

Perspectives on crime theories and juvenile's recidivism based on socio-economic variables in south africa

Abstract

Violence and crime in South Africa is a contemporary challenge. The South African crime statistics reveals that offending behaviour seem mostly prevalent among adolescent and young adults of 18 and 25 years of age. Thus, the majority of offenders are wedged between the sixth and seventh stages of development which led to incarceration. Nowadays, with more concerns is that young offenders are re-incarcerated after their first offence. A valid concern is that a pattern of re-offending or recidivism is very complicated because little is known about the circumstances associated with youth recidivism and both the re-offender and correctional institutions are not able to deal with since they have no control over the various socioeconomic circumstances which may affect the young offender outside the prison. Since little is known, the occurrence of re-offending implies the fact that juvenile offender often have to go back to the same community and family circumstances where he/she was before his/her incarceration. Particularly, the family and community background. These include unstable family life, community conditions not conducive to their adjustment, and lack of external support to assist young offender with their adjustment outside prison. Based on the assumption that little is known about factors associated with juveniles' recidivism, this study discusses various criminal theories with socioeconomic implications in order to explain criminal behaviour and juvenile recidivism. The study provides a science-based (theory) explanation to juvenile recidivism and fills the knowledge gap on circumstance associated with youth recidivism in South Africa. It emphasises the need to integratesocio-economic pillars in the crime prevention action plan. Socio-economic variables include issues related to job creation and opportunities as well as improvement of incomes, education and skills attainment. A phenomenological, qualitative research design was used and regarded as a suitable method to establish youths experience and build an understanding of the situation surrounding recidivism in South Africa.

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Background to the study

Despite the establishment of strategies for crime prevention, criminal activities from both adults and juveniles have increased over the past two decades in South Africa Tshiwula, 2001:24. Apparently, crime prevention approaches are focused on strict law enforcement which require the reform of the criminal justice system¹ rather than taking a multidisciplinary approach. As a result, combating crimes through law enforcement approach alone appears ineffective to reduce criminal activities and expresses the need to develop a cross-sartorial approach.² Among which, the lack of job and absence or level of education have been pointed out as a clear determinant of crime.³ In an emerging knowledge economy, education plays a vital role and provides the most critical input for determining a country's ability to participate in the global economy.^{4,5} Education, in conjunction with health and training, is also an important determinant of human capital formation.⁶ In her approach to human capabilities,⁷ identifies education among the central functional human capabilities, which may lead to individual well-being as well as the success of policy development.

In addressing the issue of crime, both the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security (Department of Safety and Security, 1996), apart from the need of reducing crime through environmental design, community

values, and trans-national crime, also identified education among the four pillars of crime prevention.⁸ Apparently, socio-economic pillars for crime prevention are generically dealt with in the crime prevention action plan. Particularly, issues such as job creation and opportunities as well as wages and improvement of incomes seems not to be addressed in the crime prevention plan. Such deficiency may be justified by the poor level of education (70% of women have not completed secondary schooling (Stats SA, 2008) and lack of skills attainment⁴, which have condemned the majority of South African citizens in informal employment (42 % women compared to 32% of their male counterpart).

The exclusion of almost two-thirds of South African from the labour market (62% unemployed), has resulted in chronic poverty and life of frustration.⁹ Notably, individuals with poor or low levels of education have little prospects (limited access) of employment and no prospect on how to change their life. These perceptions have induced many who find themselves in such conditions to choose a life of crime over the hard slog of trying to survive.¹⁰ The lack of income and access to employment have always been attributed to poor or lack of education.¹¹ observed that the prevalence of crime increases in local or informal unemployment rates and decreases in wage rates. In the same vein,¹² establish a link between criminal engagement and poverty. They demonstrate that individuals engage in crime to generate income to satisfy their basic needs.¹³ also hypothesized that

crimes are more prevalent with lower socio economic status than upper socio economic status and that many engage in crime because they have insufficient economic means.

From the aforementioned, it would appear that crime is a symptom of social and economic inequalities than a product of law enforcement weaknesses and the relationship between poor or lack of education and crime may be based on the assumption that education reduce unemployment rates, open access to labor market and increases income. The contrary is what lead to the life of crime and crime rates in South Africa may be said to be a psychosocial consequence of social exclusion (limited access to employment) than the democracy or institutions' weaknesses.¹⁴ Driven by social exclusion and poverty, crime rate in South Africa constitutes a growing public concern and a veritable constraint to economic growth (World Bank, 2005; Map of the World crime, 2012). Although, job trainings may raise the opportunity costs for the commission of certain white collar crimes, their significance for the development of labour market skills is even more important to increase employability, income as well as 'socialize' individuals, which they may prefer not to engage in crime, cannot be contented.

