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THEFT IN ZAMBIA : THE REASONS BEHIND THE CRIME

BY

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An Obligatory Essay Submitted to the School of Law of the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B)

SCHOOL OF LAW
UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
LUSAKA

OCTOBER, 1993
DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the ones I Love most.

To my mother and father who have supported and encouraged me in all my life endeavours and without whose Love I could never be what I am today.

To my sister Muzamba with whom I share all my confidences and who has spurred me on through all my trying experiences and academic trials.

To my two brothers Duku and Moono who have picked me up when I have fallen down.

To my three babies, my nieces Nina and little Dee and my nephew Duku Junior, the apples of my eye.

Finally this dissertation is dedicated to MORGAN MUNANSWI WALUBITA, whose Love has been everything to me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to show my appreciation to all who have been of help to me whilst putting together this dissertation. Especially to my Supervisor for his guidance and patience. To Ms. Grace Situmbeko and Rose Walubita who had the script typed for me, to Morgan for proof reading and technical assistance with my chart, to Superintendent Tembo and the Prisoners at Chimbokaila Remand Prison for their co-operation, to the other subjects of my interviews: Mr. Zulu, Mrs. Mbaluku, Sergent Banda, Mr. and Mrs. Nyirenda, Mrs. Susu, Ms. Mungo and the people at the town centre, not forgetting "Ba Joe".

Special thanks to my room-mate Sue for her encouragement during the long nights spent on my paper and to my friends Tsitsi and Charity for being there.

Thanks too go to Njunga for being a patient reference point throughout my essay and finally to my class-mates for keeping me on my toes.
INTRODUCTION

Why do people steal? This is a question that has plagued the mind of man through the ages. The answers to this question may provide the remedy to this disturbing phenomenon.

The objective of this paper is to make a contribution to the prevention and reduction of theft. It is hoped that discovering what makes criminals commit theft will enable law enforcement bodies to create an atmosphere which is less conducive to commission of theft. This could be done by negating the factors found to motivate crime in the Zambian set up.

The approach will be to critically examine theories of crime, which will be complimented by field research. Here will be a search for first-hand information and opinions from members of society directly involved with the crime of theft; the police, the judiciary, lawyers and loiterers, victims of theft and the thieves themselves. Upon application of textbook theories to the practical Zambian situation, a conclusion may be made on why thieves steal and more importantly, a contribution to crime prevention with suggestions to prevent or reduce this malady.

The chapters will be set as follows:
Chapter One: "Theories of crime" - this chapter will critically examine the various theories of crime as propounded by different writers. The pros and cons of these theories will be evaluated for eventual application to the Zambian situation.

Chapter two: "A Comparative Study of Theft on the Local and International Planes" - here a comparative study will be made of different environments and their relative conduciveness to theft. What factors make theft more common in one area than another?
Chapter Three: "Theft in Zambia: A Field Research". A survey will be conducted on a convicted thieves. Other people involved with theft such as law enforcement bodies and victims of theft will be interviewed as to their opinions on why people steal.

Chapter Four: "Conclusion and Recommendations" - in the concluding chapter, the theoretical aspect of motivation for theft will be related to the Zambian situation and finally a conclusion as to the reasons behind the crime of theft in Zambia shall be made and recommendations as to how the environment in Zambia may be made less conducive to theft shall be rendered.
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CHAPTER ONE

"THEORIES OF CRIME"

Theoretical criminology is the starting point in discovering why people steal. For this reason over the centuries there has been many theories propounded in the attempt to understand and combat the undesirable phenomenon of theft. In this Chapter the various theories of crime arising through the different epochs from the sixteenth century will be discussed briefly.

Old criminological theories are often pushed aside in favour of new ones, not that usually the older ones have been proven wrong. Some theories are conflicting and some complimentary.

People began to search the physical world for causes of law violation such as the environmental factors of geography and climate and after Darwin, in man himself. Excessive development of portions of the brain and body anomalies were announced as causes of crime/1. However, such biological explanations tend to fold under the pressure of critical examination as they are seen as mere attempts to dismiss criminals as victims of genetic mutation, a thesis that is in serious conflict with modern discovery and understanding of criminal behaviour. Later, crime was said to be a result of defective intelligence, a "bursting forth" of certain impulses which most civilised beings had learnt to restrain/2. The abnormality was regarded as being in the mind.

A question was posed as to whether or not criminals differ significantly from non-criminals in the incidence of mental abnormality related to crime. This was found not to be the case, by researchers/3 after world war one.
Law saw crime as an interplay between the evils of man, that is malice, lust and greed, and the force of state inflicted punishments. If penalties outweighed the gratification of crime, the would-be criminal would abide by the law. This is in line with what was later to be known as the hedonic theory of pleasure versus pain/4. This was the starting point of criminology as we know it today which is why it is also known as the classical school of criminology which will be discussed more fully in due course.

There are, in the present day, several schools of criminology. They began their development in the late sixteenth century. These schools are integrated theories of causation of crime. The different principle schools of criminology offer separate explanations of crime. These can broadly be divided into the classical school founded in 1775, the cartographic school from 1830, the socialist school coined in 1850, the typological school subdivided into the Lombrosian theories, the mental-testers theories and the psychiatric theory. The broadest, most diverse, modern and perhaps most flexible theory is the sociological school of criminology. Here are found inter alia Emile Durkheim’s theory of Anomie, Tarde’s laws of imitation and Sutherland’s differential association theory which portray criminal behaviour as normal learned behaviour and finally Guerry and Quetelet’s theory of crime, poverty and economic inequality. This is the theory which is perhaps the most relevant to causation of crime in Zambia and in particular theft. It is for this
reason that our first chapter shall lay the most emphasis on the theory of crime poverty and economic inequality. There is however one last school, which advocates the multiple factor theory that no scientific theory of criminal behaviour is possible.

