

## ANALYSIS OF SOCIO - DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN INCREASING RECIDIVISM IN PEMATANG SIANTAR CLASS IIA PRISON



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### ABSTRACT

*This study analyzes the socio-demographic factors that influence the increase in recidivism at Pematang Siantar Class IIA Correctional Facility. Data shows an increase in the number of recidivist prisoners each year, with factors such as age, gender, education, and social environment playing an important role in the tendency of former prisoners to re-offend. This study uses qualitative methods through interviews and observations to identify the relationship between these socio-demographic factors. The results show that prisoners who are younger, male, lower education, and less supportive social environment are more vulnerable to becoming recidivists. This study recommends a rehabilitation program that focuses more on skill building, psychosocial support, and family and community involvement in supporting the reintegration of ex-prisoners.*

**Keywords:** Recidivism; Socio-Demographics; Prisons; Rehabilitation; Reintegration



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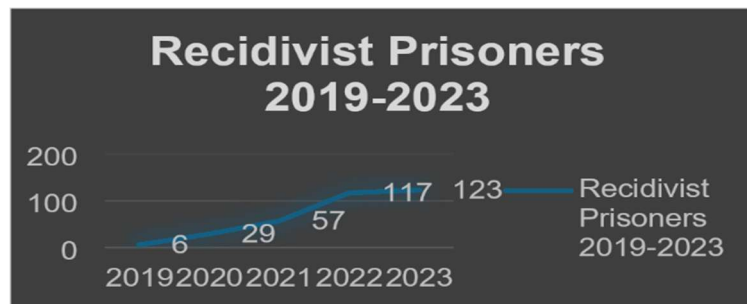
## INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who live in groups in society. According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), society is a unit of human life that interacts based on certain customs and is bound by a common identity. In society, individuals sometimes commit norm deviations, which are called crimes. Juridically, crime is behavior that violates criminal law (Saleh, 1983).

Crime disrupts the fabric of society, especially in terms of security, due to the lack of individual self-control. Criminality refers to unlawful acts that threaten public order. According to Abdulsyani (1987), criminality is an act that causes unrest in society, such as theft, persecution, and murder. Criminality is also influenced by the environment, social inequality, and psychological conditions.

Packer (1968) refers to criminal sanctions as a tool to enforce the law, and provide a deterrent effect on criminals. Criminal offenders who are convicted will become prisoners in correctional institutions (Lapas), where they are coached in accordance with Law No. 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections. This coaching includes personality and independence development, with the hope that after serving their sentence, they can lead a better life. However, not all offenders are deterred after serving their sentence. The phenomenon of recidivism, which is offenders who re-offend after being released, is a major challenge in the criminal justice system. Recidivism is a form of repetition of crime that shows the existence of internal and external factors that influence a person to return to the criminal world.

Indonesia has seen an increase in the number of recidivist prisoners in recent years. Data from the Directorate General of Corrections of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights shows an increase in the number of recidivists from 40% in 2020 to 45% in 2023. Every year, the number of recidivists continues to increase, adding to the complexity of problems in the correctional system. At Pematang Siantar Class IIA Correctional Facility, out of 1,691 prisoners, 123 are recidivists.



Source: SDP of Class IIA Prison Pematang Siantar, 2024

**Figure 1**  
**Recidivist Prisoners of Class IIA Pematang Siantar Prison**

The high recidivism rate indicates the lack of optimal rehabilitation and social reintegration programs in prisons. In addition, socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, education, employment, and living environment also play a role in the tendency of ex-prisoners to re-offend. Poor neighborhoods and high crime rates also encourage ex-prisoners to return to the world of crime.

Shaw and McKay's Cultural Transmission Theory emphasizes that the environment strongly influences criminal behavior. Economic inequality and poverty create frustration that drives individuals to commit illegal acts in order to survive. Data

from BPS Pematang Siantar City shows a decrease in the percentage of poor people from 8.63% in 2019 to 7.24% in 2023. However, this inequality remains a driving factor for crime.