Against this background, the study aims at conceptualizing juvenile recidivism and crime activities in South Africa using criminal theories. In this context, criminal theories explain how socioeconomic variables, such as lack of job, income, education, or access to labour market may influence crimes and recidivism of young adolescent in South Africa. Based on the perception that individuals with poor or low levels of education have limited access to employment and may be induced to choose the life of crime over the hard slog of trying to survive, the study argues that education and employment are vital to re-socialize juvenile offenders. Such assumption is based on the fact that employment and education are central to functional human capabilities and may lead to individual well-being and successful integration.

Particularly, employment for an ex-offender may provide responsibility, personal value, independence, dignity and most importantly, it offers an income structure and routine. Employment for ex-offender may also provide the opportunity to increase social networks, psychological health enhance self-esteem¹⁵ and curb ex-offender from recidivating.¹⁶ Experience shows that many offenders who participate in programs targeting employability skills, have been more successful in their life by working after release than others.¹⁷ Likewise, those offenders who participate in vocational training are more likely to find employment than those who participate in institutionalized work assignments only or other employment programs while incarcerated. However, during the reintegration process, especially in trying to find an employment, ex-offenders are confronted with several issues (Uggen, 2004), which are also discussed below.

Theories on crime perspectives in south africa

The causes of juvenile recidivism are always unclear. Some refers to the lack of education and employment while others link it with poverty and other social facts such as deprivation, conflict, economy and containment. Generally, certain prevailing family and community circumstances contribute to behavior change and induce criminal activities or juvenile re-offending. In this context, criminality is seen as a by-product of social and personal conditioning (Allemanat al. 1998: 22). As a result, criminals are described as people

who have been unduly exposed to and influenced by adverse social conditions. Likewise, the occurrence of criminal behavior, in young offenders means that the crime and rehabilitation programmes are inadequate and call for adjustment.¹⁸ such a failure is mainly because rehabilitation institutions programmes do not have much control beyond the prison walls. In the particular context of South Africa, social exclusion has resulted in inequality and a glaring lack of social policies to deal with unemployment, inadequate health care and substandard housing. These factors have since been among the major objectives of the government and form an integrate part of the crime prevention plan.¹ states "we must built a society that is less unequal, less depriving, less insecure, less disruptive of family and community ties, less corrosive of cooperative values...we know that many of the conditions that generate criminal violence are capable of alteration, other countries have done so" Once these causes are eliminated, their consequences, including criminal behavior may be eradicated.

Achieving successful rates of these causes requires an in-deep analysis or investigation of factors which differentiate recidivists from non-recidivists. Criminal theories, especially in the context of this study may shape the understanding on the social, psychological and economic causes of criminal activities among certain categories of people. Since these theories are scientifically based, they may provide or be adapted and used for crime prevention and recidivism in South Africa. The use of criminal theories is also justified by the need to provide a broader picture of crime activities and recidivism since the situation is countrywide. Thus, these is no doubt that the selected theories, although discussed separately, are well suited and may provide an understanding of the situation on juvenile recidivism in South African.

a. Deprivation and criminal activities

The deprivation theory explains inequality as the fact that there is high concentration of economic wealth in one particular group of people within a community. The theory hypothesizes that inequality induces social classes, in which some people are perceived to be privileged and are referred to as the highest class (rich) and less privileged are called the lowest class (poor). Apparently, the lowest class people are characterized by poverty, joblessness, female headed families, lack of formal control of guardianship and surveillances of the communities. Such differences or inequality within a community is more likely to produce tensions, strains of frustration and pressure from the lowest class (Wang, 2005). The greater the inequality is perceived by an individual the higher the strain and frustration a person experiences and thus more likely to commit acts of violence as a way of voicing out the frustrations. In order to level down the differences, the underprivileged or the lowest class people are more likely to engage in criminal activities for economic benefits (Hipp, 2007). Thus breakdown in a society allows criminal activities to have the freedom to breed.