It can be seen that the different theories of criminology were opinions formulated in the varying epochs in which they were written. The earliest of these was the classical school of criminology which developed in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century later spreading to the rest of Europe and to America. The classical school were advocates of hedonism. According to the psychology of hedonism, and bases his behaviour on the concept of "pleasure verses pain" the pleasure derived from certain actions may be balanced against the greater pain which the same action may cause. If the painful repercussions of an act will outweigh the pleasures gained from that act, the act is forfeited in favour of a more favourably balanced action. The individual was assumed to have a free will and base his life's decisions on hedonistic calculation alone.

Beccaria in 1764/5 proposed that all who violated a law should be given identical punishment, regardless of social status, sanity, age motive or any other considerations so that the rights of individuals be protected by treating all alike and that punishment should be known in advance for purposes of calculating the degree of pain or pleasure that would result from breaking each separate law. It was contended that penalties should be calculated to ensure that pains just exceeded pleasure to be
gained by violating a law. Beccaria felt punishment should be identical to all, but his contemporaries felt that children and lunatics be given leniency. This was simply because such individuals were unable to calculate pleasures and pains intelligently. The classic theory became the backbone of criminal penology as we know it today.

The classical theory emphasised free will as the sole motivation for crime in the final analysis. Positivistic scholars reacted to this and put forward a hypothesis of natural causation, which is accepted by subsequent criminological schools. The cartographic school is one such school. It is also called the geographic school and is akin to the more modern ecological theory. This school looked at crime distribution in different geographical and social areas. Quetelet and Guerry were at the pinnacle of research in this field. They looked into crime as a necessary expression of social conditions. They coined the theory in France where their following grew and spread to England and Germany. Studies of juvenile delinquency and professional crime were also carried out. This period of criminological history was lost to subsequent scholars after 1880 until it was unearthed by the studies of Alfred Lindesmith and Yale Levin in 1937/7. Quetelet and Guerry's theory will be covered in greater detail further along in this chapter.

The next school criminological thought is the socialist school criminology. The works on this school were spearheaded by the writings of Max and Engels. This school began in about 1850.
It was based on the theory of economic determinism. Although this school was not concerned with crime directly, but merely as a by-product, it did carry out many an enlightening study on variations in crime rates in association with variations in economic conditions. The students using this methodology had preconceived conclusions which invariably were purportedly supported by their statistical findings and the school was therefore dismissed as socialist propaganda. However, this school is given its due respect as a scientific school, because it begins with a general hypothesis and the factual data enables their conclusions to be tested by other students other than the statistical value of the findings of this school, it has had a small impact on the development of theoretical criminology.

The typological school of criminology is divided into the three distinct schools whose general logic and methodology are similar. This school is also called the bio-typological school. This school contends that criminals differ from non-criminals by factors which, tend to make them commit crimes, these factors being intrinsic personality traits absent in non criminals. These traits may be inherited, or the tendency to commit crime may be an expression of the defect. Influence of society has no part to play on the typological criminal. The typological schools differ as to what specific traits differentiate criminals from non-criminals. The three schools - within - the - school are the Lombrosians, the Mental testers and the psychiatric schools of thought.
The Lombrosians were followers of a school known also as the Italian school. Lombroso was the founder of this school. This school believed that criminals are born that way. They can even be identified by certain characteristics such as a flattered nose, a long lower jaw, a specific type of lips hair and teeth etc. Possession of five of eighteen given physical characteristics pointed to a certain criminal/9. This school was originally a reaction to the classic school. It was later directed against Trade’s theory of imitation. Lombroso later reduced the proportion of born criminals from 100 percent to about 40 percent/10. Lombroso’s theories further lost authenticity when his theories were disproved by later scholars such as Goring who compared a large sample of several thousand criminals to a similar number of non-criminals and found no significant differences in their physical appearance.

The mental testers succeeded the Lombrosians. They felt that feeble mindedness, rather than physical characteristics was what differentiated criminals from non criminals.

Goddard was a theorist of this school, who believed that feeble-mindedness, which is hereditary, causes crime simply because a feeble-minded individual is unable to understand the meaning of law or to appreciate the gravity of the nature of his transgressions. Goddard asserted that almost all criminals, according to his tests, were feeble-minded, and inferred that almost all feeble minded people were criminals/11. The mental-testers theories were likewise put to shame by scholars as these
hypotheses were disproven by wider, more conclusive tests/12.

The psychiatric school, as did Lombroso an psychosis, epilepsy and "moral insanity"/13 as causes of crime. The school however felt that a lot of these maladies were as a result of social interaction rather than inheritance. The most influential theory in this school was the Freudian theory of unconscious frustrations being channelled into conscious misdeeds/14.

The psychiatric school further brought out the theory of mental abnormality which attributes five causal factors to the commission of crime, and acts as a summary of the typological school.

Firstly inferior intelligence, which is akin to the mental testers theory, because the feeble-minded are easily led into wrong doing because they don't know better.

Secondly, a variety of internal conflicts may erupt, according to Freud, into criminal behaviour that the criminal recognises as undesireable but fails to control/15.

Thirdly, moral apathy, or indifference causes an individual to commit acts he knows are contrary to criminal and moral dictates, but due to a psychopathic disposition, little or no remorse is evoked by his actions/16.

The fourth alternative is that the criminal may become divorced from reality and due maybe to delusions, may strike at imaginary assailants or react to paranoid fantasies which actions are in actual fact crimes with no justification.

Finally, the theory states that the individual may be suf-
fering from amnesia with no recollection or awareness of his actions.

Previous criminological schools attributed crime to sociological causes, such as the cartographic and socialist schools. The central thesis of the sociological school is that criminal behaviour results from the same processes as other social behaviour. Concepts such as imitation, attitude-value, differential association and frustration-aggression are put forward as causal influences of crime.

