

From...*The Atlantic*.

America's **Social Infrastructure** Is Falling Apart - The Atlantic

Worry Less About Crumbling Roads, More About Crumbling Libraries.

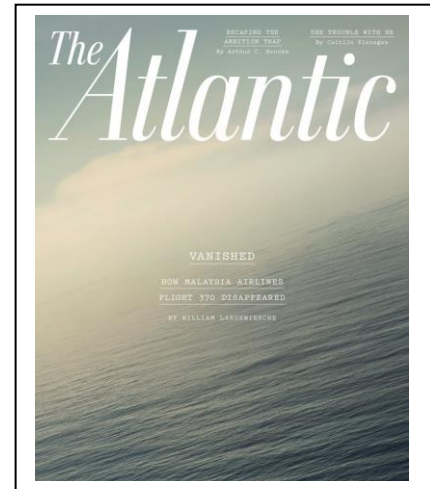
America's social infrastructure is falling apart, and it's hurting democracy.

Sep 20, 2018

[Eric Klinenberg](#)

Professor of sociology at New York University

The ASCE does not grade our “social infrastructure.” If it did, the scores would be equally shameful. For decades, we’ve neglected the shared spaces that shape our interactions. The consequences of that neglect may be less visible than crumbling bridges and ports, but they’re no less dire.



Social infrastructure is not “social capital”—the concept commonly used to measure people’s relationships and networks—but the physical places that allow bonds to develop. When social infrastructure is robust, it fosters contact, mutual support, and collaboration among friends and neighbors; when degraded, it inhibits social activity, leaving families and individuals to fend for themselves. People forge ties in places that have healthy social infrastructures—not necessarily because they set out to build community, but because when people engage in sustained, recurrent interaction, particularly while doing things they enjoy, relationships—even across ethnic or political lines—inevitably grow.

Read more... <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/09/worry-less-about-crumbling-roads-more-about-crumbling-libraries/570721/>