However these views are not always shared by all. Some research have challenged the view that the poor steal from the rich. They have established that poor are more likely victims of all types of crimes, including robbery, thief, violence and murder compared to other social classes (Zubilla, 2002). Especially, they argue that poor are more likely to suffer violence from the police and the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system, which in practice exclude them without due process of the law (Caldenia, 2000). Such violence include gender based violence, where woman from poor settlements are victims of domestic abuse and robbery while their counter partners poor males experience violence on the streets and from the police.¹⁹

b. Social conflict and criminal activities in South Africa

Like the deprivation theory, tenets of the conflict theory consider diversities and differences between individuals, including inequalities in wealth, power and status. They believe that differences in a society are the basis of conflict between individuals and social groups. They explain conflict arises between individuals or groups as they have different interests and values.²⁰ Particularly, conflict is born from the gap between the choices and the opinion of members of a group. The fact that they form a very diverse and heterogeneous group, hold different positions or opinions on a specific issue and are far removed from one another; create conflict in a society.²¹ The conflict theory also explains how certain social factors may reduce conflicts in a society. One is education. However, if education is to be seen as both diver and enabler of socialization, then differences in the level of educational attainment and outcomes as well as factors of marginalization in education such as gender and urban /rural residence combine with income, languages, minority status, ages, mutually continue to reinforce disadvantages and built conflict in communities.

Conflicts are always a source of incentives and frustrations that result in social deviance or criminalities. Social deviance refers to any behavior of sufficient severity that violates social norms and warrant disapproval from the majority of society (Stuart, 2009). Accordingly, criminal activities are acts of social deviant because the criminal enter in conflict with the law and social order established to maintain the stability and harmony of the society. In constructing the study on criminal engagement from socioeconomic variables in South Africa, one may recall the Apartheid history. South Africa has remained an unequal society.²² Apart head was characterized by systematic violations of fundamental rights, including the rights to education. Not only that black peoples were denied the right to education but also they were excluded from participating to the labour market (Calderhead, 2011). These inefficiencies were inherited by the democratic government elected after 1994 and continue to trap millions of peoples, especially blacks in poverty, and unemployment (Adato et al. 2006: 235).

Based on the conflict theory social differences and inequality in wealth and status between individuals in society, lack of employment and earnings as well as low earnings create inequality, develop conflict and may result in the life of crime. Thus, conflict in South Africa arises because of differences and inequality within racial and social groups, which likely produce tensions, strain of frustration and pressure from the lowest class (Wang, 2005). Accordingly, Kelly²³ attested that differences or economic classes breed inequality in a society and results therefore in criminal behavior. As provided above, South African history of inequalities is likely one of the root of the crime problems.⁹ The author explains how inequality in South Africa drove systematic exclusion of millions of black people from participation in the labour market and has created a set of incentives that lead to a life of crime.

However, how to establish why or what is the motivation behind the life of crime, remains a dilemma. Many consider that criminals are rational decision makers, they consider personal situation, including the need for money, and personal values, before choosing to commit crime (Siegel, 2005). Therefore, they engage in crime to generate income to satisfy their basic needs.¹² If the need of incomes is one of the motive driving criminal to satisfy their needs, it may not be contented that employment and skills training may provide income and release criminal and ex-offender from criminal and recidivism.²⁴

study found that low level of basic employment qualifications, poor employment histories, and life skills are likely to contribute to poor job performance, and resulted in violent behavior.¹¹ ascertain that the prevalence of crime increases in local or informal unemployment rates and decreases in wage rates. Likewise¹³ study on crime and unemployment finds that many people's join the world of crime because they had insufficient economic mean. In particular, the study revealed that crimes are more prevalent with lower socio economic class than upper socio economic class.

Apparently, most of the results in these studies were found by using multivariate regression methods based on the conditional correlation. They assess individual and family characteristics in order to determine whether lack of education may contribute to criminal engagement.²⁵ In using these methods different results were found. Witte et al. (1994) for example, found a negative relationship between education and crime and observed that trends affecting school decisions are far from those influencing decision to engage in crime. They indicated that individuals with high criminal tensions are more likely to spend much of their time in preparing the crime (planning, locating a target and, potentially, evading detection and arrest) than working or schooling whether they are educated or not. Grogger (1998) elaborated in the same vein but found a significant negative effect of wages on crimes. In contrast,²⁶ concluded that standard regression studies are unlikely to estimate the relationship between education and crimes and these studies must be interpreted with caution. Especially, hidden individual characteristics such as patience or risk aversion affect both schooling and criminal decisions. As a result, individuals who prefer more schooling (regardless of their education level) might also have fewer trends for crime. Thus, regression-based estimates cannot identify the causal effect of schooling on crime.

