CHAPTER FIVE

ZAMBIANIZATION AND ANOMIE:
THE QUESTION OF WINDOW-DRESSING

So far our discussion has been confined to bureaucratic succession, but Zambianization has far wider significance in the context of the social structure. As a form of rapid social mobility, Zambianization has created a nouveau riche class referred to by some writers as the ‘new elite’ or ‘national bourgeoisie’. Fanon, for example, expresses his outrage at the ‘anti-national’ sentiments exhibited by the ‘native bourgeoisie’:

The bourgeoisie, expressing its mediocrity in its profits, its achievements and in its thought, tries to hide this mediocrity by buildings which have prestige value and at the individual level by chromium plating on big American cars, by holidays on the Riviera and weekends in neon-lit night clubs.¹

In the underdeveloped countries we have seen that no true bourgeoisie exists; there is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a buckster, only too glad to accept the dividends that the former colonial power hands out to it. This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or of great inventiveness. It remembers what it has read in European textbooks and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature.²

Dumont, who writes in a more moderate tone, but is equally critical, comments,

Massive departure of the French resulted in a high rate of promotion of subordinate African civil servants, who thus earn even more now than before, for the same qualifications. The student returning from France is appointed director if he is the only African technician or graduate in his field.³

Too many African elites have interpreted Independence as simply meaning that they could move into the jobs and enjoy the privileges of Europeans. Along with high salaries often go beautiful houses, completely furnished, sometimes palaces for Governors and a large domestic staff, on the expense account, and cars usually with chauffeurs. After Independence, the ‘403’ car was succeeded by Chevrolets in Abidjan and Mercedes in Yaounde . . . ⁴

Jackets and ties have become the new symbols of prestige. Ministers and Cabinet members keep them on even when the heat makes them insufferable, which also justifies the expense of installing air-conditioning.
Most of them require all officials, European or African, to wear jackets and ties when they appear for an appointment.  

Coming from what was a subservient class, the Zambian successor’s ambitions are dominated by the desire to rid himself of the characteristics of that class. It is not enough for him to be successful: he must display his success for all to see. Such a phenomenon is typical of any nouveau riche. In his *Theory of the Leisure Class* Veblen describes similar characteristics amongst the rising classes of America in the late nineteenth century. His account bears many similarities to those of Dumont and Fanon. Mills has some illuminating comments which put Veblen’s work in wider perspective.

The ‘Theory of the Leisure Class’ is not the theory of the leisure class. It is a theory of a particular element of the upper classes in one period of the history of one nation. It is an account of the status struggle between new and old wealth and, in particular, it is an examination of the ‘nouveau riche’, so much in evidence in Veblen’s formative time.  

It is an analysis of an upper class which is climbing socially by translating its money into symbols of status, but doing so in a status situation in which symbols are ambiguous. Moreover the audience for the Veblian drama is not traditional, nor are the actors firmly set in an inherited social structure, as in feudalism. Accordingly, consumption patterns are the only means of competing for status honour. Veblen does not analyse societies with an old nobility or a court society where the courtier was a successful style of life.

The nouveaux riches of Zambia are made all the more conscious of their status by the rigidity of a colonial social structure which confined all Africans to positions of inferiority with relatively poor incomes. Where status anxieties are most acute the strife for symbols of success, for the material perquisites which are the signs of wealth and superior social position, is all the more severe.

At the time of Independence the educational structure was such that among the population of over three million Africans there were fewer than a hundred university graduates, and it is a fair inference that the parents of the country’s leadership must have been relatively uneducated. On the mines the low levels of formal education of those Zambians in high positions is particularly pronounced, since the Government has absorbed the cream of the available qualified manpower. At the time of the study of the personnel department none of its members had a higher educational qualification than O level and there was a tendency for those at the top to be the most poorly qualified, and for the juniors with little experience to have attained secondary school levels of formal education. Before Independence the present incumbents were either still at school or in some lowly clerical position.