Emile Durkheim believed that inequality was a natural condition which is not associated with crime, unless it is coupled with a breakdown of social norms. Such a breakdown he called anomie and attributed to rapid social changes and modernisation. Durkheim believed that society can only be formed if its members make large and permanent sacrifices in conforming with its norms. This he called collective conscience. The demands of society are such that non-conformance by some individuals is inevitable. He felt criminals contribute significantly to a feeling of social solidarity because they being morally inferior, give the conforming members of society a feeling of superiority and solidarity. Penal sanctions are necessary not merely as punishment to the deviant members of society, but also as a reward to society's conforming members as what they have escaped by their "sacrifice". In Shelley's conclusion in a study of the relationship between crime and modernisation, she concluded: "The evidence... suggests that only the changes accompanying the developmental process are great enough to explain the enormous
changes that have occurred in international crime patterns in the last two centuries"/18.

A criticism has been offered to Durkheim's theory that crime is attributed to anomie. He characterised previous societies as having strong social control and low crime rates. It is felt that social controls have increased with modernisation, but so has the crime rate.

Tarde, a sociologist, portrayed crime as normal, learned behaviour. Criminals were people who were brought up in an atmosphere where crime was a way of life. He put forward three laws of imitation/19.

The first law of imitation was that people imitate one another in proportion to the contact they have with one another. Imitation is frequent and changes rapidly in the cities. He calls this fashion. Imitation in rural areas is less frequent and changes reluctantly. This he calls custom. Tarde claimed that crime too, like any other social behaviour begins as fashion and later, after it is learned becomes custom.

Tarde's second law was that the inferior imitates the superior. Looking at the history of different crimes, he found that they were committed first by royalty, then imitation by all classes. Also he stated that crime originated in large cities and was then imitated by smaller towns and rural areas.

Tarde's third law of imitation was that newer fashions displace older ones. Murder by shooting, a more recent phenomena has replaced the older methods of murder by knifing and strangulation.
Tarde's laws were the first attempt at describing crime as normal learned behaviour rather than by inherent characteristics.

Sutherland is another sociological school criminologist who felt that crime was normal learned behaviour. Most of this learned occurs within intimate circles of association. Techniques, motives and criminal attitudes are all learned. Sutherland's principle of differential association with people who define violation of an excess of legal codes as favourable behaviour. This differential association varies in frequency, duration, priority and intensity/20.

Sutherland’s theory was the single theory that claims the greatest responsibility for the decline in the view that crime is a result of biological and psychological anomalies in favour of the row more popular feeling that it is the result of societal influences acting on biologically and psychologically sound individuals.

Of all criminological theories, the most relevant explanations of property crime in general and the Zambian situation in particular is the theory analysing the relationships between crime, poverty and economic in equality.

In contrast to biological and psychological characteristics as an explanation for criminal behaviour, theories of property crime tend to explain such behaviour in terms of economic influence or differences. This theory looks at the consequences of poverty such as vagrancy, sickness and despair. Empirical studies have been made of the relationship between poverty and crime
to determine to what extent there is a connection/21.

Several relationships have been found between poverty and crime. Firstly poverty often breeds resentment in the economically inferior. Often, the poor and suppressed tend to feel that they have as much right to the luxuries of life as their wealthy counterparts. These factors may result in the criminal taking "justice" into own hands and proceeding to avail oneself with money or property that belongs to a wealthier member of society. This is done without remorse and the crime is actually justified in the mind of the thief.

Another relationship between poverty and crime is that poverty often results in starvation or malnutrition so otherwise moral citizens result to theft as a means to alleviate suffering. Such people steal only out of desperation and would prefer an alternative way to earn a living if such an opportunity were presented to them but their feelings of remorse are outweighed by the necessity to survive.

Low intelligence is another factor that is said to link poverty to crime. Low intelligence results in lack of initiative. The individual therefore fails to discover a lawful, probably more complex means of earning an income and resorts to what is most simple and logical: availing himself of that which he sees and desires notwithstanding the fact that it belongs to someone else.

Low intelligence also limits ones chances of getting a sound education and hence gainful employment. This reduces ones options of economic opportunity and may lead the individual into
crime as an alternative means to economic gain.

In the above illustrations of the relationship between poverty and crime, poverty was related to another factor which caused the crime, such as desperation, resentment, etc. There is however a hypothesis that poverty itself causes crime. It can be reasoned that if poverty causes theft, there should be more theft during depressions and in poor areas. The question is raised: Is crime associated with poverty or economic inequality?

Guerry tested the belief that crime was associated with poverty, but he found that the wealthiest region of France had a higher rate of property crimes. He concluded that poverty did not cause property crime, but it was opportunity that increased instances of theft. There is much more to steal in wealthier areas than poor ones.

This too can be seen in Zambia, there is a very low incidence of theft in the rural areas; people trust one another, doors have no locks and burglary is virtually unheard of. Most villagers are poor but they do not steal from one another. However, oftentimes should a villager migrate to the city where there is more to steal, he may become a thief, though Tarde would say he only learns to steal by imitating the new society around him and Sutherland would insist that he would only begin to steal after such behaviour has been learned.

Quetelet, like Guerry felt that opportunity might have a causal connection with higher crime rates in wealthier areas. He also felt that the inequality between the rich and the poor leads
to a great many temptations. Quetelet analysed crime in France, Belgium and Holland. He did find that in the poorer provinces there was little wealth and less crime.

Relative deprivation comes about where there is economic inequality coupled with resentment from the less privileged faction of society. Countries with more economic inequality have higher homicide rates which indeed implies more resentment, but a higher rate of property crime has not been statistically proven. It has however been inferred that the larger the proportion of wealthy people in society to poor people, the more crime, as opposed to the view that the larger the number of poor people the higher the rate of property crime.

Finally, there is the multiple factor theory. This approach states that crime is a product of a large variety of factors which cannot be organised into hypotheses without exceptions. This theory is usually used in analysing individual cases. William Healy/22 in his works on juvenile delinquency advocated this approach. He emphasised on multiple causation of crime and insisted on observing any causal factor present. Multiple-factor theorists look down on other schools which are more particular and dismiss them as narrow minded. Naturally there is a lot of critique offered to defend single theories. Albert Cohen/23 was a significant critic. He points out that a single theory does not represent a single factor, but a number of variables present. The single theory schools for this and other reasons are not indeed narrow as they were made out to be by the multiple factor approach.
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5. Ibid


12. Ibid

13. Inability to differentiate between right and wrong


20. Ibid


23. Ibid
CHAPTER TWO

"A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THEFT ON THE INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANES"

The purpose of this chapter is to make a comparative study of theft, given different variables such as the wealth or not the country in question is developed. The intention is to discover whether or not such variables have an effect on the rate, prevalence method or type of crime in each area. It must be determined to what extent the fact that Zambia is a developing country has an effect on its rate of theft.

A study of five randomly selected countries from different parts of the world both developed and developing will be made. The study will look at the cultural, socio-political and economic background of these countries and relate them to the rate and methods of theft prevalent in each. Finally we shall look at Zambia itself and look at the types and methods of theft prevalent here. A comparative study on the local plane will also be made between differing neighbourhoods, towns and villages within Zambia.

The first country to be looked at is Italy. This is a democratic state with a parliamentary system of government. In 1988 out of a population of 58,129,000, 26,322,000 were in the pool of potential labour/1, 38% of the population therefore were able to give service or to produce material benefits of these 25,553,000 were employed and 769,000 were unemployed/2.

From 1951 up to 1966/3, the population increased by more
than five and a half million but the pool of potential labour decreased by one and a half million. As a result, the population excluded from potential labour increased by over seven million. The main reasons for this deficit in labour potential were firstly that many women have ventured from agriculture to housekeeping/3, secondly there is a larger number of students who now study for longer periods of time and thirdly pension age has been lowered and pension funds extended/4.

In 1988, it was reported that 27,244 out of 107,742 reported crimes were theft/5. The rate of theft had increased in the past decade. This tends to show that with a reduction in the pool of population labour, which is to say those able to produce material benefits or give service, there was an increase in the rate of the crime of theft.

To begin with, Lombroso was the main influence in causation theories/6, but social factors prevailed as an explanation in the latter years. It was felt that the cause of an increase in theft was the increased number of loafers and other people with little or no capacity to earn money, causing such people to steal, and increasing the burden on those who have to support the students, housewives and retirees. There is now an increased tendency to use the multi-factoral approach to the theory of crime.

Organised crime is said to originate in Italy/7, but this rarely concerns itself with theft prima facie, but rather with drugs, gambling, loan-sharking and prostitution. At the lower levels however, "soldiers" from different gangs and small-
time dealers tend to steal from each other, but there are no accurate statistics for the rates of theft among these criminals for the obvious reason of fear of the wrath of justice.

Japan is an Asian nation with a population of over 100,000,000/8. The social system of Japan consists of a patriarchal family system. It is a capitalist democracy. The economic growth of Japan has been rapid since the second world war. Japan entered a high mass consumption period in 1955 according to Rostow/9, this is characterised by large-scale heavy mechanical industries and service industries. The electronic industry has also grown to magnificently high proportions. The small industries which were once the stabilising factor in Japan have however still maintained their ground in Japanese industry. This has been described as the dual construction of Japanese society/10.

Crime in Japan used to be what has been termed a crime of poverty, to the modern day crime of prosperity. In 1980, 209,251 out of a total of about 800,000 reported crimes were theft. By 1987, the proportion had decreased to 174,310 out of a total of about, 1,000,000 reported offences.

Theft in Japan now tends to take the form of highly technical swindles by either white collar officers or well organised professional thieves. There is little room for the common pick-pocket or petty theft in a land where technology is the order of the day and unemployment a stronger.

America has by far the largest incidence of crime in the world, so little of which is reported or solved. Groups of
people often blamed for this crime are adolescents, blacks, drug
addicts and even the legal system itself by way of Police offi-
cers who fail to apprehend thieves and judges who pass lenient
sentences. In 1965 there were 326 robberies a day/12. In 1968
there were 261,730 robberies known to the Police, one robbery
every two minutes at a rate of 131 robberies per 100,000 inhabi-
tants with an incredible increase to 433 per 100,000 in large
cities with a population of over 250,000/13.

There are several causes of theft in America, idleness of
young people, too much emphasis on freedom of expression and
action, widespread drug addiction and too much poverty within a
wealthy society. Also, Americans are too pre-occupied with
achieving the "American Dream" initially the goal of success, but
which has degenerated to mean "e p suit of the dollar by any
available means. It is hard for the Police and the judiciary to
tackle these problems directly, this can only be done by the
collective efforts of the whole society.

In 1988, 87% of the index crimes in the uniform crime re-
ports of the Federal Bureau of investigation were thefts of
property worth over $50, automobile thefts and burglaries.
Burglary is the most prevalent form of theft and only 25% of
burglaries were solved. The uniform crime reports show a rapid
rise in crimes against property especially.

Dealing with burglars adequately is a difficult problem for
the law because for many of its youthful perpetrators, harsh
criminal sanctions would do more harm than good.
Larceny is by far the most frequent kind of stealing in America. This is a crime of opportunity which does not involve force or illegal entry. It ought not to be forgotten that America is often referred to as "the land of opportunity" and this is very evident as well in the activities of opportunist thieves. This crime can be reduced by more caution on the part of the potential victims themselves, who are the residents of America in general. On the other hand, this is an extremely difficult crime for the Police to deal with because physical evidence is minimal and likelihood of identification is reduced unlike in face to face crimes like robbery. Only 20% of major larcenies are solved and minor ones are a lot less.

