations and history from that of the Boy Scouts. The GSUSA, throughout its history, needed to create its own identity from what were often contradictory values or goals.

Unlike the BSA therefore, when faced with similar challenges, the GSUSA from the 1970's onwards was flexible, responding positively and changing nearly every dimension of its organization, including the wording of its promise and law, the meaning of a fundamental word like 'God', the badges it awarded, the uniforms it gave to Girl Scouts, even its famous cookies. Unlike the BSA on the two issues discussed above, the GSUSA implemented a policy of non-discrimination with respect to both lesbians and atheists. The first significant change occurred in 1972 when the GSUSA replaced the duty 'to be loyal' in their laws with 'I will do my best to be honest and fair'. This shift

reflects a new emphasis on individuals choosing for themselves what morality means rather than being 'loyal' to an existing set of laws or authorities. This distinction is significant in light of the civil rights generation's questioning of an uncritical loyalty to the state.[18] Loyalty was dropped in order to 'encourage girls to examine and clarify ethical concepts for themselves'. (Hunter, 2000:73) The shift where women were to critically reflect on their obligations as citizens became the new working definition of 'citizenship'. Thus, the dropping of the word 'loyalty' was important for it suggested that real citizenship meant loyalty to one's country should be questioned in particular circumstances, 'laws' were not cemented in 'bedrock values' but could change with time.

The duty to be 'clean in thought, word and deed' (a phrase originally coined by Baden Powell and used by the BSA to defend their exclusion of gay men and boys as discussed) was replaced at the same time with 'I will do my best to show respect for myself and others through my words and actions'. (Zeiger, 159) Once again there is an emphasis on the individual and a shift towards the idea of tolerance for *others*, which implies a generalized principle of respect for difference, but also respect 'for *myself*' that reflects a new emphasis, in the wake of feminism, to explicitly support girls' self esteem.

Indeed, in the 1980's the GSUSA supplemented the idea of 'respect for myself' with a new program that focused on developing self awareness and one's potential. Perhaps most striking about this new program is the shifting meaning of 'values' – a conception so very different from the 'bedrock values' in the BSA. The goal of this program was the 'development of values' by the girl (again the emphasis was not on existing values but how to develop one's one moral compass). And again this is coupled

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[18] In the 1929 GSUSA Handbook, loyalty was defined in terms of being 'true to her Country, city or village where she is a citizen'.

with an explicit recognition of the need to respect values different from one's own. 'Differences in values do not necessarily mean that certain ones are better or worse than others they are just different. The ability to understand such differences and to relate them to what you feel and believe in is a part of becoming aware of yourself and others'.

Both of these new emphases, women's equality *and* cultural diversity are developed in many different ways as the GSUSA evolves over the last three decades. In 1970, Betty Friedan, the first president of the National Organization of Women, was appointed to the national board of the Girl Scouts and remained there until 1982. During this time, the Girl Scouts changed their uniforms, introduced new badges that challenged traditional gender roles, forged relationships with Planned Parenthood and emphasized the empowerment of girls and their equality with boys. The emphasis on independence and careers continued in the GSUSA into the 1980's and 90's.

For example, in 1996, the Girl Scouts launched the *Girl Sports* initiative, encouraging girls and adults to host sports and fitness events in their local communities. In 1999, 2300 sporting events were held with 100,000 participants. By 2000 this had grown to 5000 events. The general emphasis on female empowerment, fitness and strength even had an impact on those famous Girl Scout cookies:

> On the newly designed boxes, consumers will see Girl Scouts playing high adventure sports, exploring careers as aviators, firefighters, broadcast journalists and veternianrians. The message displayed on each box reads, 'You'd be surprised what a Girl Scout cookie can build: strong values, strong minds, strong bodies, strong spirits, strong friendships, strong skills, strong leadership, strong community.' (Girl Scouts, 2001)

Respect for cultural diversity also continued in the 1980's and 1990's for both substantive reasons and in order to increase membership. In the mid 1980s, GSUSA adopted a national initiative on pluralism, emphasizing the mission of developing all girls by serving previously underserved ethnic and class populations. The initiative was successful, with a tripling of minority membership by 1989. (Weisinger and Salipante, 2005:35

