

A Phenomenological Study of Theft Recidivism and Law Enforcement Strategies in Tulungagung, Indonesia

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Abstract

Theft recidivism remains a persistent global concern that reflects the complex interaction of socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors shaping criminal behavior across diverse societies. Similar to global trends observed in the United States, Europe, and Japan, recidivism in Indonesia demonstrates how structural inequality, limited rehabilitation, and weak reintegration frameworks perpetuate repeated offending. Despite these parallels, Indonesian studies have primarily focused on normative legal analyses, offering limited insight into offenders' lived experiences and socio-structural dynamics. Addressing this gap, the present study explores the phenomenology of theft recidivism within the jurisdiction of the Tulungagung Police Department through a qualitative approach using deductive analysis. The findings reveal that economic strain, social disconnection, and institutional shortcomings jointly sustain reoffending behavior. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory shows these factors interact across individual, interpersonal, institutional, community, and policy levels, forming an interdependent framework of recidivism. The Tulungagung Police have localized global best practices by integrating Social Control and Community Policing strategies—combining pre-emptive, preventive, restorative, and rehabilitative measures. Programs such as legal education, neighborhood patrols, restorative justice, and post-release empowerment reflect a shift from punitive deterrence to participatory crime prevention. Theoretically, this study contributes to global criminological discourse by contextualizing ecological and phenomenological insights; practically, it offers a localized, evidence-based model for sustainable desistance in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Theft Recidivism; Ecological Systems; Social Control; Criminology.*

Introduction

Legal development constitutes a fundamental responsibility of the state; however, its realization continues to encounter structural and institutional obstacles, particularly in efforts to enhance public legal awareness. Without such awareness, societal order risks deterioration as individual behaviors may



diverge from established legal norms. Law ideally serves as a principal instrument for regulating the dynamics of social life, yet in practice, law enforcement frequently falls short of public expectations. This condition manifests in the persistence of dishonest trials, inconsistencies among judicial officers, and exploitative legal practices, all collectively eroding public trust in the judiciary. Consequently, the legal system is increasingly perceived as detached from its intended role as a guarantor of justice in social relations. This disillusionment is evident in the rise of theft-related crimes, often linked to economic hardship, social inequality, peer influence, and adverse environmental conditions.¹

Theft cases in Indonesia vary from minor to major offenses and remain under intense public and institutional scrutiny as part of ongoing crime reduction efforts.² Recidivism—the repetition of criminal acts by previously convicted individuals—persists as a significant challenge in the national criminal justice system³, with data showing that reoffending rates remain high even after parole or conditional release, especially in property crimes such as theft and robbery.⁴ As Dufour (2022) emphasizes, reintegration after release represents a critical phase determining whether offenders desist from or return to crime. The broader discourse on “desistance from crime” highlights multiple explanatory frameworks,⁵ ranging from individual or agentic perspectives (e.g., age-crime curve, maturational reform, rational choice theory)⁶ to social and structural models (e.g., social learning, differential association, informal social control). An integrated approach that combines these perspectives offers the most holistic understanding of reoffending

¹ Hamdiah Hamdiah, “Analisis Unsur-Unsur Tindak Pidana Pencurian: Tinjauan Hukum,” *Jurnal Tahqiq : Jurnal Ilmiah Pemikiran Hukum Islam* 18, no. 1 (January 31, 2024): 98–108, <https://doi.org/10.61393/tahqiq.v18i1.216>.

² Giovanni Primakova et al., “Law Enforcement Of Higgs Domino Online Gambling Crimes,” *Social Sciences Journal* 1, no. 3 (May 5, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.70963/soc.v1i3.223>.

³ Jennifer S. Wong et al., “The Effects of Halfway Houses on Criminal Recidivism: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 69, no. 12 (September 20, 2025): 1781–1804, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X251327574>.

⁴ Anisa Bella Nurainin et al., “Tindak Pidana Pencurian Dalam Perspektif Hukum Pidana,” *Lentera Ilmu* 1, no. 1 (May 29, 2024): 75–85, <https://doi.org/10.59971/li.v1i1.36>.

⁵ Isabelle F.-Dufour, Stéphanie Chouinard-Thivierge, and Patrick Lussier, “Who Is Coming Back to Prison? Emerging Adulthood and the Challenges Associated with Desistance from Crime,” *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 49, no. 1 (January 2, 2025): 41–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2023.2286235>.