Consequently, Lochner establishes a false positive correlation between education and crime. The author explains that such link may be determined merely by using variation in crime and education across states or local communities. Lochner attests that such relationship exist but may be ill-defined as empirical studies (determining the effect of education on crime) focus on post school criminal activities rather on the effect of school on criminal behaviour. Subsequently, the author expresses the need to establish whether peoples drop out school to commit crime or they commit crime because they drop out school.²⁵ Therefore, the study suggests that employment needs of an ex-offender must be addressed prior to his returns to the community.

c. Economic theory of crime

In the effort to establish causal relationships between education and crime, economists use Instrumental Variables (IV) estimation methods and the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimators.²⁵ The instrumental variables estimations helps to attest the validity of instruments used while the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) is used to estimate the effect of educational attainment on the probability of imprisonment. Although these estimations were based on several variables such as age of the respondent (three-year age categories), state of birth, state of residence, and group of birth, emphasis was put on the effects of crime in states within a specific year. The result of these estimations provide evidences on how different states may have different time trends for law enforcement policies and may simply exhibit different trends in aggregating criminal activities.²⁵ For example, in any particular state or year, there are different group of age, which have faced different compulsory schooling laws during their high school years. They therefore conclude that ordinary least

square (OLS) and Instrumental Variables (IV) estimates attest similar results to the predicted effect derived from multiplying the estimated increase in wages associated with an additional year of school by the estimated effect of higher wage rates on crime. In this regard Gould & al.(2002) elaborate that much of the effect of schooling on crime may come through increased wage rates and opportunity costs. Wages and unemployment are significantly related to crime. Accordingly, since increased wages and earnings are important consequences of schooling, education may reduce indirectly crime through increased wages rates.²⁵

While empirical studies shaped the understanding on economic perspective of education, their effects on crime may vary significantly. For example when using the OLS on average, an extra year of school reduce positively both property and violent crimes.²⁵ However, there are some varieties and differences effects across the broad categories of both violent and property crimes. Similar differences effects of factors or variables on both property and violent crimes were also observed in several other studies. A study conducted by Raphael and Winter- Ember¹⁰ found that a decrease in property crimes was chiefly attributed to a decrease in unemployment rates, Kelly ascertains that inequality create a strong influence on violent crimes and has no effect on property crimes.²³ Although different effects are observed on both property and violent crimes, they all agreed that the majority of incarcerated population are less literate, have less job skills and have missed the opportunities to acquire and develop social, relational and cognitive life skills to be productive and successful.

The economy of crime

According to economist such as Becker (1969) criminals are rational decision makers, they compare the costs and the benefits of a criminal activity, if the expected benefits accedes the expected cost then a rational criminal commits the crime otherwise refrain from it. Likewise the economic and analyses of choice suggest that criminals are like any other individuals they behave in a rational manner. Obviously, the law or a social order is violated after an individual decides to do so by considering and comparing his personal conditions, including the need for money, personal values or even a learning experience. An offender may also consider environmental situational factors such as how affluent the neighbourhood is or the efficiency of the police and how the target is protected. All these factors, including the risk of apprehension, the seriousness of the expected punishment and the value of the criminal enterprise may be taken into account before choosing to commit a crime (Siegel, 2005). However, these views are not shared among criminologists, who argue using limited rational model that knowledge of a penalty cannot prevent an offender from achieving its criminal goals. This is because the law only set a minimum of penalty and that the applicable penalty is only known after a person has committed a crime. Although, the criminologist views may be true, it is contended in the context of the South African Constitution, where juveniles are aware that because of their age they may not be subjected to harsher punishment (Cook: 2012). Particularly, sections 28 prohibit and make the detention of a child a measure of last resort. Likewise section 12 and 35, should they be detained allow for the shortest period of the sentence. Consequently, many juveniles re-offend because they are aware of the fact that sentences that will be imposed will be lenient. Because of their experience with the criminal system, there is a high rate of recidivism among juveniles. As far as juvenile developmental theory is concerned, age does not hinder them from understanding their state of affairs. Building on this assumption, one may ascertain that socio-

economic variables, including employment constitutes a strategic goal for criminal disengagement. Since the central premise of this study is based on the assumption that on the micro level employment and skill trainings may contribute to increase social inclusion and access to the labour market, it is significant to analyse how to harmonies ex-offenders behavior and realign their behavior for social integration.

