

# Forms of social control essay sample

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## Critical Thinking Assignment #1

The question posed for critical thinking #1 is aside from the threat of legal punishment, what controls people's behavior?

In our text book *Criminology The Core*, 4th Ed. by Larry Siegel, Beccaria argued that the threat of punishment controls crime. There have been many forms of social control ever since there has been a society. Small groups of people needed minimal amounts of social control. As people interacted with more people we developed a global world from a family and small community world, we have needed some social control over the person's who have little or no self control. The first place many people encounter social control is within the confines of their family or extended family. After the family, many in America have the neighborhood. Finally many people receive their social control from attending their church or synagogue. The society moved from an agricultural society to an urban society in the industrial revolution.

In the article, *The Social-Control Theory in American History: a Critique* by William A. Muraskin, author David Rothman's Book *Discovery of the Asylum*, Rothman maintains that the general American problem was how to approach the postcolonial world with its economic, social, cultural and political instability when Americans had been accustomed to a stable, ordered world and found the new situation deviant and threatening. To Rothman the period was one in which the desire and need for "social order" was paramount. But by "social order" he means the attempt of the general public to contain, cure, and prevent specific problems (crime, insanity, and pauperism) Muraskin (p561). This thought and use of the poor to shoulder the bad jobs

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and menial labor is represented in many utopian society's where the elite are at the top and others are lower than the top because they did not know as much about being a land owner, or what was expected of them within the context of their families.

The elite and rich have been in charge for many years. Many of the customs, traditions and expectations had been passed down through the family to the younger generation. Many of the theologians had much to say about how crime, punishment and rehabilitation were to be carried out in their society. In our textbook Beccaria believed in utilitarianism.

The concept of utilitarianism: In their behavior choices, people want to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. Crimes occur when the potential Pleasure and reward from illegal acts outweigh the likely pains of Punishment... Beccaria's famous theorem was that in order for punishment to be effective it must be public, prompt, necessary, the least possible in the given circumstances, proportionate, and dictated by law. Siegel (p. 9) Many with a social orientation look at poverty, socialization, and the neighborhood that our families, criminals and deviants live in and point to the external forces at work in a person's life as to explain the lack of social control among our communities at the present time.

The church, our schools and the family play a different role today than they did 50, 100 or 200 years ago. Many Americans... judged their society with eighteenth-century criteria in mind. As a result, they defined as corrupting the fluidity and mobility that they saw. Thinking that an orderly society had to be a fixed on,... [they had to find a way to have a cohesive yet fluid

society]. Rothman (pp69-70). Both Siegel and Muraskin present many ways that there are other social controls besides the penal system to curtail society from doing what society has deemed wrong or unacceptable.

#### References

Muraskin, W. A., (1974) THE SOCIAL-CONTROL THEORY IN AMERICAN HISTORY: A CRITIQUE. (1976). *Journal of Social History*, 9(4), 559. Siegel, L. J. (2011). *Criminology The Core*. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning