

STOCK THEFT IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CAUSES, MOTIVES AND MODUS OPERANDI

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INTRODUCTION

- The presentation stems from research done on perpetrators of stock theft
- Literature showed a shortfall of research on stock theft and more so on the perpetrators.
- The purpose of this research was to explore, describe and explain the criminal behaviour of stock theft perpetrators from a criminological point of view.
- Several key aspects were uncovered – when and where the thefts occur, whether spontaneous or planned, different types of perpetrators, individual or groups, loopholes, cultural factors, theories to explain the associated criminal behaviour. Several recommendations were also made in line with the findings.
- Purpose of this presentation - focus the causes and motives that drove these perpetrators to engage in criminal acts associated with stock theft, as well as their modus operandi to expropriate livestock.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

THE AIM

To construct a profile of a sample of offenders sentenced for stock theft – with a criminological focus

THE OBJECTIVES

- To determine and describe the modus operandi utilised by the perpetrators to carry out acts of stock theft
- To identify and explore the motives and causes related to the crimes; and
- To explain the crimes and criminal behaviours associated with stock theft by applying several criminological theories

METHODOLOGY OUTLINE

- Qualitative research approached, focus on a case study design
- Unit of analysis consisted of sentenced offenders, members of the stock theft units and livestock owners + analysis of (closed) police case dockets
- Location: Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape
- Sampling: non-probability sampling (deliberate selected groups i.e. offenders, victims & experts)
- Ethical clearance obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa, Department of Correctional Services and South Africa Police Service
- Data collection: In-depth interviewing using a semi-structured interview schedule, document analysis
- Ethical considerations

RESEARCH SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

Perpetrators			Experts		Victims	Analysed Case Dockets
GAUTENG	KwaZulu-Natal	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	KwaZulu-Natal & Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal & Gauteng
Zonderwater Correctional Centre Medium B (Cullinan, GP), four adult male offenders, Media A, One adult male	Kokstad Correctional Centre Medium (KZN), 11 adult male offenders	Middleburg Correctional Centre I (EC), 10 adult male offenders	Cullinan (GP): SAPS STU Station Commander and two investigating officers	Bergville (KZN): SAPS STU Station Commander	Kwazulu-Natal; 1 male	SAPS STUs in KZN: 3 (Bergville); 3 (Kokstad); 4 (Ladysmith); 3 (Utrecht, Newcastle); 3 (Pietermaritzburg); 4 (Vryheid); 8 (GP SAPS STUs)
Nigel Correctional Centre (East Rand, GP), two adult male offenders	Durban Female Correctional Centre (KZN), one adult female offender			The Provincial Co-ordinator SAPS STU of KZN	Gauteng; 1 male & 1 female	
Kgoši Mampuru II Correctional Centre (Pretoria, GP), five adult male offenders				Pietermaritzburg (KZN): SAPS STU Station Commander and one investigating officer		
ODI Correctional Centre (Johannesburg, GP), one adult male offender				Bergville (KZN): SAPS STU Station Commander		
				Utrecht (KZN): SAPS STU Station Commander		
TOTAL: 34 males & 1 Female			10 STU members		3 owners	28 Dockets

MOTIVES

Perpetrators

Financial (74.2%)

Greed (37.1%); Need for survival (34.2%)

Substance abuse (2.8%)

Revenge (2.8%)

Own livestock (11.4%)

Dockets

Financial intent (resell meat and livestock) (46.2%)

Need for survival

Livestock for traditional ceremony and lobola (7.1%)

CAUSES

- Opportunistic behaviour (60%);
- Previous criminal history (57.1%);
- Negative peer association, influence and pressure (54.1%);
- Low or no formal education (45.7%);
- Unfavourable childhood development (i.e. conflict within family and an absent parent) (42.8%)
- Unemployment (25.7%)
- Large family size (17.1%).

FINDINGS: THE MODUS OPERANDI

CHOICE OF VICTIM/TARGET

- Victims unknown to perpetrators (82.1%), majority African victims
- Based selection on knowledge and information received of area
- Knowledge or background information on livestock – diverse group of offenders

Use of equipment

- Tongs, cutters, pliers, knives, ropes and other items (i.e. broken bottles)
- Printing machines to falsify documents
- Branding equipment
- Weapons (i.e. guns)
- Other equipment: night vision binoculars
- False aliases (i.e. use another person's identity documents)
- Use of violence or threat of violence

FINDINGS: THE MODUS OPERANDI CONT...

