



## Social Control and Forms of Societal Governance

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### ABSTRACT

Social control aids in achieving social stability because it forbids people from acting in ways that are against societal standards. They have been persuaded and inspired to behave according to societal norms and values. Study of social control focuses on the methods that society uses to keep social order and cohesion through patterns of pressure. These systems include various elements like shame, coercion, force, restraint, and persuasion and create and enforce a standard of conduct for members of a community. The main mechanism by which social order arises is the continuous process of socialization that each individual goes through. By means of this procedure, people are taught from infancy the social and behavioral norms that apply to their family, friends, community, and larger society. Socialization successfully regulates our participation in society by teaching us how to think and act in ways that are accepted. Social control may take two forms: informal or formal. Social management also includes how society is physically structured. For instance, paved roads and traffic lights should, in principle, control how people behave while operating motor vehicles. Although some drivers still do it, drivers are aware that they shouldn't run red signals or stop signs. Additionally, crosswalks and walkways generally control foot traffic. Despite the fact that jaywalking is reasonably common, pedestrians are aware of the dangers of doing so. Last but not least, the layout of places—like the aisles in food stores—determines how we navigate them. Many everyday occurrences or objects can be used as societal controls.

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### DEFINITION

According to Maciver and page, social control is the way in which the entire social order coheres and maintains itself how it operates as a whole as a changing equilibrium. There is another definition of social control by Pound, discussed later in the paper.

#### IMPORTANCE

Family, peers, and institutions like the state, religious groups, schools, and workplaces are just a few of the people and organizations that are used to exert social control.<sup>1</sup> The most important component of social control is the distraction strategy, which uses the technique of flooding the public with irrelevant information and constant distractions to divert attention away from significant issues and changes determined by political and economic elites. For society to survive, social solidarity is necessary. In terms of nature, ideas, attitudes, and interests, no two people are similar. Every person has a unique demeanor. The people are different from one another on a cultural level. Society is, in reality, a heterogeneous organization. Unrestricted freedom of action and behaviour for each person may lead to societal disorder. Social control is required for a smooth social existence. The objectives of social control are to promote unity, continuity, and conformity within a given group or community.<sup>2</sup>

#### BUILDING BLOCKS MANUFACTURING

Hobbes (2011), Rousseau (2003), and Beccaria (1963) are just a few examples of social philosophers who have made significant contributions to the growth of social control, a subfield of sociology. Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim, two sociology giants, can be credited as the modern originators of works on social control. An especially significant contribution to the study of social control and the upkeep of social order is Durkheim's 1947 work in his "The Rules of Sociological Method." The works laid the groundwork for a large portion of contemporary social-control theory. Another important addition to the field is Marx and Engels in their "Communist Manifesto" 1978, which pays particular attention to how class dominance serves as the foundation for

<sup>1</sup><https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199756384/obo-9780199756384-0048.xml#:~:text=Social%20control%20is%20the%20study,maintains%20> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.

<sup>2</sup> <https://revisesociology.com/2020/03/18/what-is-social-control/> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.



efforts at social control. While borrowing from these ancient writings, contemporary works also left their own mark.<sup>3</sup> Pound 1996 offers the most insightful analysis of social control from a sociological viewpoint. Pound provides fairly precise definition of social control as, 'a mechanism to ensure compliance with norms'.<sup>4</sup> as well as the methods and driving forces behind its implementation in his seminal book in the field, *Social Control through Law* (New Brunswick, NJ; London: Transaction, 2006). Rusche and Kirchheimer's 2007 article is another important one.<sup>5</sup> These texts demonstrate how structural factors, especially unemployment rates, influence the severity of punishment. Foucault 1977 has recently dominated the discussion about societal control.<sup>6</sup>

### Social Control Techniques

Social control techniques are all applied to socially acceptable images, behaviour, or concepts. It can be done by enforcing tangible penalties, associating unfavourable traits with rebellious people, or rewarding people who have avoided rebellious behaviour for an extended period of time. Social cohesion wouldn't exist without societal control. Social control enforces set norms on behaviour, bringing about uniformity in behaviour and fostering intergroup harmony. The family remains cohesive because all of its members act consistently and according to family values. There are so many differences between people's lifestyles that conflict between them is always a potential. This possibility has grown more likely in contemporary times as a result of how self-centered people have become. In order to safeguard social interests and meet basic requirements, social control is required. Social order would be destroyed if societal constraints were lifted and everyone was allowed to act however they would please to.