⁶ Denis Yukhnenko, Leen Farouki, and Seena Fazel, “Criminal Recidivism Rates Globally: A 6-Year Systematic Review Update,” *Journal of Criminal Justice* 88 (September 2023): 102115, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2023.102115>.

behavior.⁷ In this regard, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) provides a useful conceptual lens for examining how individual, interpersonal, institutional, community, and policy-level factors interact to shape reintegration outcomes,⁸ and influence the persistence or cessation of criminal activity.⁹

According to annual records from the Tulungagung District Court (2024), 307 criminal cases reached final judgment during the reporting year. Of these, 306 cases resulted in convictions, while only one case was released from prosecution, involving 359 defendants.¹⁰ The overwhelming prevalence of convictions illustrates a high reliance on custodial sentencing and reinforces the retributive character of Indonesia's criminal justice model. Moreover, the steady recurrence of theft cases each month suggests that recidivism in Tulungagung is not incidental but represents a systemic and socially embedded phenomenon. Seasonal fluctuations—such as pre-holiday economic pressures and rising living costs—may further influence these patterns, aligning with broader criminological findings on the correlation between economic strain and property crime.

Although numerous studies address recidivism, most Indonesian research remains normative in orientation, focusing on statutory interpretation and penal policy rather than the lived experiences of offenders. As Dufour (2022) emphasizes, community reintegration following release is a critical determinant of whether an individual successfully desists from crime. However, this process's phenomenological and socio-structural dimensions remain underexplored in the Indonesian context.¹¹

Internationally, several scholars have investigated the determinants of reoffending. Obatusin (2019) found that employer distrust and stigma toward ex-offenders are significant barriers to reintegration.¹² Oprüş (2021) linked

⁷ Mia Bird, Viet Nguyen, and Ryken Grattet, "Recidivism Outcomes Under a Shifting Continuum of Control," *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 48, no. 3 (June 19, 2023): 808–29, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-022-09686-5>.

⁸ Cayley Russell et al., "Applying the Socio-Ecological Model to Understand Community Reintegration Experiences among Individuals on Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) Released from Federal Incarceration in Ontario, Canada," *SSM - Qualitative Research in Health* 2 (December 2022): 100083, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2022.100083>.

⁹ Brandon Tregle, Rob Tillyer, and Michael Smith, "Hot Spots Policing: Assessing the Impact on Officer-Initiated Activity," *Police Quarterly*, January 30, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10986111251317475>.

¹⁰ Pengadilan Negeri Tulungagung, "Laporan Putusan Pengadilan Negeri Tulungagung Dalam Kasus Pencurian Tahun 2024," 2025.

¹¹ F.-Dufour, Chouinard-Thivierge, and Lussier, "Who Is Coming Back to Prison? Emerging Adulthood and the Challenges Associated with Desistance from Crime."

¹² Oluwasegun Obatusin and Debbie Ritter-Williams, "A Phenomenological Study of Employer Perspectives on Hiring Ex- Offenders," ed. Georgios Antonopoulos, *Cogent Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (January 14, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1571730>.

recidivism to dark personality traits, poor mentalization, and low social desirability.¹³ Mancino (2020) demonstrated that participation in employment-oriented correctional programs increased post-release employment and reduced reoffending.¹⁴ In Australia, Bower (2021) evaluated the EQUIPS modular intervention based on the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model, finding that program effectiveness depended on full completion rather than dosage intensity.¹⁵ In Japan, Okamura (2020) identified mental disorder and limited post-release care as predictors of reoffending,¹⁶ while in Spain, Giménez Fita (2021) highlighted traffic-related recidivism linked to substance abuse and unlicensed driving.¹⁷

Despite these valuable contributions, the Indonesian socio-legal setting remains underrepresented in global criminological discourse. There is a significant gap in understanding how social norms, moral perceptions, and reintegration barriers shape the phenomenology of recidivism within developing judicial systems such as Indonesia's.

To address these multidimensional issues, this study adopts Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which conceptualizes human behavior as the product of interactions across five interconnected levels: individual, interpersonal, institutional, community, and public policy. This framework allows for a holistic examination of how internal motivations and external environments converge to influence reoffending behavior. The framework provides analytical grounding to explore why existing preventive strategies and rehabilitative efforts have not sufficiently reduced recidivism rates.