a. Theory of containment

In essence the theory analyzed the relationship between personal and social controls (Adler et al. 1995:169). It determines that every individual has two structure, namely containing external structure and a protective internal structure. Accordingly, both structures act as a defense and protection mechanisms against falling into external pressures, which may lead towards juvenile delinquency (Adler et al. 1995:169). Another assumption explains the containment theory by the fact that people are conceptualized as being composed of several layers of drives, pressures, pulls, and insulators or buffers. All these forces affect the individual simultaneously and they come from both within and outside the person. These views are not however shared by many researchers. Arguments against argue that (Walter Reckless) these studies did not establish a theory of crime causation between these external and internal factors influencing individual behavior (Lilly et al. 1995:85). Instead they suggest that a variety of factors, including biophysical forces, psychological pressures, and social condition such as poverty may induce crime or delinquency. These factors may be classified in four groups namely, outer or social, pressures and pulls, external containment, inner containment and inner pushes, which is organic or psychological forces (Shoemaker, 1990:177). In trying to conceptualize these factors, the authors consider them as circles, or layers emanating from the personality of an individual. They explain external pressures as bad living conditions such as poverty, unemployment, minority group status, and discrimination, while outer or pulls include bad companions, deviant prestige figures, juvenile gangs, and the mass media. Internal pushes include a variable host of faults and problems, such as tensions and frustrations, aggression, need for immediate gratification, rebelliousness, feelings of inadequacy, etc. As it appears all these "pushes" and "pulls" operate on juveniles' personality and have induced some to become delinquent while other may have resisted. There are so many other aspects of external and internal containment which may induce juveniles' delinquency. External containment may include the structure of roles and expectations in society and a sense of acceptance and belonging to a group or society while inner containment include goal orientation, frustration, tolerance, and norm commitment and retention of inner and outer containment. Apparently, inner containment is more important for the control of delinquency than outer one (Shoemaker 1990:176-178).

b. Theory of relative deprivation, crime and juvenile recidivism

Basically, relative deprivation is usually measured in terms of monetary goals or expectations for future financial success.²⁷ It has also been defined by using neighborhood sorting index as well as poverty concentration.²⁸ However, these measures are not accepted by all. Some researchers believe that they have been a wrong path of understanding being deprived and do not really express the relationship between deprivation and crime.²⁹ They emphasis that relative deprivation should be understand from the offenders inner feelings because not all poor people are criminal or may have the huge to commit crime.²⁹ As a result, relative deprivation may be considered as a personal or subjective feeling of being deprived, which one may have or get after assessing differences with an identified group that

they feel compatible with. A person may compare or assess his/her standards in terms of finances, social values and perhaps physical attributes with other people, which tell them whether they are deprived or not. Eventually, such comparison constitutes an internal process through which an individual may assess its status within a specific group. It becomes more affluent when coupled with class, economic status and powers (source). Accordingly, juveniles' class, economic status and power is obtained by virtue of their parents' income because they are still depending on their parents. Relative deprivation may also be understood as a result of social process, expectations and aspirations that one may have or a vital role he may want to play with regard to its perception of injustice.³⁰ Those who feel deprived may likely be those who have no or few aspirations. Depending on how long or short is one aspiration; some aspirations have less impact than others. For instance, if the aspiration of a teenager to further studies are cut off while his fellow have made it, such aspiration may result in a disconnection from the group and are harmful than one aspiration to buy a house or to merely graduate.²⁹

Consequently, it may be contended that juvenile aspirations and expectations are influenced by several factors, which are also linked to relative deprivation. Some of these factors include the age, the family class and status, and emotions. As a result a teenager may be aspired or have great expectation in a certain age or because of the social class and status which them belong. These factors have the potential to also shape physical and emotional (being inspired to commit or achieve) capacity of juvenile's recidivism. When trying to understand relative deprivation as the outcome of those processes for delinquency, it may changes the dynamics between aspiration and expectations. For instance a person who feels deprived is more likely to have aspirations, which are lower and not as central to their identity as expectations.³⁰ Aspirations and expectations are fundamental aspects of understanding relative deprivation. Webber²⁹ clearly explains the relationship between relative deprivation, expectation and aspirations. The author explains that: "it is because of the comparative process of relative deprivation, which develop the envy and frustration that many people felt because of the lack of opportunities, result in possible delinquency act". Accordingly, people develop certain attitudes and aspirations when they feel they are more deprived, because of the comparison they make with other people; it may be within the same family, in the neighborhoods or society. Although relative deprivation is subjective and it affects individual differently, the perception of being deprived is mostly based on comparison. When a person begun to compare its aspirations and expectation, he/ she may perceive injustice, which will make him/ her feel deprived and be exposed to delinquent act.