### Categories of Social Control

Depending on the time and societal context, society employs a variety of social control

mechanisms to achieve its goals. The group will determine what means are necessary to employ at what time and in what social circumstance. Magic and superstitious beliefs are sufficient in some primitive communities to exert control. In rural societies, however, old cultures, more, customs, traditions, and beliefs are sufficient to operate as societal pressures on individual behaviour. Radio, television, newspapers, schools, colleges, the police, etc., can all be used to enforce conformity in today's urban culture. In reality, societies have created a variety of tools, either consciously or unconsciously, to regulate the behaviour of their members.<sup>7</sup>

1. Formal Control: To maintain societal order, the state employs a variety of legal and legislative measures, as well as police, military, and administrative power. Similar to this, various associations and entities from the fields of politics, religion, business, culture, and other things also impose formal controls on how their members behave. On purpose, formal supervision is established. There are several rules established to make it particular. Associations and institutions make it very obvious that adhering to formal control or rules is necessary. Depending on the sort and extent of the violation, those who violate formal control face different penalties. The organisation that uses formal control might also establish a group of officials with the authority to enforce control, as is the case with states that have created the police, military, and other security forces. In short, every organisation, be it a state, bank, army, factory, or anything else, has its own standards that it uses to regulate member behaviour. All of these are formally in charge. In today's complex societies, where contact is largely impersonal, formal control is becoming necessary.<sup>8</sup> Formal control is exercised by the rules and regulations laid down in the constitution of a nation, by the enactment of new legislations and ethical procedures. While, the laws in the constitution stand binding on people, on the other hand, the ethical codes are not binding, yet are expected to be followed by a person of reasonable understanding forming a part of the society.

2. Informal Control: Informal control encompasses agents like rumours, slander, resentment, sympathy, justice, public opinion, folkways, mores, customs,

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/social-control-the-meaning-need-types-and-other-details/8533> Last Visited On 20.02.2023

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jstor.org> Last Visited On 20.02.2023

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.socialworkin.com/2021/09/What-is-social-control-concept-meaning.html> Last Visited On 20.02.2023

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.igntu.ac.in/eContent/BA-TribalStudies-02Sem-Dr.%20Kumkum%20Kasturi%20-Tribal%20Society.pdf> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.

<sup>7</sup> <https://helpfulprofessor.com/social-control-in-sociology-definition-types-examples/> Last Visited On 20.02.2023

<sup>8</sup> <https://byjus.com/question-answer/what-is-social-control-do-you-think-the-modes-of-social-control-in-different-spheres/> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.



faith, morality, and so forth. These were not deliberately made. Regarding their ancestry, nothing could be guaranteed. They emerge in their own manner, gaining currency and acceptance over time. With individuals and their practices, they establish strong roots. The offenders of informal control would not face any particular sanctions. Nevertheless, they are more efficient than formal supervision. Unlike with formal supervision, they don't need any additional personnel to be enforced. They lack the actual power to compel compliance with them. Therefore, they cannot be observed or violated without resulting in bodily harm. It is discovered that informal control is more influenced by religious belief, moral beliefs, public opinion, artistic standards, practices and a general state of enlightenment; which could include doctrines or observations of various sociologists and philosophers regarding the current state of society and governance accordingly.

### Social Control by Caste

A caste would often not accept prepared food from any other caste that is lower on the social scale than itself owing to the fear of becoming contaminated. Additionally, there were a number of linked taboos surrounding eating. The table etiquettes of different castes might also vary, for example, some might promote eating from their hands some might disregard it. The cooking taboo establishes who is allowed to prepare the food. The eating taboo may specify the mealtime routine to be followed. The higher castes maintained their purported ritual, spiritual, and racial purity by excluding the lower castes under the pretext of defilement. A touch from a lower caste man would contaminate or pollute a man from a higher caste, according to the concept of contamination. Even his shadow is thought to be sufficient to defile a man from a higher rank.<sup>9</sup>

### Theories of Social Control

#### THEORY 1

- It discusses the 4 states of living beings which are utilized in social control.

**1. Desire:** a motivation that directs a person towards immediate reward-related stimuli and starts as a visceral, subcortically mediated state of "wanting" (as described by Berridge, Robinson, and Aldridge, 2009).