This study is guided by the following research questions based on the above theoretical and empirical considerations. Firstly, what socio-economic,

¹³ Laura Opriş, Liliana Hurezan, and Laura Visu-Petra, "Reading the Mind in the Dark: Theory of Mind and Dark Personality as Predictors of Criminal Behavior and Recidivism," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 99 (July 2025): 102451, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2025.102451>.

¹⁴ M. Antonella Mancino, "Rehabilitating Futures: Assessing the Effects of Correctional Employment-Focused Programs on Recidivism and Employment," *European Economic Review* 173 (April 2025): 104954, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2025.104954>.

¹⁵ Marlee Bower et al., "The Efficacy of 'Modular Dosage' in Prison-Based Psychological Interventions to Reduce Recidivism: A State-Wide Naturalistic Study of Convicted People in Australian Prisons," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 95 (November 2024): 102294, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2024.102294>.

¹⁶ Marika Okamura, Takayuki Okada, and Yusuke Okumura, "Recidivism among Prisoners with Severe Mental Disorders," *Heliyon* 9, no. 6 (June 2023): e17007, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e17007>.

¹⁷ Elisa Giménez Fita, Antonio Carrasco García, and Cristina Escamilla Robla, "Recidivism as a Risk Factor in Road Crime: The Importance of Its Consideration in Re-Education and Reintegration Programmes," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (2025): 101609, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101609>.

psychological, and environmental factors contribute to theft recidivism within the jurisdiction of the Tulungagung Police? Secondly, how do local law enforcement strategies address and prevent repeat offending among theft recidivists?

The novelty of this research lies in its contextual exploration of theft recidivism within the Indonesian socio-legal environment, emphasizing the intersection of individual morality, social stigma, and institutional response. Unlike prior studies dominated by Western paradigms, this research integrates a phenomenological criminological approach with ecological systems analysis, thereby situating recidivism within local cultural and structural realities.

Methodology

This study employs a phenomenological approach with a descriptive qualitative method to understand the subjective experiences of theft recidivists within the jurisdiction of the Tulungagung Police.¹⁸ The phenomenological approach was chosen to explore the meaning¹⁹ behind repeated criminal behavior and to gain an in-depth understanding of the social, economic, and psychological factors that drive recidivism. The primary legal materials used include the Indonesian Penal Code (KUHP), specifically Articles 362, 363, and 365 concerning theft offenses, and official data from the Tulungagung Police on theft cases and recidivists. The secondary legal materials comprise criminology literature, textbooks, reputable international journals (Scopus/WoS) on recidivism, and reports from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on prisoner social reintegration.

Discussion

Data on Theft Crimes in the Jurisdiction of Tulungagung Police

To identify the causal factors behind theft recidivism in Tulungagung Regency and to determine the preventive measures, the author conducted research and obtained qualitative data from the Tulungagung District Police (Polres) and the Tulungagung District Correctional Institution. The data are presented as follows:

Table 2. Distribution of Theft Crime Cases²⁰

Year's	Types of Criminal Acts	Cases
2022	Theft with Violence (Article 365 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	40

¹⁸ Lexy J Moleong, "Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif . Remaja Rosdakarya," 2018.

¹⁹ Syafrida Hafni Sahir, *Metodologi Penelitian* (Bantul: KBM Indonesia, 2022).

²⁰ Polres Tulungagung, "Data Tindak Pidana Pencurian 2022-2024 Di Tulungagung," 2025.

	Aggravated Theft (Article 363 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	50
	Ordinary Theft (Article 362 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	45
	Motor Vehicle Theft (Article 362 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	60
	Motor Vehicle Theft (Article 363 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	-
Total		195
2023	Theft with Violence (Article 365 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	35
	Aggravated Theft (Article 363 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	52
	Ordinary Theft (Article 362 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	48
	Motor Vehicle Theft (Article 362 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	58
	Motor Vehicle Theft (Article 363 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	40
Total		233
2024	Theft with Violence (Article 365 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	50
	Aggravated Theft (Article 363 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	80
	Ordinary Theft (Article 362 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	70
	Motor Vehicle Theft (Article 362 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	60
	Motor Vehicle Theft (Article 363 of the Indonesian Penal Code)	46
Total		306