C. Socio-economic variables influencing crimes and recidivism in South Africa

It is clear from the analysis provided previously on criminal theories that some socioeconomic factors may induce crimes and result in a life of re-offending. These factors include unemployment, education, poverty and family conditions.

Education and unemployment

Job opportunities for the majority of juveniles are narrowed because they drop out of school before they can obtain a matric certificate or secondary certificate (Farlie, 2002). As a result, of poor or lack of education and inappropriate working skills, many find themselves in criminal activities. Apparently, the lack of education is even more apparent among men juveniles. Freeman (1996) found that more than

two-thirds of all the incarcerated men in 1993 had not graduated from high school and few make use of the educational programs available in the juvenile detention centers. School plays a significant role in the context of reintegration of juveniles. It shapes the relationship between juveniles' unemployment, crimes and recidivism. For instance³¹ highlighted the possibility how school variables contribute to juveniles' unemployment and crime. Especially, for those juveniles who had left school at the age of 16 and most likely to be in grade 8, face very limited full time job prospects and are forced to settle with secured part-time poor employment. This is because the effects of school leaving depend on the last grade obtained by the juvenile. As a result, the higher is the degree, the more opportunities or high demand of the labour market and the demand of job are available. For instance, juveniles who had managed to have almost a matric are more likely to get a full time job than those who never reach high school (Krahn, 1989). Consequently, juveniles with far less education found themselves unemployed and are more likely convicted with the same offenses. This has proved to be consistent with the high level of not only illiterate juvenile re-offending but also older re-offenders. A 5 years follow up study on measuring recidivism during integrating stage found that about 60 % of the juveniles who were released and provided employment remained outside of the correctional system for at least the duration of the study (Ballied at al 2002). Although education may allow juvenile offenders to find employment and choose not to re-offend, there are several other factors which constitute a challenge for the reintegration of juveniles through employment. One is the requirement of a criminal record before gaining employment. The position of a criminal record may be a barrier to an ex-offender willing to enter the labor market, especially when applying for a sustainable employment (Hilary, Anderson, and Rolfe 2001). People with a bad criminal record are most likely to be discriminated and disqualified when applying for employment (Manza, 2000).

Both public and private sector consider bad criminal record as a way of disqualifying an ex-offender. In the private sector most recruiters' requirements, depending on the type of job, are more likely to discriminate those who have any record of theft, possession and use of drugs, and indecent assault. Discrimination based on a criminal record is even more apparent and delicate in the public sector, where ex-offenders are limited and restricted from being recruited in public sector positions, including the police services. Apparently, those ex-offenders who had been arrested and have received custodial sentence or had their case remanded are likely to face, even more discrimination than others (Visher, 2008). This because employers are reluctant to hire a person who had been previously convicted of an offence. Consequently, a criminal history of being detained or having a case reminded, may not allow those ex-offenders, especially juveniles that are currently working to change job or facilitate those who are studying towards obtaining employment. Thus, irrespectively of sentences rewarded criminal record, conviction tends to lower confidence and self-esteem motivation of many employers.

It is even more alarming when the position of criminal record include bailfines, other fines, disciplinary hearings, dismissal and custody. Employees convicted of an offence or dismissed may even face dislocation from formal and informal jobs seeking network, which constitute the major channel in finding jobs (Hilary *atal.*, 2001). Furthermore, most employers would perhaps prefer to employ applicants with little experience than an ex-convicted because the fear to be victimised (Dale 1979, Freeman 1998, Pager 2003 and Graffam *et.al* 2004). Not only is the stigma of being an ex-offender a problem to many ex-offenders but also many employers are more likely to use

the duration of unemployment before and after of an individual had been incarcerated as a negative signal. This is because employers always link the lengths of unemployment with their productivity. Likewise, and perhaps more important is that the on-going search for employment creates not only anger and a sense of alienation but also more of a need for survival mechanism in the absence of legal means (Chapman, 1993). Nevertheless, whatever it may be, most ex-offenders encounter serious challenges in the labor market because of their criminal records. Those who are able to gain training or education while still in prisons are not spared either. There seems to have a mismatch between the knowledge acquired when being in prison and the need of a local labour market into which the offender will be reintegrated. However, such barriers, which restrict ex-offenders to not be able to find a job as a mean of reintegration, may be overcome. One of the way is to provide meaningful opportunities to encourage ex-offenders to be re-socialised. Reintegration or behavioural change of an ex-offender has several benefits to both the society and government. It constitutes a long term investment for the government while providing the society with a secure environment. However, such transformation may not be achieved without a good attitude or willingness of the ex-offender.