Automobile theft is another prevalent type of theft in the United States. Although only a quarter of the cases reported are actually solved, 87% of the vehicles are recovered. This is because most stolen vehicles are abandoned, after being used for temporary transport, as a "get-away" car during a robbery or merely for "joy riding". 88% of those arrested for this in 1988 were below 25 years old. However, a lot of automobile theft involves professional motives such as resale of car parts. The estimated value of unrecovered stolen automobiles in 1988 is over $100,000,000.

The mafia or cosa nostra or syndicate is responsible for a major part of organised crimes in the United States. This involves business crime such as gambling, prostitution, narcotics and loan-sharking characterised by assault and murder as a means
of control. Again, as is the case in Italy, theft is considered cheap and only occurs in the lower ranks. Surprisingly however, despite the vast evidence available in the courts and Police records for the existence of organised crime there is still hot debate among scholars as to whether the "mafia" actually exists/14.

Ethiopia was an ancient civilisation. It is now over 3,000 years old. It has a population of about 23 million people/15. Ethiopia's economy is mainly agricultural. Up until 1930 which was the time of the first penal code, there was no unified or codified system of law. The origins of Ethiopian law were Fetha Negast, whose sources were Roman Law, the New Testament and customs of the land. The Fetha Negast law was used for the copic Christians, Moslem law for the Islamic sector and customary law for the rest. The early Ethiopian system of justice was highly developed and the punishments very cruel and often inhuman. Theft was rare and olden day crimes such as highway robbery were much less frequent than in Europe.

In 1968, 26,257 out of 108,366 were property offences. The number of arrests are fewer than the number of cases reported. 37.4% of reported thefts result in arrests whilst 22.6 go free. Convictions are very low, only 18.5% of all reported crimes result in convictions and 21% of cases where arrests are made/16. This is attributed to the slow process of the court system and to lack of efficiency in finding evidence. As a result there are many habitual offenders, some are arrested as many as 43 times.
members of society to whom they refer as being "straight"/19.

"The professional thief is a disciplined and dedicated individual who takes pleasure in seeing a difficult job accomplished with finesse."/20

It has however, been suggested that this type of thief is a dying breed/21. With technology on the upswing and moral values ever on the decline, thieves themselves have also, in line with modern trends, opted to take the quickest means available to obtain the largest amount of money. Such careful planning as by the professional thief is seen as a waste of valuable time.

With the development of modern technology, both methods of theft and crime prevention techniques have become more sophisticated. Both thieves and the law enforcement bodies make use of technology as it develops. As means of transportation, both groups went from moving on foot to horseback, to bicycles, to automobiles and sometimes boats, helicopters and aeroplanes. For weapons, both went from clubs to knives to guns, machineguns and explosives. Both use bullet proof vests, armoured cars, tear gas, bombs and gas masks if the situation demands it. When the Police develop an invention for the detection of crime, the thieves invent a devise to protect themselves. A good example of this is the safe. Safes have developed from simple wooden boxes with locks to highly sophisticated devices equipped with a steel encasing and anything from electric charges to infra-red alarm mechanisms with highly complex combination systems. Thieves, true to the demands of their professions have developed equipment
from lock-picking gadgets such as paper clips and metal bars to sophisticated safe-cracking" equipment to discipiter combinations and heat-sensitive mechanisms to detect and de-activate alarm systems/22.

The main focus of this essay is theft in Zambia. Theft is defined in the Zambian Penal Code, Chapter 146 of the Laws of Zambia, Section 264 as follows:

"A person who fraudulently and with claim of right takes anything capable of being stolen, or fraudulently converts to the use of any person other than the general or specific owner there of anything capable of being stolen is said to steal that thing".

In Zambia many different types of theft occur in the different areas of Zambia, depending on the socio-economic setting in that area. In villages, the most common type of theft is stock theft. In Muzyamba v The People/23 a bull ate maize from a certain field and the owner kept the bull as compensation. The accused in vain tried to use a bona fide claim of right as a defence but is was rejected by the court and he was convicted of theft. The case of Siyangombe v The People/24 was also a purported case of stock theft, but the conviction of the court of first instance was set aside because of a genuine belief on the part of the accused that he had a right to the cow as it was the off-spring of a cow that had been paid as dowry for his sister.

However, theft is very rare in the Zambian villages because the cultural setting there is based on the belief in the extended
family, where every member of the community has an obligation to take care of and the right to be taken care of by the other members of the community. Life is slow and peaceful, but naturally from time to time a deviant member of society will commit theft.

As one moves to the Zambian towns, the situation is very different. Life in the cities and towns in Zambia is a lot faster than in the villages. Moral standards are much lower and an "every man for himself" attitude prevails. The rate of unemployment is very high and therefore the competition to survive is rife.

Zambia is a very young developing country, which recently received independence from Britain in 1964. Economically it is still trying to find its feet. There are only a few very wealthy people in Zambia. Wealth in Zambia is mainly achieved by unorthodox means such as top government officials plundering the wealth of the nation and trade in narcotics. The genuine worker or peasant farmer has very little income. Even professionals such as doctors and teachers are not paid their worth. As a result, even those in the employment sector are encouraged to commit white collar crimes. Theft by public servant has a high incidence in Zambia as a result.

