

Exploring the Burden of Property Related Crimes among the Basotho People of Lesotho: A Case Study of Roma Valley Communities of Lesotho

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ABSTRACT Property crimes are considered as the most serious types of crime in Lesotho. These include burglary, theft, robbery and many other criminal activities that have elements of economic motivations and gains. The dimension and extent of these aspects of crime in Roma Valley area of Lesotho requires scholarly attention, given the heterogeneous nature of the area. The main objective of this study was to find out the extent, nature and prevention of property crimes in Roma valley, Lesotho. The study investigated the kinds of property crimes that are most prevalent in the area, the predisposing conditions and the social background characteristics that are most commonly associated with property crime. The data for this study were collected using survey instrument, which was administered to a selected sample population of 100 respondents from ten villages/locations in Roma Valley. Secondary data on crime incidences within six months time period were extracted from the Police record in the Roma Police station. In-depth interviews were also conducted among selected members of the community. The results from the study showed that while property related crimes accounted for more than half of the total number of reported cases in the area, housebreaking tops the list as the most common crime in the area, which is usually attributed to students. The study further revealed poverty and peer influence as the most prominent disposing factors to property crime. Other factors commonly associated with various categories of crime include childhood experience and jealousy, which is mainly associated with car theft.