The decision to make the organization more inclusive created challenges for some core precepts. For example, in the 1990's, 'Muslim and atheist Scouts balked at reciting the Girl Scouts promise'. (Tyre, 2001: 51) The GSUSA responded, unlike the BSA, by allowing the maximum flexibility possible in defining what 'God' means and therefore allowing girls to replace it with any other word when taking the Girl Scouts' promise. Thus, in every version since 1992, an asterisk appears beside the word 'God' in the Promise with an explanation that reads: 'The word "God" can be interpreted in a number of ways, depending on one's spiritual beliefs. When reciting the Girl Scout Promise, it is okay to replace the word "God" with whatever word your spiritual beliefs dictate.'[19] Thus, while the Boy Scouts were expelling those who were unwilling to declare a belief in God, the Girl Scouts simply changed the meaning of the word 'God' in the oath so as to recognize and include both Muslim girls who want to declare their allegiance to Allah and agnostics/atheists who can replace God with a word that better suits their beliefs and identity. As Neil MacFarquhar writes in the *New York Times,* fifteen years later these changes have meant that 'to Muslim Girls, Scouts Offer a Chance to Fit In'. (2007)

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[19] http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/promise_law/

The GSUSA has moved even beyond the liberal idea of tolerance and non-discrimination to embrace what is called in political theory, 'multicultural' citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995). This has taken two forms. First, the GSUSA has engaged in a concerted effort at affirmative action programs by changing basic aspects of the organization that were inconsistent with the culture of some ethnic minorities. Second, they allowed troops to be defined by their local community so that adult volunteers were able to protect and preserve their cultural identities through the creation of new badges and particular practices. In both cases, the GSUSA demonstrates both enormous flexibility and the flourishing of local democracy with respect to key elements in its organization.

The multicultural affirmative action dimension of the GSUSA really emerged after Marsha Johnson Evans was appointed as executive director in 1998. As a former recruiter for the navy, 'she was the mother of the 12-12-5 affirmative action policy, a mandate to make the Navy look more like America – 12% African American, 12% Hispanic and 5% Asian/Pacific.' (Lopez, 2000) In 2001, the GSUSA launched a program entitled 'For every girl, everywhere', emphasizing a commitment to greater diversification. The executive wanted to increase its membership amongst ethnic minorities, particularly Hispanic Americans (which were only 6.6% of Girl Scout membership compared to 17% of the general population in 1998).

What is fascinating about this particular initiative were the various means used to achieve increased diversity. Unlike the BSA who prided themselves on allowing no deviation in relation to their oath and laws since their inception and very little flexibility to local councils to define their own practices and values, the GSUSA were willing to

adapt virtually every aspect of the organization to create a more multicultural

organization and allow local councils to decide on various dimensions of Scouting that

would suit that particular local community. Thus, the Girl 'Scouts' were not sold as a

package to the Hispanic-American population, rather the GSUSA executive analyzed

how their ways of doing business could be altered to better reflect the cultural milieu.

The answer, again in contrast to the top-down hierarchical nature of the BSA, was to

create greater control at the local level in order to allow them to appeal to the community.

As Marty Evans, then national executive director of the Girl Scouts in 2002,

commented: 'It's a grass roots enterprise, and the grass is different in every location.

(Taylro, 2002:19) Examples of modifications including changing the green colored

military uniforms, because to a 'Hispanic mother, they may stir up memories of…US

immigration officials' (Taylor, 2002:19) The GSUSA also looked at ways in which Latin

American traditions could be absorbed into the Scouting mainstream. On April 24, 2001,

Girl Scouts across America participated in a national observance of El Dia de los Ninos

(The Day of the Children) based on a traditional Latin American celebration. The Girl

Scouts also created a 'cultural awareness training program' that focused on relationships

within a multicultural community. The idea wasn't simply to translate the existing

formula of scouting into Spanish but rather to transform it into something that

encompassed the culture as a whole. As Varel Hudson, the market specialist who helped

the Girl Scouts on this campaign, commented: 'It's all part of…being "in-culture" rather

than being simply "in-language"' (Taylor, 2002:19) The Girl Scouts also began hosting

an annual National Latina Conference in 2000, whose object was 'to celebrate Latino

culture, promote community leadership and encourage inclusiveness' and launched a

Spanish language web-site in 2004. Kathy Cloninger, current CEO of the Girl Scouts, comments: 'Our number one priority at Girl Scouts of the USA is a full and ongoing commitment to diversity and serving every girl in every community'.[20]

The Girl Scouts provide (unlike the BSA) in their Annual Reports a breakdown of their membership based on 'race/ethnicity'. This allows them not only to set targets for creating a membership that is reflective of a diverse American population but more importantly, to measure the degree to which they have truly become multicultural by quantifying (publicly) the increase (or decrease) amongst historically under-represented groups. Membership of cultural minorities in the GSUSA has grown significantly in response to these changes and is measured in these annual surveys. For example, in 2000, the number of Hispanic American girls increased by 10.3% over the previous year. In 2003, the growth over the previous year was 13.6% and between 2003 and 2007, the membership increased a further 17%.