Senior officials in the department, and indeed the junior ones too, have striven for status symbols to convince others and assure themselves that they have in fact escaped from their background and subservient status. The determination to obtain loans to purchase a car, the continual complaints about not being housed in the better residential areas and the competition, particularly amongst the more poorly educated, for the ‘educated’ mistress whom they may cultivate with the money at their disposal in preference to their wives, are all indications of the acute status consciousness that besets the Zambian successor. I shall now try and examine why the symbols of prestige adopted and accepted by the new elites are those pertaining to elites in Western countries.

The phenomenon I am referring to is not new to the Zambian scene. Wilson, as far back as 1949 and Mitchell in the early ‘fifties, observed how Africans on the Copperbelt adopted distinctively European modes of dress and aspired to acquire other ‘Western’ artifacts.

The Europeans are in a position of social superiority and Africans aspire to the civilization which is the particular characteristic and perquisite of the socially superior group. The civilized way of life thus provides a scale along which the prestige of Africans in urban areas (and to an increasing extent in rural areas) may be measured. At the top of the scale are the lower professional and white-collar workers and successful traders, who are meticulously dressed, have European furniture in their houses, speak English to one another, read the local newspapers printed for the European public, eat European-type foods, prefer Western to traditional music, choose bottled beer in preference to traditionally brewed beer. At the bottom of the scale are the unskilled labourers of all types, whose standards of living differ but little from that of rural villagers, who have no furniture, eat traditional foods, know no English and are uneducated. Between the two are ranged the lower white-collar workers, supervisors and skilled manual workers, all varying considerably in the degree to which they can achieve what they believe to be a ‘civilized way of life’. The African use of the European way of life as a standard against which they can measure prestige may thus be seen as a type of reference group behaviour.

Mitchell suggests, then, that the African borrows from the European style of life a set of prestige values. Others have argued that the adoption of the ‘European’ way of life stems not so much from ‘imitation’ as from the functional conveniences of urban living. It is not so much ‘Western’ dress that has been adopted but a type of dress required by the job; in purchasing a car the urban dweller is merely providing himself with
a means of covering the larger distances that separate him from his work, his friends, etc. However, such functional arguments by no means account for many of Mitchell's observations, such as the preference for 'European' food, bottled beer, speaking English, etc. Having established that the African does use the European way of life as a reference in the comparative sense, it is now a matter of deciding why.

Merton, in a theoretical exposition of the relation between reference group theory and social mobility, points out that conformity to the values, beliefs and life style of an 'out' group is a characteristic of those aspiring to move out of the membership group. Before the actual recruitment a process (which Merton refers to as anticipatory socialization) takes place in which the aspirant adopts what he perceives to be the behaviour and attitudes of the out group. Anticipatory socialization performs two functions. First, it is an attempt to make the aspirant acceptable to the out group; second, it helps adjustment when the aspirant actually gains membership of the out group. Sanscritization, which precedes upward caste mobility in the traditional social structure of India, is a typical example of the process. Merton also suggests that anticipatory socialization may work against the interests of the individual ('dysfunctional') if the group to which he aspires refuses to accept him even though he may have adopted its life style, beliefs, etc. In such instances the aspirant becomes a 'marginal' man, rejecting his membership group and unacceptable to the out group to which he aspires. May we regard the Zambian successor as a 'marginal' man in this sense? Does the Zambian successor aspire to join the class of whites in positions of 'social superiority'? Clearly Mitchell does not think so.

I earlier stated that mixing between the races is almost non-existent, and that the social pressures from one's membership group and resistance from the other race present virtually insurmountable obstacles to such mixing. As in the caste system of India, where similar social pressures exist as a reflection of the rigid social structure, individual mobility is exceptional and group mobility is the rule. On the other hand, status differentiation in the caste system, though ascribed, is nevertheless based on attributes of behaviour, wealth, etc. In other words there are no ineradicable, permanently visible signs of status inferiority which cannot be thrown off after a caste group has asserted its claim for mobility over a number of generations. The untouchable, after escaping the confines of his village, can, though the obstacles, as for any disadvantaged group, are great, eventually achieve a position of superiority. However, the permanence and visibility of differentiation by colour makes the stigma of what was a subservient class inescapable. The ensuing racial conscious ness, exacerbated by an industrial structure which emphasizes differentiation by colour, makes the accept-