Data on theft cases in the jurisdiction of Tulungagung Police (Polres) for the 2022–2024 period show a significant increase, particularly in aggravated theft (Article 363 of the Indonesian Penal Code). In 2022, there were 195 cases, which increased to 233 cases in 2023, and sharply rose to 306 cases in 2024. The category with the highest growth rate was aggravated theft, which rose from 50 cases in 2022 to 80 cases in 2024 (an increase of 60%). This phenomenon indicates socio-economic dynamics driving increased theft cases committed in more complex and high-risk ways. Ordinary theft (Article 362 of the Penal Code) also increased from 45 cases in 2022 to 70 cases in 2024, while

motor vehicle theft remained relatively stable with a slight increase. Interestingly, theft with violence (Article 365 of the Penal Code) declined in 2023 but rose significantly again in 2024, reaching 50 cases. These data reveal a recurring pattern of recidivism, where some offenders who have previously served sentences reoffend, thereby reinforcing the relevance of a phenomenological study focusing on motives, triggering factors, and the effectiveness of preventive efforts by law enforcement authorities.

Causes of Recidivists Committing Theft Crimes

The findings of this study reveal that theft recidivism in Tulungagung is not simply a result of individual choice but rather the outcome of interacting socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors that reinforce one another in the post-release context. From a socio-economic perspective, financial instability and limited access to formal employment emerged as the strongest structural drivers of reoffending. Many ex-offenders face social stigma and institutional barriers that prevent their reintegration into the labor market, resulting in economic marginalization. The absence of sustainable livelihood opportunities creates a cycle of dependency and vulnerability that pushes them back toward criminal activity. These findings align with Obatusin's study, which demonstrates that employer distrust and negative public perceptions significantly restrict ex-offenders' employability, sustaining a structural path to reoffending.²¹

This study also found that the deterrent effect of criminal sanctions has not been fully optimal. Some respondents admitted that imprisonment did not bring about significant behavioral change, but instead expanded their criminal social network during their time in prison. Some recidivists exhibit compulsive or addictive tendencies toward criminal acts, which can be explained through the criminogenic needs perspective.²² This is worsened by the lack of psychological rehabilitation programs during incarceration.²³ The results of this study reinforce previous findings that individual factors do not solely cause recidivism but result from a complex interaction between personal, structural, and institutional factors. This discussion highlights the need for multi-level intervention strategies that combine preventive efforts (improving welfare and education), repressive measures (consistent law enforcement), and

²¹ Obatusin and Ritter-Williams, "A Phenomenological Study of Employer Perspectives on Hiring Ex- Offenders."

²² Rangga Adlaine Ginting et al., "Tinjauan Kriminologis Terhadap Narapidana Residivis Narkotika Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Perempuan Kelas Iib Batam," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 3, no. 1 (2024): 21–30, <https://www.journal.unrika.ac.id/index.php/JIH/article/view/6463>.

²³ Hamdiyah, "Analisis Unsur-Unsur Tindak Pidana Pencurian: Tinjauan Hukum."

rehabilitative programs (practical guidance and social reintegration).²⁴

From an environmental and social standpoint, the study found that community stigma, negative peer networks, and weak familial support serve as significant contextual catalysts for recidivism. Returning to criminogenic environments where former criminal associates dominate social ties normalizes deviant behavior and obstructs reintegration. This supports the propositions of Social Control Theory, suggesting that weak social bonds and a lack of normative attachment increase the probability of rule violation. The Tulungagung setting illustrates that when social networks fail to provide acceptance and legitimate support, the ex-offender's reintegration pathway collapses, making reoffending an adaptive response rather than an intentional choice.