Another example of multiculturalism is found amongst the Girl Scouts of Minneapolis, where the local Girl Scouts Council after surveying its declining membership established 'special outreach coordinators for various minorities' most particularly to the local Muslim community. The parents' key concern was their Muslim faith and culture would be undermined. As a result, the local council sought ways to ensure that Islamic traditions became central to their activities:

Troop leaders win over parents by explaining that various activities incorporate

Muslim traditions. In Minneapolis, for instance, Ms Hakeem helped develop the

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[20] 'Girl Scouts of the USA Launches Spanish-Language Web Site', Press Release Girl Scouts of the USA, May 6, 2004. http://www.girlscouts.org/news/news_releases/2004/spanish_website.asp

Khadija Club, named for the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad, which exposes older girls to the history of prominent Muslim women.[21]

New badges were created to reward Scouts who could memorize the Koran's last verse and for studying Ramadan traditions. The result was the creation of ten Muslim troops with 280 girls in Minneapolis over the last five years.

Finally, the GSUSA, like the BSA, faced the issue of homosexuality in relation to its membership. While the Boy Scouts chose, as described above, to exclude all gay men and boys from their organization based on their understanding of the 'law' and 'oath', the Girl Scouts took a different approach. In February 1998, the GSUSA issued a news release reaffirming a non-discriminatory policy with respect to sexual orientation. At the same time they made it clear that the GSUSA did not 'endorse' any lifestyle nor recruit lesbians as a group to be scout leaders:

> The Girl Scout organization does not discriminate, but we do not endorse any particular lifestyle and we do not recruit lesbians as a group. We have firm standards relating to appropriate conduct…These are private matters for girls and their families to address. Girl Scout volunteers and staff must at all times serve as appropriate role models for girls.[22]

This statement caused some concerns within the lesbian community – although it endorsed the principle of non-discrimination, it also seemed to imply that to be a lesbian was a 'lifestyle choice' and suggested that lesbianism was a purely 'private' matter.

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[21] Neil MacFarquhar, 'To Muslim Girls, Scouts offer a Chance to Fit In' *New York Times,* November 28, 2007. www.nytimes.com/2007/11/28/us/28girlscout.html

[22] http://www.bsa-discrimination.org/html/gsusa-gay-media.html

The GSUSA was different from the BSA in a second important way with respect to the issue of homosexuality. Rather than seeing themselves as setting a national policy that must be followed by every single local council, the GSUSA executive allowed local councils to decide for themselves whether to include lesbian girls/women in their organization. Some argued that such a policy 'sidesteps the issue', a kind of 'Junior league "don's ask, don't tell"' (Tyre, 2001:51), that could still result in a lesbian counselor being fired. Others, including the leadership of the Girl Scouts, viewed this policy as fundamentally democratic in that it recognized a diversity of views but left it up to the local community to decide. 'Christie Ach [spokeswoman for the Girl Scouts USA] says that in a grass roots organization…the "norms of each community" must determine whether gays can be excluded'. (Tyre, 2001, 51) At the same time, the national leadership was supportive of resources that reflected and embraced diverse kinds of families, including same-sex couples. (Berkowitz, 2001; Lopez, 2000)

Conclusions:

Thus, while both the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts witnessed significant declines from 1970 to 1985, in the last two decades the membership patterns diverged significantly as discussed– the GSUSA peaking in membership in 2003 and the BSA continuing to decline over the same period. I have argued that the decline in membership in both organizations in the 1970's is consistent with an overall decline in *traditional* organizations during this historical period rather than a 'collapse' in civil society more broadly, as Putnam has argued. Moreover, the decline in membership in Scouting, like other traditional organizations, is caused not so much by the passing of an older 'civic generation' who simply participated more (as Putnam has argued) as the emergence of a

younger 'civil rights generation' challenging the existing norms of American society including those governing traditional organizations.

To the extent that both the GSUSA and the BSA were founded (as our historical analysis has demonstrated) on an intersecting set of core principles that wove together conventional gender roles (masculine and feminine), uncritical loyalty to one's country, obedience to particular traditional moral strictures and a quasi-military sensibility, it should not surprise us that both organizations would find themselves at odds with a generation of young people who questioned military service, automatic loyalty to a state asserting itself around the globe, traditional gender roles that undermined claims to sexual equality and duty to age-old strictures rather than accepting responsibility to develop one's own moral compass.

Understanding the decline in both the GSUSA and BSA in this way actually creates a new perspective on the normative implications of such decreasing membership. For while Putnam and others see decline in organizations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts as wholly negative from a 'social capital' perspective, seen from the perspective of equal rights and inclusive justice, such decline is a positive development in the longer term. Ultimately, if the collective decision making of this generation (as they vote with their feet) forced both organizations to rethink their basic tenets in light of larger claims emerging out of civil rights' and second wave feminists' demands, and the outcome, as is the case with the GSUSA, is a more inclusive organization that continues to grow, than the short term decline of the 1970's is, in the longer term, a good thing.