**2. A objective of higher order:** An end state that is supported and is more cortically mediated, mainly

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.clearias.com/caste-system-in-india/>  
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cognitive, and drives instrumental psychological (cognitive, affective, and behavioural) activity. Higher-order goals, in contrast to desires, are frequently actively sought and linked to declarative expectations of long-term benefits.

**3. Control motivation:** The aspiration to control desire. As such, control motivation is determined by the self-control goal as well as additional factors that increase this aspiration.

**4. Control capacity:** All the potential nonmotivational cognitive resources a person can use to facilitate the control of temptation (eg, directed attention and inhibitory capacity).<sup>10</sup>

#### THEORY 2

The philosophical foundations of social control theory go back to Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes (2020) depicts early human existence as "nasty, poor, brutish and short" and as a "war of all against all" in *Leviathan*, his most well-known work.

According to him, crime is the sensible course of action in this natural condition of humanity. According to Hobbes' theory, rational individuals would prefer to submit to governmental power over anything else in order to protect their personal safety and property. Hobbes thought that this control originates from the states, in contrast to later theories of self-control. According to social control theory, the societal costs of crime—shame—are the most significant. By the 20th century, sociology had taken over as the field most commonly used to investigate crime.<sup>11</sup>

Sociologists like Roscoe Pound, completely dismissed Hobbes' viewpoint because they believed that human behaviour was determined rather than deliberate. To explain the breakdown of societal order they observed in immigrant communities and the slums of big cities, social disorganization theory began to take shape in the early decades of the 20th century. Sociologists thought that these high crime rates could be explained by the inability of communities, families, and schools to rein in residents' behaviour, enabling delinquency to thrive. As Hobbes argued that while crime is a natural

<sup>10</sup> [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Introduction\\_to\\_Sociology/Book%3A\\_Sociology\\_\(Boundless\)/07%3A\\_Deviance\\_Social\\_Control\\_and\\_Crime/7.02%3A\\_Social\\_Control/7.2A%3A\\_Social\\_Control\\_Theory](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Introduction_to_Sociology/Book%3A_Sociology_(Boundless)/07%3A_Deviance_Social_Control_and_Crime/7.02%3A_Social_Control/7.2A%3A_Social_Control_Theory) Last Visited On 20.02.2023.

<sup>11</sup> <https://helpfulprofessor.com/social-control-in-sociology-definition-types-examples/> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.



phenomenon, it cannot be controlled solely by the criminal justice system.

### THEORY 3

According to Travis Hirschi, criminal behaviour happens when a person's social bond is compromised. The strength of the ties that bind individuals to society socially determines how attached they are. Hirschi asserts that our shared social connections are formed by four social bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

This theory predicts that the "typical delinquent" will be young, unmarried, jobless, and most likely male. Contrarily, those who are employed and married are less inclined to commit crimes; similarly, those who participate in societal institutions are far less likely to make poor decisions.<sup>12</sup>

### ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Positive aspects of societal controls

This entails the ability to interact with followers more frequently as well as posting material more frequently. The advantages of societal control are numerous. Societies with strong societal authority tend to be more stable and orderly. Social constraints assist in preserving the status quo and limiting extreme change. They also encourage uniformity, which can result in more effective collaboration. Lastly, societal control can help shield weaker people from harm or exploitation.

The most obvious benefit of social controls is that they support societal stability and order. Social controls aid in preventing abnormal behaviour that might threaten peace by enticing people to adhere to social standards. Social controls are crucial in making sure that people comprehend what is expected of them and the repercussions of disobeying social norms. A feeling of certainty and stability, both of which are necessary for a functioning community, can be fostered by this clarity.<sup>13</sup>

Negative aspects of societal controls

The drawbacks of social controls: Censorship and banning have some drawbacks. One is that dissent and societal injustices can be suppressed using it. One more is that it might result in a conformist society where people are too frightened to express their true emotions. Lastly, societal controls can be used as an excuse for prejudice and oppression. Social controls have the drawback of encouraging a

feeling of compliance and conformity. They also permit unjustified prejudice. They could potentially stifle individualism and innovation, which is a drawback. This implies that there might be less space for innovation and new ideas if everyone follows the same norms. People may also begin to sense pressure or oppression when social controls become overly strict.