Crime in Pematang Siantar City is dominated by theft, violence, and security disturbances, especially at night. Data from Pematang Siantar Police in 2023 recorded 1,185 cases of crime, with the majority of perpetrators coming from low education backgrounds. This shows that educational factors also play an important role in crime prevention.

**Table 1**  
**Recidivist Prisoners of Class IIA Pematang Siantar Correctional Facility by Gender**

No	Category	Recidivist	Grand Total
1	Male	268	1656
2	Female	4	35

Source: Processed by the author based on SDP of Class IIA Prison Pematang Siantar, February 2024

The gender of prisoners also influences a person's tendency to commit crimes. Research shows that biological, social and psychological factors between men and women influence criminal behavior and the likelihood of becoming a recidivist. For example, hormones in men are associated with higher aggression and impulsivity. Data from the Pematang Siantar Class IIA prison supports this: out of 272 recidivist prisoners, 268 were male and only 4 were female. Previous studies have shown that women's involvement in crime often occurs in more limited and different situations than men.

Based on the background, the author is interested to analyse the socio-demographic factors in increasing recidivism in Pematang Siantar Class IIA Prison. The problem formulations in this study are as follows: First, what are the sociodemographic factors that contribute to the increase in recidivist prisoners in Pematang Siantar Class IIA Prison? Second, are these sociodemographic factors interrelated and affect the increase in the number of recidivist prisoners in prison? In line with the formulation of the problem, this study aims to identify sociodemographic factors that contribute to the increase in recidivist prisoners in Pematang Siantar Class IIA Correctional Facility and analyze the relationship between these factors in influencing the increase in recidivism.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This research refers to several relevant previous studies to strengthen the theoretical framework and basic assumptions used. Permana (2019) in his research on the factors causing former prisoners to become recidivists at the Garut Class II B Correctional Facility found that economic factors and deviant associations were the main causes of recidivism. This result supports the same concept in this study, which also highlights socio-demographic factors such as economic conditions as one of the main causes of recidivism.

Accordingly, Islam and Goswami (2019), in their research, arrived at a conclusion that in Bangladesh it was poverty that is most closely associated with lack of education and psychological problems as major causes of recidivism. Their findings are in accordance with the current study, which further explores how a lack of education and social surroundings influence potential recidivism. The suggestions proposed by Islam and Goswami, such as rehabilitation programs, are related to the current study in regard to training concerning social control.

In another study by Panggayuh et al., (2022), motivations among recidivists at the Surakarta Detention Center were a result of economic status, environments, peers, and criminal habits. This research supports the basic hypothesis of the study since it focuses

on how individual self-control and social environment can influence recidivism. The findings support the application of social control theory in explaining the processes through which relapse occurs. Moreover, Mianita (2023) relies on Hirschi's social control theory to emphasize the role family and social networks play as agents of social control within Sukamiskin prison. In fact, Mianita has indicated in his work how the families are helpful to the inmates within the process of rehabilitation, improving thereby the relevance of the social control theory in this study.

The next study by Villanueva et al. (2019) examines recurrence among young adults based on sociodemographic factors as well as other risk factors. There, it was observed that certain demographic groups, such as adolescent males of low protective factor status, could be more vulnerable to a recurrence. Outcomes from these findings do seem to concur with the previous literature since such past studies also considered sociodemographic variables for influence on recurrence probabilities.

The current study addresses the research objectives through the use of social control theory and socio-geography. These two theories further frame, appropriately, the different impacts on criminal activities and recidivism rates. Social control theory was researched by Travis Hirschi in the year 1969. According to this theory, there is an interconnection between people's self-control ability and their relationships with society. The Social Control Theory stipulates that the elements of social bonds consist of emotional attachment, commitment to known goals, involvement in social activities, and participation in social activities. This paper examines how offenders' recidivism probability correlates with the strength of their social ties.

