

# Deterrence theory essay sample

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



Deterrence theory is a form of social control that is used to instill fear as a preventative measure to crime. This theory often makes an offender do a cost/benefits analysis prior to committing the crime: is doing this crime worth the time? An offender is “ put on notice” that if they are caught there are certain things that society and the constitution mandates will happen as a result of non-conformity. I believe Deterrence can work, my issue is the varying degrees of non-conformity and the varying degrees of punishment are not the same across the board. An example of conformity/non-conformity is individual state gun laws. In the state of Louisiana, you are able to carry a loaded gun in your vehicle as long as it is in plain, open view.

Once you cross the state line into Texas, the law changes, you cannot have a loaded weapon in your vehicle and the ammunition cannot be in the same space as the firearm. Unknowingly, many travelers become non-conformists as they travel from state to state. The laws were made to deter specific acts, however, many are ignorant of these laws, and they are the same laws that were made to protect them from events such as the Luby’ s Massacre in 1991. Often judges say “ ignorance of the law is not an excuse,” but because we don’t live in that specific state or county and we don’t plan on moving or being there we often times don’t care what the law is because we feel it doesn’t apply to us and that is where the Deterrence theory fails. How can you deter a criminal act if the citizens aren’t aware that it is a criminal act.

The primary goal of deterrence is to discourage members of society from committing criminal acts out of fear of punishment and we have used this theory and had some success with it over time. Applying it as a singular theory could work better if there were more uniformity of laws across cities,

counties, and states. It is hard to ban a substance in one city and in the one next to it, it is not banned or considered illegal; it makes enforcement and punishment hard especially if there is a discrepancy about which city you are physically in at the time of the crime. Media broadcasting is helping to instill fear of punishment into society as a whole by broadcasting live cases such as Casey Anthony and showing that police work has vastly improved from 10-20 years ago and it is easier to catch criminals than it was and more peers are willing to agree to the death penalty for the most heinous crimes in our society. It costs us no tax dollars for the media to air these cases and keep Deterrence Theory as one of the top philosophies of punishment.

#### SOURCES:

La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 14: 91, 14: 95; 14: 95. 1-8; 32: 292. 1, 40: 1379. 3; 40: 1752-1754; 40: 1781; 40: 1796; 40: 1799; 40: 1803; 40: 1810-1812

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