By far the highest incidence of theft in Zambia is petty theft. Pick pocketing, theft by finding, store breaking burglary to mention a few. Theft by these methods represent the struggling majority. Unemployment, lack of education and stiff compe-
tion in the small time business sector lead many a Zambian to turn to theft in the cities especially. There are however few professional thieves in Zambia, unlike in England. This is because thieves in Zambia have yet attained the high sophisticated skills of their English counterparts. Instead, Zambia has the phenomenon of the habitual thief, who lurks around crowded places or residential areas seeking potential game.

Statistically, the incidence of theft in Zambia is hard to determine/25. This is due to the poor communication network in Zambia and lack of reporting of crimes, as the Zambia Police rarely solve crimes or recover stolen property. Also, most offences in rural areas are settled at the village in the traditional way, using their peculiar brand of justice.

There has however, been an increase in thefts reported since independence. The Criminal Investigations Department of the Zambia Police Force has attributed this to the increasing urban population from 123,000 in 1963 to 400,000 by 1974/26. The Police Force in Zambia is very ineffective due to lack of sufficient funding for transport and patrols, lack of dedication among the officers and poor training inter alia. An alarming example of the lack of effectiveness is of the 1,431 cases of theft reported in 1990, 979 remained undetected, 452 went to court and only 139 convictions were obtained due to lack of witnesses or evidence in the other cases, according to the statistics available at Lusaka Central Police.

Having compared the rate and methods of theft around the world, it can be seen that theft is a universal phenomenon.
However, different areas use different methods depending on the existing variables in that area, also the instance of theft varies from one socio-economic setting or cultural background to another. Developed countries have a prevalence of more technical and sophisticated methods as explained earlier in the chapter whereas developing countries tend to use the more primitive methods available to them, which are also employed in the slums of developed countries such as the ghettos of America. In Zambia itself, the rate type, method and frequency of theft varies from area to area.

It is however, clear that the world over theft is a long way away from being eradicated, as theft will only be eradicated with the removal of the many factors which cause it.
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CHAPTER THREE

"THEFT IN ZAMBIA: A FIELD RESEARCH"

The scope of this chapter is field research in Lusaka, being the capital of Zambia is the heart of justice and also therefore the town with the highest crime rate. It is for this reason that most of the field research was carried out in this town, with but a few exceptions. Interviews were carried out with a number of representatives of different categories of people considered to be directly involved with the crime of theft. These include professionals such as Judges, Lawyers and Police; victims of theft; loiterers who appear likely to steal; and convicted thieves.

The main focus of this chapter is the data received from the prisoners themselves. The aim of the interviews conducted with the prisoners was to find:

(a) Common features,
(b) Differences,
(c) Offending patterns,
(d) Age distribution,
(e) Economic status of offenders,
(f) Family responsibilities of offenders,
(g) Family size,
(h) Social attitude.

The interviews were made possible with the co-operation of Superintendent Tembo, the Officer-in-Charge of Chimbokaila Remand Prison in Lusaka. Criminals from all over Zambia are taken to
this prison upon conviction to serve sentences or await transfer. It was therefore considered to be a fair sample of convicted thieves in Zambia. The prison housed almost 2,000 prisoners, of whom only 22 were women. The percentage of female offenders (1%) was therefore negligible. By reason of this, only data from one female offender will be recorded.

Of the 15 convicts interviewed, at least one was selected from the more common types of theft found in Zambia. The categories were:

1. Theft
2. Theft by servant
3. Theft by public servant
4. House breaking
5. Burglary
6. Robbery
7. Aggravated robbery
8. Theft of motor vehicle
9. Stock theft

The following chart/2 represents the data received from the 15 offenders interviewed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>OF PARENTS OR GUARDIAN</th>
<th>HISTORY OF EDUCATION</th>
<th>OCCUPATION AT TIME OF THEFT</th>
<th>PREVIOUS CONVICTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>REASON TO THEFT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NINA</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>CAJA BOBO</td>
<td>BLACK WORKER</td>
<td>GRADE NINE</td>
<td>STABILE</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>THREAT IS WRONG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAKA</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>KASISI</td>
<td>SECURITY GUARD</td>
<td>GRADE NINE</td>
<td>THEFT BY PUBLIC SEIVANT</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO SURVIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANAYA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>KASAKA</td>
<td>SECURITY GUARD</td>
<td>GRADE NINE</td>
<td>THEFT BY SEIVANT</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO SURVIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUENDA</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>LUSIKA</td>
<td>SECURITY GUARD</td>
<td>GRADE NINE</td>
<td>THEFT BY SEIVANT</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO SURVIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCIA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>MANDEVA</td>
<td>LOAFER</td>
<td>GRADE NINE</td>
<td>BREAKING</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO SURVIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUNAIGA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>KAPTA</td>
<td>COBBER</td>
<td>GRADE SEVEN</td>
<td>ROBBERY</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO COMPUMENT EARNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHIZANGA</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>NOULU</td>
<td>MARKET STANDS</td>
<td>GRADE SEVEN</td>
<td>ROBBERY</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO COMPUMENT EARNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIRI</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>CHILAINE</td>
<td>FATHER FARMER</td>
<td>GRADE NINE</td>
<td>MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO HUNGER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANDA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>SHOMA</td>
<td>PEASANT</td>
<td>GRADE SEVEN</td>
<td>STOCK THEFT</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>THREAT IS AN ART (ESP BY TRICK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKSON</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>LUSIKA</td>
<td>STREET VENDOR</td>
<td>GRADE SEVEN</td>
<td>JURUARY</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>THREAT IS A PRODUCT OF PAO BEHAVIAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILLI</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>LUSIKA</td>
<td>SECURITY GUARD</td>
<td>GRADE NINE</td>
<td>ROBBERY</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO SURVIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAXAMBA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>LUSIKA</td>
<td>PARENTS</td>
<td>GRADE SEVEN</td>
<td>SIMPLE THEFT</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO COMPUMENT EARNINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>THREAT IS A MEANS TO SURVIVE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*THREAT IS A MEANS TO SURVIVE*
The chart above shows that most of the offenders came from humble backgrounds. Parents were often dead or retired and the level of education was low. The offenders were mostly either unemployed, or had low paying jobs. Those who were self employed had low incomes as cobblers, marketeers, street vendors etc.