This leads us directly into drawing some conclusions about the causes for the divergence between these two organizations in the 1980's and beyond. I have argued that

each of these organizations have grown or declined in accordance with the degree to which it responded to the normative challenges posed by the civil rights generation - that is either embracing or rejecting the new principles of sexual equality, multiculturalism, critical self-reflection and the inclusion of all, regardless of religious belief or 'lifestyle'. The GSUSA, as I have enumerated in many different ways, changed almost every aspect of its organization, from the central promise and laws, to its uniform, badges, and various policies. It embraced the principle of gender equality in various ways in its programs and policies and implemented a non-discriminatory policy towards both lesbians and atheists. When respect to ethnic minorities, the GSUSA actually went beyond the liberal principle of trying to *include* individuals within existing tenets to the *recognition* of the need to create spaces for difference. Thus, the GSUSA sought out new and innovative ways to, in the words of political philosopher Charles Taylor, *recognize difference*; where specific Girl Scout troops were created to develop girls' character in a way that protects and preserves distinct ethno-cultures. Examples include all-Muslim troops in Minnesota who work towards badges that reward learning about the Koran or Ramadan as well as 'in-culture' changes to uniforms and troop practices to make local councils reflective of the values of Hispanic families. At the heart of the new GSUSA is a commitment to both democracy (allowing local councils flexibility in determining what scouting means in a given community) and 'multicultural citizenship' as Will Kymlicka has called it, through which cultural differences are embraced and preserved. Finally, in trying to make its organization more reflective of an increasingly diverse America, GSUSA has not simply paid lip service to the cause, but made itself both transparent and accountable, by providing, in its Annual Reports, a yearly breakdown of membership along racial/ethnic

lines so that whatever success or failure they may have with respect to cultural diversity can be measured and through which they can be held accountable.

The BSA on the other hand, after initially making changes in response to the civil rights generation in the 1970's, rebounded back to its traditional norms in the 1980's and 90's– asserting in even stronger tones, the constancy of the oath and laws against any proposed changes, enforcing specific moral strictures on its individual members, including a particular definition of the duty to be 'clean' and 'reverent', excluding groups who do not abide by these rules and resisting any moves towards a more democratic organization by insisting that such rules must be followed by all troops or face expulsion by the BSA executive. Tracking membership, both generally and with respect to diversity, in the BSA, unlike the GSUSA, is also problematic. Changing categories, inflated rolls, and the failure to provide information in Annual Reports, including any breakdown on racial/ethnic lines, means measuring and holding the BSA accountable more difficult.

The simple lesson that can be taken from this analysis is that traditional organizations must take seriously the fundamental challenges posed by the civil rights' generation and the generations that followed and consider developing new policies and directions in their organizations in accordance with society's evolving norms. It also means that they should keep track of membership growth and decline in an open and transparent manner including the degree to which the organizations are reflective of the diversity in society more broadly. The GSUSA's willingness to both change and record the results of these changes in terms of membership has been key to its success. If the BSA and other traditional organizations want to do the same, they must consider similar

changes and allow themselves to be publicly accountable to the larger society within which they operate. This is a fundamentally important lesson that my analysis both supports and endorses.

There is however, a more complicated lesson to be learned that involves the very identity of the organizations themselves and not just their aggregate number of members. It will not be as easy for the BSA to change as it was for the GSUSA given the origins, identity and evolution of each organization. The GSUSA from its inception saw itself as a self-contradictory even paradoxical organization that sought to both defend and challenge the existing order. When it chose to change it shifted emphasis from the former dimension of its identity to the latter. The BSA, on the other hand, has understood itself to be (particularly at the turn of last century and the beginning of this century) in a deeply defensive mode in which it must defend a narrowly defined understanding of 'morality', 'masculinity' and 'God' from a variety of perceived threats. The BSA is a unity that must ward off the danger of 'diversity' that exists outside of its organization. My more complicated message to the BSA would be that I recognize how difficult the task is, given its self-identity as bedrock. But the reality is that the diversity it fears *already* exists *within* its own organization and *always has.*   Thus there is not and never has been a singular definition of masculinity within the Boy Scouts, regardless of what the National office might say in its various memoranda; there was and is a diversity of boy; some of whom have faith and other who do not; there will be various conceptions of the meaning of 'masculinity', of what being 'morally straight' means; of what duty to country entails. Moreover, the very things that the BSA seeks to defend are both stronger and more diverse than they allow. Faith will not unravel if atheists; masculinity will not

suddenly wash away if gay boys/men join the BSA. As tough as it might be for the BSA

to shed its unitary identity, ultimately, its time for the Boy Scouts to recognize the reality

of its own identity and allow its members to truly reflect back to the nation, the diversity

of what it says its defending.

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