The study found that economic factors are the leading cause of theft recidivism, as financial needs after release, unemployment or irregular work, and family pressures often become the dominant motivation. In addition to economic factors, the social environment also plays a significant role. The study identified that interaction with old criminal networks, lack of community support, and unstable family pressures exacerbate the risk of recidivism.²⁵ There is a tendency for offenders who return to environments that tolerate criminal activities to have a higher likelihood of re-offending. Theories of informal social control and differential association support this understanding: criminal behavior is learned through interaction within a social environment that enables or even supports criminal behavior.²⁶

From a psychological perspective, most recidivists exhibit low self-efficacy, impulsivity, and diminished moral reasoning shaped by prior criminal socialization. Feelings of alienation and hopelessness after release often manifest as cognitive dissonance between their intention to reform and their perceived inability to adapt to lawful life. Such internalized defeatism is consistent with Opris's argument that mentalization deficits and antisocial personality traits, particularly sadism and low empathy, are critical predictors of reoffending risk. In the context of Tulungagung, these psychological tendencies are further reinforced by a lack of psychological counseling or post-sentence rehabilitation services. Taken together, these factors demonstrate that

²⁴ Panagiota Bali et al., "Recidivism among Forensic Psychiatric Patients Undergoing Outpatient Treatment for Mental Health Disorders – A Meta-Analysis," *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 104 (January 2026): 102155, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2025.102155>.

²⁵ Akbar Anugrah Fantono, "Analisis Kriminologi Terhadap Residivis Anak Sebagai Pelaku Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 1, no. 4 (2023), <https://ojs.daarulhuda.or.id/index.php/Socius/article/view/23>.

²⁶ Widia Sari and Hana Farida, "Analisa Kriminologis Kejahatan Pencurian Berdasarkan Teori Differential Association," *Jurnal Panorama Hukum* 6, no. 2 (2021): 111–18, <https://ejournal.unikama.ac.id/index.php/jph/article/view/6084>.

theft recidivism is a multidimensional phenomenon sustained by socio-structural exclusion, psychological vulnerability, and environmental disconnection. Addressing recidivism, therefore, requires not only legal deterrence but also the construction of supportive ecosystems through economic empowerment programs, psychosocial rehabilitation, and community-based reintegration initiatives to disrupt the recurring cycle of crime.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains theft recidivism in Tulungagung as the outcome of dynamic interactions between individual, interpersonal, institutional, community, and policy environments. At the individual level, persistent socio-economic hardship—such as unemployment, low education, and unstable income—creates structural pressure that encourages repeat offending. Psychological factors, including low self-control, limited coping capacity, and internalized stigma from prior incarceration, further reinforce a deviant self-concept. These conditions reduce offenders' confidence in lawful reintegration and increase dependence on theft as a survival strategy.

At the interpersonal level, weak family ties and negative peer associations sustain cycles of reoffending. Many former offenders in Tulungagung return to the same social networks that initially facilitated criminal behavior. The absence of emotional and social support diminishes informal social control, while peer influence reinforces criminal norms. Without restorative family engagement or community mentorship, ex-offenders remain socially isolated and vulnerable to recidivism.

The institutional and community levels reveal systemic weaknesses in rehabilitation and reintegration. Correctional facilities focus primarily on punishment rather than skill development or psychological recovery, resulting in limited post-release employability. At the community level, economic inequality, seasonal financial pressures, and weak neighborhood cohesion normalize opportunistic crimes such as theft. These environmental stressors interact with institutional gaps to perpetuate a cycle in which released offenders find few legitimate alternatives to sustain their livelihoods.

The predominance of retributive justice over restorative or rehabilitative approaches at the policy level exacerbates the problem. National and local enforcement strategies emphasize deterrence through punishment but neglect social reintegration and post-release monitoring. The lack of coordinated policies linking police, correctional institutions, and social welfare agencies undermines long-term preventive efforts. Consequently, theft recidivism in Tulungagung should be understood as individual deviance and as the result of interconnected socio-economic, psychological, and structural factors operating across multiple ecological layers.

Police Efforts to Prevent Recidivism in Theft Crimes

Efforts to tackle recidivism and theft crimes in Tulungagung must be carried out massively and dynamically between law enforcement elements and the community. In addition, continuous and sustained guidance efforts by parents or families are needed to change attitudes, behavior, and ways of thinking in order to avoid recidivist forms of theft crime. These efforts to combat aggravated theft recidivism are intended to create awareness and alertness, and anticipate all forms of danger that may arise from recidivist theft crimes. Offenders are expected to be able to plan their future lives in a healthy, productive, creative, and beneficial way for themselves and their environment.