The offenders came from all over Zambia, with the highest number being from Lusaka. Most of them lived in shanty compounds and had relatives for whom they were responsible. A number had emigrated from the villages to seek employment in towns.

The age distribution was mostly the 25-35 years old age group. This is the age group where most active Zambians in gainful employment are found. Most offenders stole petty household items which have a ready market.

The range in family size was from 2 to 16 members of the family, but it can be seen that most families were over 5, which is large. A number of offenders claimed that it was their first time to steal, (about 50%) but there was a unanimous denial of previous convictions.

The main differences were in the attitudes to theft. Offenders (2), (3) and (7) believed theft was wrong and alleged that they were wrongly convicted. Offender (12) felt theft was wrong but he did it to make ends meet. The rest felt that theft was either justified because of the poor economy or fun.

From the survey carried out, it can be seen that theft in Zambia is an economic problem. The majority of thieves steal to survive. Most of them have had to fend for themselves early
because they came from large, poor families and their parents were dead or staying in far away villages. The use of theft as a means of survival can be further seen by the fact that the survey showed no thieves from upper or middle classes. Most of the offenders had a wife and child to support.

The social attitude of thieves in Zambia varied from "theft is wrong but I had do it anyway" to "theft is justifiable in certain circumstances"/3 few felt that theft was inexcusable. This attitude therefore, which prevailed in the shanty compounds, their dwelling places, makes the atmosphere more conducive to property crime.

In a further survey of Lusaka town centre market and bus station/4, an alleged haven for petty thieves, the following observations were made. A number of young men stood around, not appearing to be doing anything in particular. Over a week, one could see that the same faces returned to the same "posts" day after day. These men were constantly looking around, some of them communicating with each other from time to time.

From time to time, one of the men would appear to nudge a passer-by, yank something off his person and make a quick exit. This would once in a while ensure in a scuffle between the victim and the pick-pocket during which there would be vehement and even indignant denial of having "searched"/5 the victim. In the event of a successful exit, the victim may not realise or realise too late that he has indeed been "searched". At this point there is nothing he or she can do.
An attempt to interview these loiterers for the most part met with hostility and sometimes obscenities and threats of violence. They were very hostile to people outside their circles and presumably on the side of the law. Only three agreed to talk, two of whom were brief and curt. All of them declined to give their names, reacting to the request with suspicion.

The first two, fairly smartly dressed in jeans and the fashions of the day, claimed that they were loitering because home was boring and they wished to mix with friends. They denied point blank having any dubious intentions.

The third interviewee was a rough looking man with bitter, hardened features, a typical Lombrosian criminal in every way. He was at one time referred to as "Ba Joe". "Ba Joe" was surprisingly co-operative he appeared to feel he had nothing to lose, and oiling his palm with K200 didn’t hurt matters. When asked tactfully why he was doing what he was doing, he asked in vernacular what else he should do when no one would employ him and street vending was tedious and unprofitable. He said he and the boys had no better way to make ends meet. He showed no remorse for his victims whom he felt were rich, spoilt fools from "maying"
. At this point he said he didn’t want the Police on his back and turned abruptly on his heel and walked off.

The unconvicted loiterers at town centre were more weary than the convicted thieves who were passive and submissive. Their reasons for stealing were, however, the same.

In an interview with Inspector Banda of Kabwata Police/8,
theft in Zambia was attributed to a poor economy. When queried about the effectiveness of the Police, he admitted that the efficiency of the Zambia Police was at a very low ebb due to lack of funds, transport and a generally poor communications network.

The Police system as laid down is alright, but it is the practical realities that mar efficiency. The public tend to fear the Police because the Police tend to be brusque and rough, even with complainants.

It was felt by the Police that to curb theft, Police public relations should be improved, the public should regain the lost confidence in the Police Force. Also the calibre of Police officers is too low. A grade nine certificate is the qualification to join the force. Training is too physical and lacks the intellectual aspect of criminal psychology. Police are scantily versed in law and therefore do not respect the rights of suspects. As a result they brutalise them to obtain confessions, such confessions are inadmissible in courts of law and as a result fewer convictions are made.

Crime detection is further hindered by the public's failure to report crimes. This again is because of the lack of faith in the efficiency of the Police. The Police however, have made positive steps towards crime prevention. Posters have been put up for members of the public at the Civic Centre and other public places. The posters instruct the public on the role they can play in reducing theft.

In an interview with Mrs. Mbaluku/9 a Ndola Magistrate, a
look was taken at the judicial perspective of crime in Zambia. Sentences were considered to be adequate for theft, but the problem lies in enforcement. Cases on appeal often pend for up to six years during which the appellant is on bail. Often the records get lost or misplaced, the appeal is forgotten and the offender goes scot free. Sometimes there is even a conspiracy with the filing clerks to destroy records which nobody will miss anyway.

Recidivism is high because some criminals are hardened. They do not steal with a view to being caught so no matter how harsh a penalty is imposed, such criminals will merely strive not to be caught the next time.

Mrs. Mbaluku felt that more judges should be employed so that more appeals can be heard sooner. Once again the Zambian judicial system in paper was considered adequate but its practical implementation leaves much to be desired in dealing with theft.