There are a lot of factors that influences an ex-offender attitude after incarceration to re-offend. This is because, based on their life circumstances, there are different ways in which they internalise their experiences and consequences.²⁴ For instance, for some, being labelled or having a criminal record brings shame to an extent of promoting dishonesty. Many ex-offenders will not openly admit that they have a criminal record when applying for jobs because the employers may lose confidence in the ex-offender (Eley 2007). Lack or disappointment as a result of being an ex-offender may create frustration and lead many to believe in self-employment to ensure independency. However, self-employment is a very rare option or merely not be feasible for many ex-offender, especially for black juveniles coming from under privileged societies and family. Thus, in order to effectively intervene in reintegrating ex-offenders through employment, it is necessary to develop a better understanding of the offenders' attitude towards employment and the impact those attitude have on the ability to serve and maintain a meaningful employment.

a. Induced poverty and social class

It is significant in the context of this section to analyses poverty as a socioeconomic factor influencing crime among juvenile. However, it is not poverty per se that causes crime but there are certain variables such as the existence of different economic classes which breed inequality in a community and result in the commission of certain crimes.²³ Yet, such analysis would have been better interpreted when relating inequality to violent crimes such as robbery, and theft.

b. Social class in South Africa

As discussed previously owing to the apartheid regime, South Africa had remained an unequal society. Social classes in South Africa are obviously the result of the social exclusion of the majority from the minority. Today, three classes, namely the white, the black middle and black underclass are established.

The middle class include emerging and growing number of the black elites, while at the same time; a huge numbers of other black people are plagued into poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion, forming an underclass. Most white people still maintained the advantages conferred by their disposition at the end of apartheid. Pointing to the importance of class in South Africa, independently

of the country racial history, people are not relocated according to class structures. However, there are some areas which are dominated whether by white or the middle class while some other are mixed areas or dominated by poor black. Social classes are not the only challenges faced by people of South Africa, there are also cultural or social differences between people with different origins, traditional and racial classification. These differences simply means that it's easy to identify who's poor and rich, who enjoy good or bad health. Some differences are as of a result of the employment. Obviously, rich and good health households are those who have well-paying jobs or assets which generate income, while poor households are really poor because they lack dissent jobs. Thus, classes structure are filled according to the country past history, which is determined the racial structure.

Family conditions, seize and Juvenile recidivism

Family structure and its economic condition may induce juvenile delinquency. Apparently, the nature of the family and the ability of the parents to provide primary needs such as food, clothing and shelter may have a significant impact on the child understanding of the norms and beliefs of society. As a result, some adolescents' misconduct may be attributed to the family characteristics. It would be fair to state that many young people in South Africa today face problems arising from family conflicts. One of the most common family conflicts has been parents' separation or divorce, which lead to the breakdown of the family. It is not surprising to see that many families are headed by single woman, whom for most of them had limited formal education. In addition, social changes have also huge impacts inducing juvenile delinquency by affecting the values of the society and changing family conditions and characteristics. For instance, legitimate and illegitimate births, large and overcrowded families, poor employment opportunities, and economic strains will obviously affect a family condition and perhaps force parents to find alternatives, including an employment to support the family. For many adolescents, these issues have influenced their behavioral changes whether positively or not. The seize of the family or the number of siblings and family members may also be a predictor of juvenile recidivism (Petroaso, Derzon and Levenburg, 2009). Particularly, given that most of black South African families have traditional understanding of families. A family does not only mean both parent and children but include cousins, uncles, unties, and grandparents. In some other households a family may consist of children from previous and existing marriages. As it may be, in many of these families only very few people may have an income, on which the entire family depend on. Apparently, some studies found no link between the numbers of people in a family as a possible motivation for juvenile recidivism. However, such link is possible because as provided for previously that most of the juvenile who re-offend had fathers who had low paying jobs such as farmers, truck drivers, clerks' secretary, and mechanic barber. Lack of unemployment or income as well as single parent families were also among the predictor of juvenile recidivism. Children from single parent home are more likely to become delinquents than those living with both parents (CSV 2002). Obviously, single parents may not spend much time in monitoring the child because of most of the time is spent whether at work, or business. Apart from some rare cases, there is a consistent relationship between single parents and poverty (Break Breurick, olweusEdnson 2009). This is perhaps because most of them are unemployed or have low income due to their limited skills and education.