Additionally, they might believe that they lack independence or the freedom to articulate themselves, which can cause frustration or even anger. Social controls may also be abused by those in positions of authority who wish to advance their own goals or suppress dissent because they are dependent on peer pressure and public opinion. Last but not least, the drawback of social controls is that they depend on rigid enforcement and people's perceptions of what constitutes the standard rather than strong individual morality for restraint.<sup>14</sup>

### NEEDS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

1. To Maintain the Old Order: It is essential for every community or group to preserve its established social structure, which can only be done when its members act in accordance with it. Upholding the status quo is a key goal of societal control. Familia supports the achievement of this goal. The family's elderly members control the children's minds.<sup>15</sup>

The more senior family members decide who gets married. The elderly parents of the family also have an impact on other family members' behaviour, including in religion and other areas. Maintaining continuity and uniformity in society is essential, even though doing so in a society that is changing may impede social advancement.

2. To Regulate: In terms of attitudes, ideas, interests, and behaviour, no two males are the same. Even siblings who share the same parents do not necessarily share the same attitudes, routines, or hobbies. Men have different beliefs, practice different religions, dress differently, eat differently, and marry differently.

People's lifestyles vary so greatly from one another that conflicts between them are always a possibility. This possibility has grown more likely in contemporary times as a result of how self-centered people have become. In order to safeguard social interests and meet basic requirements, social control is required. Society would descend into a state of

<sup>12</sup> <https://study.com/learn/lesson/social-control-examples-types.html> Last Visited On 20.02.2023

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.coursehero.com/file/p6i4n88/Formal-social-control-has-several-pros-and-cons-which-are-matters-of-concern-to/> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2094936> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.sociologyguide.com/social-control/need-for-social-control.php> Last Visited On 22.02.2023.



jungle if social control were eliminated and everyone was allowed to act at their own discretion.

3. To Provide Social Sanction: Social control gives socially acceptable behaviour a social seal of approval. Numerous folkways, modes, and traditions are widely practiced in society. Everyone must adhere to them. Social control forces a person to follow the rules if they break one of the social standards. Social control thus gives societal norms legitimacy.

4. Checking for Cultural Maladjustment: New ideas, findings, and philosophies are constantly emerging in society. The person must modify his behaviour in response to societal changes. However, none of the people can adapt to the new circumstances. While some individuals advance, others stay conservative.<sup>16</sup> A person from the country may mistakenly adapt to the new cultural setting when he moves to the city because he encounters new cultural norms. He might frequent bars and spend nights in clubs as a slave to his passions. Social control is crucial for him to maintain during this time of change in his life in order to prevent him from turning bad. Today, societal control is more important in our nation than ever before.

## ANALYSIS

In a modern day society, education of social processes carries forward in individuals, the codes of behaviour in a society and enforces these commands in both the preachers and the listeners so that they could comply with the demands of a growing society. For instance, institutional knowledge and modernization led to introduction of LGBTQ rights in India and more previously, western influences during the colonial era in 1935, brought voting rights for women in India. The society was reluctant to accept these changes at large, initially, but the parts of the society who demanded such a change were firm with their demands, which shows that every society comes to a near equilibrium situation, goes through highs and lows and this goes around in a cycle.

In my opinion, formal method of social control is better because it will involve legal ways of governance and punishment. On the other hand, informal method might lead to punishments which can be immoral or illegal also.

## II. CONCLUSION

Social control is best managed through fear in a tribal society, whereas, in a developed modern-

<sup>16</sup> [https://tyonote.com/social\\_control/](https://tyonote.com/social_control/) Last Visited On 20.02.2023.

day society, education and moral values drive behaviour of people. Social control refers to methods used by a community to stop and punish norm-breaking behaviour. The chapter investigates the role of medicine and science in describing and dealing with deviant behaviour while highlighting Black's therapeutic social control. The criminal justice system's presumption that offenders act out of their own free will contrasts with the definition of various forms of deviance as an illness or medical issue, raising concerns about accountability for crime. Both good and negative effects may result from medical institutions working with other social control institutions to absolve criminal responsibility. The medicalization of deviance has caused some offenders to receive different censure and punishment, which has occasionally resulted in justification and purported backlash.<sup>17</sup>

Though social controls may have their pros, such as conformity and maintaining social order, they can also have cons. For instance, they can stifle creativity and individuality. Weighing the pros and cons of social controls is essential before implementing them in any system. Social controls affect individualism and must be done in a controlled way without affecting any individual.<sup>18</sup>

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337873997\\_Social\\_Control\\_Theory](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337873997_Social_Control_Theory) Last Visited On 20.02.2023.

<sup>18</sup> <https://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/chapter/7-1-social-control-and-the-relativity-of-deviance/> Last Visited On 20.02.2023.