Four victims of theft, Mrs Susu of the UTH compound, Ms. Mungo of Kabwata and Mr. and Mrs. Nyirenda of Lusaka Hotel/10 each felt that victims of theft do have a part to play in crime prevention they each felt their security consciousness could have been higher. Ms. Mungo’s home was left unwatched during the day with the back door poorly secured, her video was stolen. Mrs. Susu left K1,000,000 in a bag near the window, it was subsequently stolen. The Nyirendas left money in a suitcase and their keys with a neighbour, they too were subsequently robbed.
The victims however, still feel that they do have a right to Police protection. Police beats should be re-introduced to patrol neighbourhoods. Organisations such as Neighbourhood watch should compliment Police work, not take over their responsibility. Having reported their losses there was no attempt to recover the property. As they had no suspects or leads, the Police merely opened dockets and turned them away. The Police only become active when the victim hands over a suspect, when it is actually the duty of the Police, to apprehend suspects. The public may only assist, it is not their duty.

The final interview was with Mr. Sebastian Zulu, a Lusaka Lawyer/11. Mr Zulu as did the other interviewees, attributed theft to poverty and the struggle to survive. Also to inefficiency of Police and competition between Police and suspects.

Mr. Zulu felt a Lawyer cannot do much as he is not in law enforcement. Surprisingly enough, he insisted that the law actually favours criminals. He said very few thieves with good Lawyers go to prison. In fact the law, both the ingredients of theft and the law of evidence can easily be applied to let a thief go free. The Police are not well versed with the law and therefore may be used to throw out evidence in court.

The Lawyer-client relationship also, leaves much to be desired. The client rarely admits to any involvement in the crime. The client does not appreciate the fiduciary relationship between a Lawyer and his client, when a thief lies to his Lawyer, it is difficult for a Lawyer to advise his client on the case at hand and also subsequent conduct in society.
From the field research recorded in this chapter, it is clear that over and above any other factors, the low standards of living are the chief motivating factor for theft in Zambia. Unemployment, economic inequality and the need to survive go hand in hand with this. Inefficiency of the Police is also a determining factor in crime prevention. To a lesser extent still, low security consciousness by the members of the public is also a contributory factor.
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9. Interview - 27/08/93
10. Interview - 20/08/93
11. Interview - 15/09/93
CHAPTER FOUR

"CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS"

Why do people steal? As has been shown by this study the reasons behind this phenomenon are diverse and numerous. However in Zambia itself the reasons are more basic.

The theory of crime most applicable to the Zambian situation is Guerry and Quetelet's theory of crime, poverty and economic inequality, as advanced in chapter one of this paper. Research in chapter two revealed that the type and methods of theft in Zambia, a developing country are different from that in developed countries such as England and America. In developed countries people tend to turn to theft as a career choice, which they may see as an easier way to make money, despite its illegal nature. They may find other careers less profitable or more demanding.

In developing countries, people turn to theft out of despair and desperation. The majority of Zambia's thieves from the survey conducted in the preceding chapter did not reach the tenth grade in school. Several never even went to school and the majority failed grade seven and thereby lost access to the limited school places available in secondary schools. With limited education comes limited opportunity for employment. With no education it is also difficult to run a successful business as one requires capital and basic knowledge. The uneducated feel that all doors have closed to them. At this point the issue of moral ethics comes in. At school, basic moral values are taught, in particular the importance of abiding by the law.
Uneducated people often do not get this opportunity. As a result a lot of them have to rely on the ethics of the streets upon which they grow up. Some poor, uneducated people may be taught moral ethics by their family or the church. Such people would rather starve then steal. The point is that the choice between evil and ethics is that much more complicated for a poor starving man than a rich educated one. A large number of thieves in Zambia represent the poor and desperate who have opted for survival the best way they know how.

The opportunity theory discussed in chapter one, also has a part to play. If a person from a lower ethical group found a house with a window open or a carelessly left wallet even if he had no particular intention to steal, chances are that he would give in to the temptation. Thefts in Zambia are rarely well planned. Thieves often loiter about looking for an opportunity to present itself.

The multiple factor approach can also be used to explain theft in Zambia. This is because specific motivating factors for stealing vary from thief to thief. Mrs. Mbaluku the Ncola Magistrate mentioned that some people shoplift for fun while others would go without relish for supper if they did not steal. Yet others steal because they have no regard for the law.

In conclusion, it can be seen that theft is a universal problem but the reasons for and methods of stealing are diverse. In Zambia the prevailing excuse given for theft is that it is the only means available to the thieves to cope with the appealing
standards of living of the poverty-stricken majority in Zambia. 

Having delved into the causes of theft in Zambia, preventive measures against this malady can be tendered. The most obvious way to prevent theft would be to lessen opportunity for thieves to steal. The public should be made more security conscious. This could be done by improving Police public relations. The Police should alert the public about security risks and preventive measures. This can be done through the press and the mass media. Programmes on television such as "Police and You", a programme educating the public on security, should be continued. Similar programmes should be presented on radio. The public need to learn to keep their homes and property safely locked up.

The second most effective way to reduce theft would be to reduce motivation for thieves to steal. The government should dedicate a larger amount of its budget to increasing education opportunity by building more schools and trade centres for those who fail at school. More emphasis on the teaching of tailoring and various woodwork in prisons may help to reduce recidivism.

Stiffer penalties for theft may be recommended in cases where the judge feels that too lenient a sentence is a contributing factor to the theft, especially in cases of recidivism. The penalties of theft however, do not seem to affect the prevalence of this crime, as thieves steal with the penalty in mind. The public for this reason ought to be educated on the penalties of theft. A fear of the law should be instilled in would-be thieves.
Theft throughout the ages has been a thorn in the flesh of mankind. It is a universal phenomenon plaguing the rich and the poor alike. The hope to eradicate theft is almost a pipe dream, especially as theft has been seen to increase rather than decrease with development. It is the humble aim of this essay to recommend ways to reduce theft, in our mother Zambia, especially and hope that one day this evil may be eradicated.
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