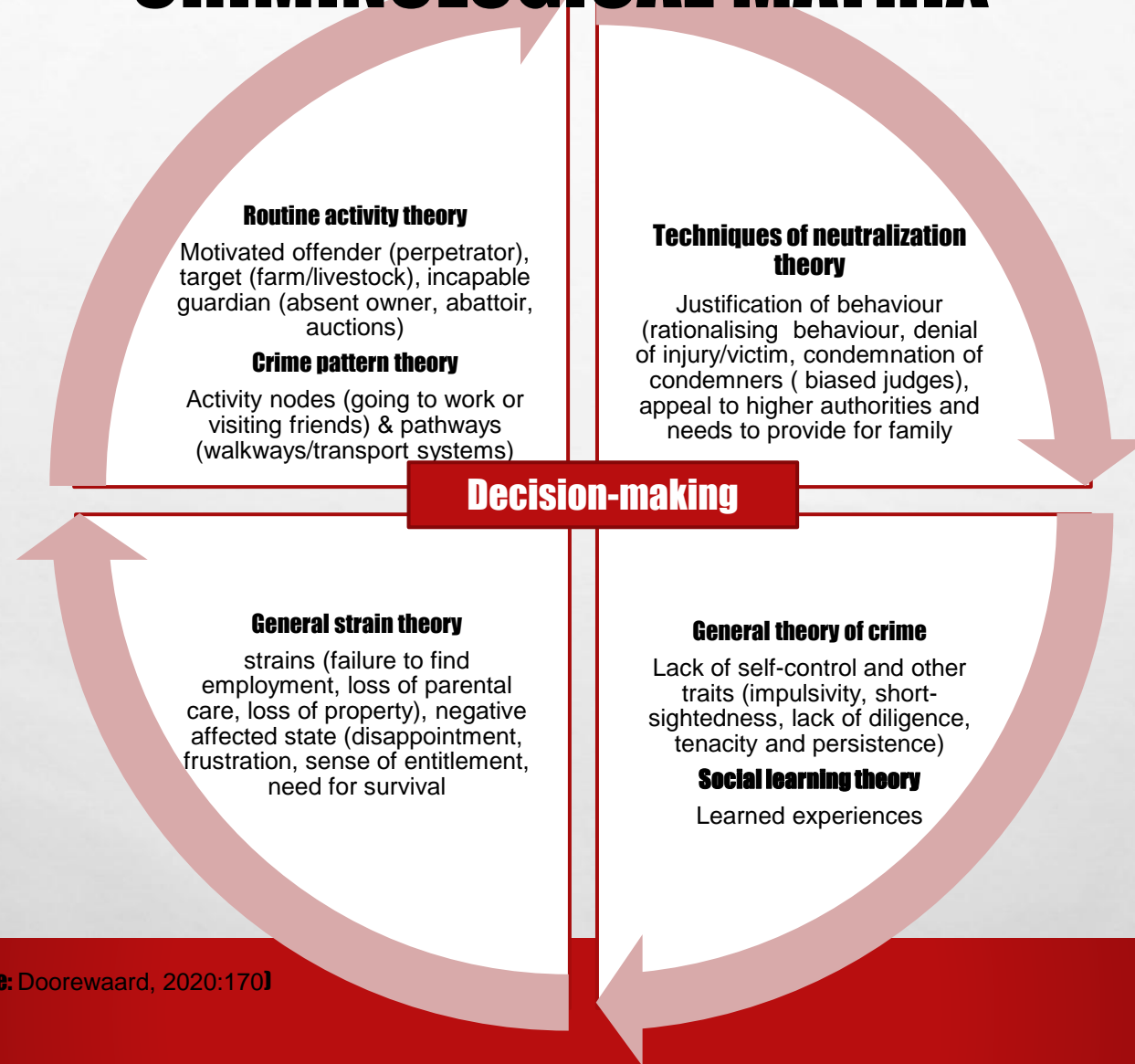
Type, numbers and disposal of livestock

- Cattle, sheep, goats, one pig
- Smaller numbers of livestock (one or two); Larger numbers of livestock (six or more)
- Hide livestock to return for it later, resell, own consumption, ritual purposes, diverting livestock away from camp to be slaughtered at a different camp or site

Act of planning or spontaneous decision

- No plan set in place (17.5%)
- Premeditated (57.1%)
- Worked mostly in groups
- Recruited
- Own initiative

CRIMINOLOGICAL MATRIX



[Source: Doorewaard, 2020:170]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Challenges experienced by SAPS STUs members in the detection & apprehension of perpetrators

- Loss of evidence (i.e. livestock consumed)
- Identifying main perpetrators (i.e. instigators)
- Reporting of cases by victims
- Leaking of information by corrupt police officials
- Proof to link a suspect to the stolen livestock
- Community participation and involved

Proposed recommendations

- *Awareness campaigns
- *Reporting of stock theft cases and training of SAPS members
- *Continued use of informants
- *Recruitment of Stock Theft Unit Investigators

Multi-collaboration of stakeholders

THANK YOU

Downloadable from the University of South Africa's Library Website:

Doorewaard, C. 2020. *Livestock Theft: A criminological assessment and sample-specific profile of the perpetrators*. Unpublished MA in Criminology, University of South Africa, Pretoria

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