

PUBLICATION

The Causes of Recidivism in the Criminal Justice System and Why It Is Worth the Cost to Address Them

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It's not only a question of cost. It's also a question of sound social policy.

The question is: What are the goals, policies and values of the criminal justice system, are they the correct ones, and are the programs in place to see that they are actualized to their fullest potential?

There are four major schools of thought in criminal justice theory. The retributivist school, commonly summed up with the phrase "an eye for an eye," sees prisons as strictly penal, and uses punishment to restore "the moral order that has been breached by the original wrongful act." The second school, sees prison as a deterrent to criminal activity, and relies upon the utilitarian idea that future consequences are material to present decisions. The third, incapacitation, seeks to take away from the offender the power to do injury. Finally, there is the school of rehabilitation. This theory rejects the idea that the offender is inherently depraved, and seeks to study the motive which produced the offense and applies punishment which tends to weaken that motive.