From the perspective of Community Policing Theory, the police in Tulungagung have strengthened cooperative relationships with local communities through neighborhood patrols, community-based information networks, and collaborative security forums. This strategy aligns with the concept of shared responsibility for crime prevention, emphasizing proactive engagement rather than reactive enforcement.

The pre-emptive approach is the earliest stage in crime prevention, focusing on forming legal awareness and strengthening moral values in society so that individuals are not encouraged to commit crimes. Based on interviews with the Community Development Unit (Binmas) of Tulungagung Police (2024), pre-emptive activities are carried out through legal counseling in schools, Islamic boarding schools, and villages, as well as the “Police RW” and “Police as Children’s Friends” programs that introduce the values of legal compliance from an early age. By increasing public understanding of the legal consequences of theft (Articles 362, 363, 365 of the Indonesian Criminal Code), potential offenders are expected to develop moral barriers against committing crimes. Pre-emptive activities also target high-risk groups such as ex-prisoners through special post-release counseling programs.

Through the lens of Socialization Theory, these preventive programs aim to recondition the cognitive and behavioral orientation of ex-offenders by integrating them back into prosocial environments. Socialization activities such as dialogues with former inmates, vocational workshops, and public education about legal awareness function as mechanisms of secondary socialization, reinforcing normative behavior and moral accountability.

The preventive approach focuses on reducing crime opportunities by improving security and surveillance. In the context of Tulungagung Police, preventive strategies are carried out through routine patrols in crime-prone areas, installation of public security banners, and the reactivation of night patrols (Siskamling) at the neighborhood level (RT/RW). This strategy is consistent with Situational Crime Prevention, which emphasizes reducing crime opportunities by increasing surveillance, decreasing potential gains for offenders, and raising the risk of being caught. The police conduct regular

visits (door-to-door system) to ex-prisoners who are at high risk of reoffending. This strategy has proven effective in building better communication relationships while preventing recidivists from re-engaging in crime. According to research, hotspot policing that targets high-risk areas and individuals can reduce crime rates significantly by 20–30% without increasing social tension.²⁷

Recent studies on Hotspot Policing by Weisburd strengthen this finding by showing that focused police presence in micro-locations with high crime concentration can significantly reduce repeat offending when combined with community partnership initiatives. Barak Ariel identifies three significant challenges in translating the concept of hotspot policing into practical policy: Ariel argues that these barriers are not merely technical but also structural, rooted in the bureaucratic culture of policing institutions that often resist innovation. To address these endemic issues, he proposes two strategic alternatives: first, establishing specialized hotspot policing units with specific training and mandates to focus on high-crime areas; and second, outsourcing the task of cooling down hotspots to non-police entities, such as community organizations or private security actors. These approaches could enhance the effectiveness of crime prevention by integrating institutional capacity with social participation within an evidence-based policing framework.²⁸

The Tulungagung model, though operating within resource limitations, mirrors these international best practices by localizing global strategies into a culturally grounded form of community policing. In summary, the Tulungagung Police's preventive strategies demonstrate a transition from purely repressive control to an integrated socio-structural crime prevention model, combining community empowerment, situational interventions, and restorative engagement. This hybrid approach not only reduces theft recidivism empirically but also fosters a sustainable framework of social reintegration rooted in trust, participation, and collective responsibility.

The repressive approach is expected to create a deterrent effect and signal that theft crimes will not be tolerated. However, literature shows that deterrence is not always effective if not accompanied by rehabilitation.²⁹

²⁷ Muhammad Fairuz Khansa Fawwaz and Eko Soponyono, "The Concept of Recidivism for Juvenile Criminal Offenders in Law Number 1 of 2023 on the Indonesian Criminal Code," *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 7, no. 07 (July 19, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v7-i07-71>.

²⁸ Barak Ariel, "Implementation Issues with Hot Spot Policing," *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 75 (December 2023): 100629, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcj.2023.100629>.

²⁹ Salhenover Laibahas, Rudepel Petrus Leo, and Rosalind Angel Fanggi, "Tinjauan Kriminologi Terhadap Residivis Kasus Pencurian Di Kota Kupang," *JURNAL HUKUM, POLITIK DAN ILMU SOSIAL* 3, no. 2 (June 2, 2024): 257–78, <https://doi.org/10.55606/jhpi.v3i2.3798>.