ance and social assimilation of one race by the other difficult to accomplish. The Personnel Manager, for example, is not to be found mixing socially with whites, and yet a person with his income and formal status in industry would find fellow heads of department obvious social acquaintances. There is no evidence to suggest that the adoption of a 'European' life style is akin to Merton's anticipatory socialization; indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the Zambian successor sees the out group, namely the whites, as a threat, and therefore rejects overtures from whites for social acceptance. The obsession with status symbols is made all the more acute by the non-availability of a class into which the Zambian successor can move. He must establish his position within his own race without the support of a pre-existing upper class. Feeling threatened by his subordinates, the Zambian successor takes advantage of his income to acquire prestige-conferring artifacts and exploits the authority bestowed upon him by the industrial structure to impress upon those beneath that despite his colour he is nevertheless in a position of superiority. Looking at the problem through the analogy of status as expendable capital, Blau writes:

A person with a large capital can live on its interest without using up any of it, and the case of a person whose superior status is pronounced and secure is analogous. The upper-class Brahmin can freely associate with his middle-class friends should he find it rewarding, since his secure social position is not in the least endangered by doing so. But the parvenue who still seeks to prove that he belongs to the upper class must do so by socializing with others who evidently do belong and thus tends to be reluctant to risk his insecure social standing by being seen with middle-class associates.

Similarly, de Tocqueville points out that the difference between race relations in the southern and northern states of America is due to the differing status security of the whites:

In the South, where slavery still exists, less trouble is taken to keep the Negro apart: they sometimes share the labours and pleasures of the white men; people are prepared to mix with them to some extent; legislation is more harsh against them, but customs are more tolerant and gentle.

In the South the master has no fear of lifting the slave up to his level, for he knows that when he wants to he can always throw him down into the dust. In the North the white man no longer clearly sees the barrier that separates him from the degraded race, and he keeps the Negro at a distance all the more carefully because he fears lest one day they be confounded together.
be a generation before a normal balance between length of service and career opportunity is finally achieved.19

In so far as the expectations aroused by the initial rapidity in the promotion of Zambians cannot be catered for by the opportunities made available by the social structure, there is the possibility of frustration.20 Thus the ‘revolution of rising expectations’ is countered by the ‘revolution of declining opportunities’, leading to the ‘revolution of rising frustrations’. Such a disjunction between the goals prescribed by the extant culture and the opportunities and means available to achieve those goals conduces to a situation of anomie.21 It is to this concept that we must now turn.

ANOMIE

Durkheim was the first sociologist to formulate the concept of ‘anomie’ rigorously. Though in his book Suicide22 he never precisely defines the concept, nevertheless there is little ambiguity in his usage.

Anomic indeed springs from the lack of collective forces at certain points in society; that is, of groups established for the regulation of social life.23 When the social structure fails to impose a constraint on human behaviour, a situation of normlessness prevails known as anomie. How applicable is the concept to the social structure in which the Zambian successor finds himself? Indicators of ‘anomie’ have by no means been well defined, and the limited availability of relevant statistics imposes a severe constraint on an accurate assessment. Infringement of the law and delinquency are possible indices, which, if ‘abnormally’ high, may be interpreted as a reflection of the absence of strong social restraints. Crime figures and delinquency rates both show considerable increases in post-Independence years.24 What, however, we are trying to show is that an anomie situation characterizes the upper classes of Zambian society. Unfortunately, specific figures for crime and delinquency amongst different sections of the population are unobtainable. Dumont has noted,

