

# [A 200 word comment on each artical](https://assignbuster.com/a-200-word-comment-on-each-artical/)

[Sociology](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/sociology/)

number Putnam, Robert D. “ Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” Journal of Democracy 6. 1 (1995): 65–78. Print.
Robert Putnam’s article talks about the decreasing civic engagement of American. Putnam says that previous researches have discovered that social bonds are very important in the United States because it has economic consequences for the individual. Such social bonds are like physical and human capital, it can be a used as a “ tool” to enhance an individual’s productivity. If an individual is well connected socially, he is more able to find better job placements, better educational opportunities, among others. This is the reason why social bonds are also referred to as social capital, more aptly defined as “[a feature] of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1).
In his article, Putnam recounts various data to show the decreasing social engagement in the United States. He talks about membership in clubs and religious organizations and voter turnout. Most striking of all figures he presented is that of the increase in the number of solo bowlers. He says that league bowling has decreased but at least 3% of Americans go bowling alone. Aside from the impact of solo bowling on the income of bowling lanes, solo bowling could also mean the increasing alienation among members of the society. Bowling games are typically rowdy, and will require a different kind of connection in order for people to enjoy each other’s company. When individuals go bowling alone, it could mean that they are no longer able to create such intimate bonds with other individuals, which in turn, could indicate the kind of relationships being made in the society today.
Tonnies, Ferdinand. “ Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.” Community and Society. Ed. Charles P. Loomis. The Michigan State University Press, 1957. 33–35. Print.
Ferdinand Tonnies’ article provides an insight as to why civic engagement has fallen in the United States in recent years. Tonnies made a point of defining the Gemeinschaft (community) from the Gesellschaft (society), or in economic terms, the relationships formed in rural and urban areas.
For Tonnies, the relationships in the Gemeinschaft are based on mutual understanding and a “ unity of being”. Sometimes, the unity is created by blood (kinship), other times it is created by the common ownership of land (neighborhood). But the most important kind of relationship are those formed with a unity of the mind, as indicated by the presence of deities and sacred places. Tonnies says that Gemeinschaft is an organic connection with another human being, and it becomes even more established with norms, folklore, and language. Gemeinschaft is therefor often found in rural life, where individuals are typically related by blood, or they have developed friendships that equal blood relations. Tonnies says that as life becomes more urban, relationships between individuals transition from mutual understanding to mutual benefit. In the urban areas, people no longer do favors if they will not get anything in return. Everything is now based on “ possible and offered services” (Tonnies 2), and is therefore unreal. It is impersonal, and alienating because no real relationships are formed.
One can already see that the increasing urbanization in the States and the improving service delivery of government organizations may have contribute to the declining civic involvement of Americans. As more and more people busy themselves in earning income, they tend to have lesser time to communicate with their family, friends and neighbors and they lose touch of the Gemeinschaft which makes them human.
On one hand, it is advantageous because it tends to make social transactions more objective. But on the other hand, without the Gemeinschaft, it becomes harder to survive because a person has to strive on their own, without help from his or her relations.
References
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