Family's Incomes and financial challenges: Family incomes and financial challenges are also among the socio-economic factors influencing juvenile recidivism. Particularly, the lack of money create the urges to continue in criminal behaviour for financial gain. This is because juveniles' recidivists have more financial problems than non-recidivist.³² Obviously, because the majority of them rely on government grants due to the lack or death of parents, dependency on grandparents, unemployment of parents with no other source of income than the child support grants. Although, government grants are distributed monthly, they are not sufficient for most families to cover all the household necessities and even to cover school fees (Likezwa, 2011). An estimate of 9.1 million children in the rural areas are depending on grants as the only source of income (Leibbrandt, 2008). Consequently, only access to savings or credit to cover or supplement the grants may help to sustain these families. However, since poor people are unlikely to have access to this service, many, especially juveniles turn to life of crime.

Other social factors: The influx of immigrants South Africa has been criticised by many as one of the major cause of crime. Particularly Nigerian and Zimbabwean have been sometimes, wrongly accused of some specific crimes, including drug and robberies. Apparently, an immense number of people from neighbouring and other African countries, because of political instabilities, wars, conflict, and economic meltdown fled to South Africa to seek refuge and work. As a result, some of them who are qualified have to compete for scarce jobs not only amongst them self but with the locals. It is therefore unfortunate that many young South African, given their limited education and skills feel neglected by some employers who may prefer to employ an immigrants because deemed more acquiescent rather than a national. Such attitude has resulted in many juveniles turning into a life of crime against immigrant (xenophobia and afro-phobia) and employers (Glaser 2000). However, the government, with its immigration and labour laws has restricted access to employment to many immigrants through the granting of work, studies, business permits. Such politic is however with several impacts on the social and economic life of many immigrants who may also turn to the life of crime.

Conclusion

While it is not surprising that ongoing crime rate in South Africa involves organized and white collar crimes, common juveniles' crimes such as instrumental, burglary and street crimes, including prostitution and petty crime theft exhibit rationality. Although they seem more likely to be random acts of criminal opportunity than well thought planned crimes, there is evidence that juveniles crimes may be a product of outer and inner factors, including environmental, social and structural factors. In South Africa, the country past history, which is not adequately dealt with by the new democratic regime, continue to develop tensions among the unprivileged class, which usually resort by embracing the life of crime. This is obvious with the majority of juveniles from the underclass. As it appears, socio-economic and inner factors have largely contributed to crime and recidivism of juveniles in South Africa. The inefficiency of the criminal system, which protect juveniles and make their detention as a matter of last resort have also induced recidivism among juveniles. Lack of adequate government support for the rehabilitation and integration are among the weaknesses which induce recidivism. All these factors have shown a correlation with some crimes theories, including the deprivation, conflict, economic, and containment theories of crime. Particularly, the conflict and deprivation are inextricably linked to the social exclusion of the black majority of South Africa. This social exclusion, which was enforced through limited access to education and

the deprivation of basis human rights, including the right to health, to life, and food have excluded the majority of black South African from accessing labour market while condemning their offspring in living in extreme poverty. Apparently, a consensus based on employability, educational and criminal system may address the challenges. This is clearly explained by the consensus theory that stability in a society is based on the socialization into norms and values, which the society as a whole, have agreed upon. As a result, individuals and social institutions work in conjunction and consent to maintain harmony in the society.²⁰ The consensus theory provides that there is a social order based on a social contract (John Locke). It assumes that base on a tacit agreement; individuals share norms and values as fundamental factors of the society. Such consensus or agreement in a society is more related to the exclusion of conflict and the presence of the equilibrium in a society.²⁰ In that society, individuals agreed with the society itself as well as with the social order established therein. The accepted norms, values, roles or regulations that are accepted by the society are maintained generally.²⁰

Since employment allows people to gain wages and give them access to labour market, it may be contented that it has value in maintaining social order and stability. Employments have crucial socialization benefits and important externalities through the shaping of personal and collective identities which are not taken into account by many individuals. Other benefits include behavioural change, social inclusion based on the principle of respect for life, human dignity and cultural diversity as well as social returns of individuals and social participation.²⁶ To the extent that education also constitutes a social system; its role includes the transmission of values and development of skills as well as opportunities. In this regard Lewis¹³ ascertained that training and education are the foundation of quality opportunity or employment and the need to satisfy other physiological and safety needs is related to educational opportunities. It constitutes the entrance to the labour market of employment.¹³ Because education lead to career development (employment), Scott²⁴ attests its value in providing responsibility, personal value, independence, dignity and a stake in society as well as offers income, structure, routine and increase social network, enhance self-esteem and psychological health.

Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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