We also apply socio-demographic theory to explain how social and demographic factors like age, sex, education, and occupation contribute toward the probability of recidivism. Demographic studies repeatedly link an offender's age and sex with the likelihood of recidivism-the younger the age, the likelier it is for the offender to re-offend compared with older offenders-while males are more likely than females. Other factors that might contribute to criminal behavior include a lack of education, inability to find employment, and social surroundings that are less nurturing.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand social phenomena through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. This descriptive study design describes social events associated with recidivism among inmates at Pematang Siantar Class IIA Prison. Data sources include secondary data in the form of relevant documentation and primary data, such as interviews with recidivist inmates, prison staff, and inmate families. Techniques for gathering data include document analysis, inmate behavior observation, and in-depth interviews. Information was sorted, grouped, and organized in order to identify significant patterns pertinent to the study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Socio-demographic characteristics are one of the complex factors that make a prisoner prone to becoming a recidivist especially in Pematang Siantar Class IIA Prison. These factors greatly affect the behavior of the inmates as well as the level of recidivism likely to be witnessed once the prisoners are let out of the prison. The study found out that there are many sociodemographic factors that aggravate the case of increased recidivist imprisonment in Pematang Siantar Class IIA Correctional Facility. Variables such as 'age, gender, occupation, education level, living situation, and friends' pressure are some of the variables that have been discovered. Although it may seem that these factors are separate,

they work in unison to create situations that increase a person's potential to commit crimes again.

One example is the age of a person, it matters a lot when it comes to the chances of committing criminal activities again. Typically, younger prisoners tend to be more impulsive and impressionable to negative influences from their surroundings. Younger individuals are still uncomplicated, yet due to poor judgment, they can be easily swayed by bad crowds. Young offenders often find themselves in situations that make them commit crimes again due to their immature emotions and lack of good decision-making capabilities.

Besides age Gender is also an important factor in recurrence events. According to statistics from Pematang Siantar Class II Prison, the recidivism rate of male prisoners is significantly higher than that of female prisoners. This supports the hypothesis that men are more likely than women to commit crimes due to social and biological factors. This is because men are more impulsive and aggressive than women. They are therefore more likely to commit crimes. In addition to the increased stress that men face, Gender roles that position them as financially responsible parties also encourage them to find ways to meet their financial needs.

Economic status and employment are also important determinants of recidivism. Prisoners from families with low incomes or without stable jobs are more likely to re-offend. After being released from prison Prisoners are often left in poverty without the necessary skills or access to decent employment. This serves as a powerful incentive to offend the offender again. They often feel they have no choice but to relapse into criminal behavior as a result of economic hardship. This is especially true when reintegrating into society without adequate support. This emphasizes the importance of providing effective economic and social rehabilitation to ex-offenders. To reduce the risk of repeat offenses.

Aside from the age factor, gender has also become an important factor in the recidivism phenomena. From the data obtained, it can be observed that male prisoners have a significantly higher number of recidivism cases compared to female prisoners. This was expected and proved the hypothesis that because of societal and biological causes, men were more likely to commit crimes than women. Men are also more prone to crime than women because men are naturally more impulsive and more aggressive. Moreover, gender roles that place men in the position of economic responsibility increase the strain for males but at the same time push them to find ways of satisfying their economic needs, which includes committing crimes.

The economic standing and employment status prove to be a good predictor of recidivism. Inmates belonging to low-income families or without regular employment tend to commit crimes again and again. Many times, the jail inmates are released to lead a life of poverty sans relevant skills or access to good jobs that act as a huge motivating factor towards committing crimes once again. Many ex-offenders find themselves forced to go back to criminal activities because of the economic hardship they often have to endure, especially in cases where there is little or no support for their reintegration into society. This acts to underscore how very important it is that ex-offenders be given effective economic and social rehabilitation to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

Education attainment has also been a major determinant factor in recidivism. Individuals with low levels of education have higher chances of committing repeat offenses compared to inmates with high levels of education. Inmates with low levels of education find it hard to secure better jobs, which influences their financial security after release. Ex-offenders are bound to revert to criminal activities for survival when they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to compete in the labor market. Inmates,



therefore, must be afforded a better opportunity for education and skill acquisition. By this process, while serving their time in prison, their gradual integration into society is ensured with minimal recidivism.