Therefore, Tulungagung Police also implement restorative justice for minor theft cases. This approach facilitates offenders, victims, and the community resolve cases peacefully while still considering justice for all parties. Restorative justice can reduce stigma against offenders and facilitate social reintegration, thereby lowering the risk of reoffending.³⁰

The rehabilitative approach is an important aspect in preventing long-term recidivism. Tulungagung Police collaborate with prisons, correctional centers, and the Social Service Agency to provide job skills training programs, psychological counseling, and business mentoring for ex-prisoners. According to Taxman in the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) theory, effective rehabilitation programs must be tailored to the offender's risk level, criminogenic needs, and individual responsivity.³¹ Cross-sector collaboration is also needed to ensure ex-prisoners have fair work opportunities or start businesses after release. Several villages in Tulungagung have begun adopting empowerment programs for ex-prisoners through Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) and job training. Such interventions play a role in breaking the cycle of re-criminalization by strengthening positive social ties. Studies show that social bonds such as marriage, stable employment, and healthy community relationships can be significant turning points in the desistance process from crime.³²

The rehabilitative approach constitutes an essential element in reducing long-term recidivism. In the jurisdiction of the Tulungagung Police, inter-agency collaboration has been initiated through formal and programmatic frameworks. According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the East Java Regional Police and the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (2022), local police must coordinate with correctional institutions and the Social Service Agency to reintegrate ex-offenders. Supporting this initiative, the Tulungagung Social Service Agency launched the Community Empowerment and Skill Development Program for Ex-Inmates in 2023, which includes vocational training, entrepreneurship mentoring, and psychosocial counseling. Within Taxman's Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) theoretical framework, such initiatives align rehabilitation programs with offenders' individual risk levels, criminogenic needs, and

³⁰ Zahra Zukhrufurrahmi Zephyr, Setya Wahyudi, and Dessi Perdani Yuris Puspita Sari, "Implementasi Diversi Pada Tindak Pidana Pencurian Yang Dilakukan Oleh Anak (Studi Di Polres Banyumas)," *Soedirman Law Review* 2, no. 1 (2020), <https://www.journal.fh.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/SLR/article/view/14/0>.

³¹ Faye S. Taxman and Lindsay Smith, "Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Classification Models: Still Evolving," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 59 (July 2021): 101459, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101459>.

³² Nathalia Gloria Angel Tarore, "Tinjauan Kriminologis Terhadap Residivis Tindak Pidana Pencurian," *Lex Privatum* 10, no. 5 (2022), <https://ejournal.unsrat.ac.id/index.php/lexprivatum/article/view/42850>.

responsiveness. Moreover, some Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in Tulungagung, particularly in Kauman and Ngunut sub-districts, have started employing ex-inmates through local work schemes, reinforcing their economic reintegration. These documented collaborations demonstrate that strengthening social bonds through structured rehabilitation reduces recidivism risk and contributes to community safety and cohesion.

Conclusion

Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, theft recidivism in Tulungagung can be understood as interacting socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors operating across multiple ecological layers. Economic deprivation, unemployment, and limited education at the individual level create structural strain that drives repeat offending. Weak family cohesion and deviant peer networks reduce informal social control, while punitive correctional systems provide minimal rehabilitation. At the community level, inequality, unstable income, and seasonal financial pressures normalize theft to survive. Policy frameworks still emphasize deterrence rather than reintegration, reinforcing a cycle of punishment and reoffending. This ecological perspective reveals that theft recidivism is not merely a product of individual choice but a systemic outcome of interdependent vulnerabilities embedded within personal, social, and institutional structures that shape human behavior in the Tulungagung context.

Addressing theft recidivism requires a comprehensive and collaborative strategy grounded in Social Control and Community Policing principles. The Tulungagung Police combine pre-emptive, preventive, and rehabilitative approaches emphasizing education, moral guidance, and active community participation. Legal counseling in schools and religious institutions builds early awareness, while neighborhood patrols and Siskamling reduce crime opportunities. Restorative justice and rehabilitation programs—implemented with correctional and social agencies under Taxman's Risk-Need-Responsivity framework—facilitate reintegration through job training, mentoring, and entrepreneurship. This integrated model strengthens social bonds, enhances public trust, and demonstrates a gradual shift from punitive deterrence to proactive, community-based crime prevention that empowers offenders to reintegrate productively into society.

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