Community is another critical factor contributing to recidivism. Inmates who are released from prison and live in highly criminalized communities are likely to commit crimes again. A social setting full of negative impacts, such as a community tolerant of criminal behavior or exposure to peers involved in criminal activities, contributes to prisoners being likely to commit crimes again. On the other hand, prisoners who receive intense social support from their families and the community seldom recidivate. This proves just how important the social milieu is in facilitating the convalescence of inmates.

The contributing role of peers in recidivism phenomena cannot be ruled out either. The urge to get back into deviant activities may find company and support from people who are in the same line of business. Inmates who have previously been involved with acquaintances who committed crimes are more likely to repeat similar mistakes. The ex-offenders often cannot resist their peers engaged in criminal activities, particularly when returned to the same old environment post-release. Inmates must establish positive and supportive social ties at the time of release from prison as a means of preventing recidivism.

Each of these sociodemographic factors tends to impact an individual's criminal tendency differently. For example, ignorance may deprive him or her of easy access to decent jobs, hence the strong risk of financial insecurity and social turmoil. This also applies to individuals who have a bad family background, and those having a history of violence or crime in their families as it may be carried on through them, hence their tendency to commit a crime. However, these factors do not occur as stand-alone entities but they are interactive and complementary in affecting human behavior.

This result of an association of these sociodemographic variables corresponds to the social control theory, which purports that people commit crimes more when there is less social control over an individual's life. A good example of such social control includes norms, beliefs, or laws that prevent one from breaking the law. Poor social constraints and conditions brought about by dysfunctional family relationships, lack of education, or strong financial burdens are more likely to lead to criminal activity. Sociodemographic features that cause a loss or deterioration in the level of societal control raise the chances of an offender repeating crimes, or becoming a recidivist.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The result of this research shows that sociodemographic variables are numerous and can be perceived as contributing to higher recidivism rates at Class IIA Penitentiary, Pematang Siantar. Among the major variables influencing prisoner behavior and the likelihood to commit crimes again after serving in prison, there is age, gender, economic status, employment, education, peer pressure, and social environment.

It defines that age will determine, because a young prisoner is impulsive and easily influenced by negative environments that surround him in the correctional facilities; hence, this increases his chances of reverting to crime. Besides, there is gender, since it was recorded that male recidivists outnumber female ones due to social and biological influences.

Other determinants of recidivism include economic factors and employment status. Most prisoners who come from low-income families or without stable employment normally engage in crime after release due to economic difficulties.

Similarly, the level of education determines recidivism, where prisoners with low education have a greater chance of reoffending due to a lack of relevant skills in the job market.

In this case, the social environment, such as communities that have high rates of criminal activities or friends that are also involved in such activities, becomes a factor that can only trigger recidivism. Of course, prisoners who receive less than enough social support from their family and the surrounding community to which they will return are very likely to recur to criminal activities.

These factors feed into one another and reinforce each other in ways that create a situation that does increase a person's potential to reoffend. Social control theory postulates that when social controls, in the forms of norms, beliefs, or laws guiding an individual's behavior, weaken-for example, due to dysfunctional family relationships, low education, or heavy economic burdens-an individual is more likely to become a recidivist. For this reason, effective economic and social rehabilitation of former prisoners will help reduce recidivism.

To address this, prisons need to develop rehabilitation programs that focus on improving skills and formal education, so that prisoners have useful skills when returning to society. In addition, psychosocial support should be strengthened through individual and group counseling, so that prisoners can overcome the social and economic pressures they face. It is also important to involve families in the development program, as well as educate the community to support the reintegration process of prisoners. Cooperation between prisons and private institutions, NGOs, and community organizations in providing job training and social assistance for ex-prisoners should also be improved. The implementation of these suggestions is expected to reduce recidivism rates and help prisoners reintegrate into society productively.

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