Sudden accession to power affected certain leaders adversely and corroded their moral sense. Corruption was certainly not unknown amongst the colonial milieu, viz. the Indo-Chinese customs. Since Independence, however, the increase in corruption has taken on alarming proportions in certain countries . . . Investigating committees were established in the Cameroons to ferret out corruption, and it has been asserted that the embezzlements thus detected amount to a tenth of the budget. This figure seems high, yet it is by no means certain that investigations reached very far up in the hierarchy.25
Instances of the misappropriation of funds by public officials may be found in a number of Zambian Government reports. The annual reports of the Auditor General provide interesting reading for a cataloguing of losses of public money, unauthorized expenditures, theft, fraud and negligence. It has been argued that what might be regarded as corruption and particularly nepotism in England would be regarded as fulfilling one's natural obligations to one's kinsmen in African society. To the extent that public officials are bound by norms characteristic of 'traditional' society so nepotism may not be regarded as an indicator of 'anomie'. However, considering that in almost every other way the values and norms adopted by such officials are characteristic of an efficiency-oriented bureaucracy, such explanations of the widespread 'misuse' of authority, wealth, etc., vested in individuals by the public or the corporation are better interpreted as excuses or rationalizations.

Our earlier conclusion that the fierce competition for conspicuous wealth and the expectations aroused by the early Zambian successors are incompatible with the institutionalized means available for the achievement of aspirations would appear to be one of the causes of the state of anomie which we have suggested exists. As Merton has written, Anomie is then conceived as a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them.

At the same time, Merton does say that there may be other processes making for the social condition of anomie. The following discussion attempts to show that the phenomenon of Zambianization directly inclines society towards such a condition.

Zambianization in some ways resembles caste mobility where it is the entire caste group—in this case Zambians—which is socially mobile rather than individuals or families, as is the case in class systems of stratification. Before Independence there were no opportunities for Africans to rise above a certain level—there was, in effect if not in theory, a colour bar akin to the pollution barrier found in the Indian caste system. Whether the system was accepted as right and proper or whether acceptance took the form of compliance to a social arrangement which the majority felt unable to oppose is not germane. What is important is that a set of values and beliefs based on feelings of racial superiority and paternalism were articulated by the whites to justify white domination, and that a corresponding set of beliefs—for example, the myth of white 'superiority'—were to a lesser or greater extent accepted by the blacks to reconcile them to their subservient social position. Resistance broke out only sporadically; the social system was characteristically stable and conflict exceptional. The rigid social structure had been in existence for a long time and the norms associated with it were widely accepted even though they imposed severe constraints on the behaviour of each race.

Studies of caste mobility reveal that acceptance of enhanced status comes only after a long struggle which may encompass a number of generations. By comparison, Independence and the rise of Zambians to high positions were won easily and in a very short time. The post-Independence period witnessed the sweeping aside of restrictions on upward mobility and the elevation of Zambians to high posts where they received incomes which made their previous ones seem minuscule by comparison. If the rise to wealth was rapid, then the ascent to power was even more so. Even on the mines, Zambian successors, as we have seen, have attained positions of authority undreamt of before Independence. Such a social condition is admirably described by Durkheim.

It is the same if the source of the crisis is an abrupt growth of power and wealth. Then, truly, as conditions of life are changed, the standard according to which needs were regulated can no longer remain the same; for it varies with social resources, since it largely determines the share of each class of producers. The scale is upset; but a new scale cannot be immediately improvised. Time is required for the public conscience to reclassify men and things. So long as the social forces thus freed have not regained equilibrium, their respective values are unknown and so all regulation is lacking for a time. The limits are unknown between the possible and the impossible, what is just and what is unjust, legitimate claims and those which are immaterial. Consequently, there is no restraint upon aspirations. If the disturbance is profound, it affects even the distribution of men among various occupations. Since relations between various parts of society are necessarily modified, the ideas expressing these relations must change. Some particular class especially favoured by the crisis is no longer resigned to its former lot, and, on the other hand, the example of its greater good fortune arouses all sorts of jealousy below and about it. Appetites, not being controlled by a public opinion, become disoriented, no longer recognise the limits proper to them. Besides, they are at the same time seized by a sort of natural erethism simply by the greater intensity of public life. With increased prosperity desires increase. At the very moment when traditional rules have lost their authority, the richer prize offered their appetites stimulates them and makes them more exigent and impatient of control. The state of de-regulation or anomie is thus further heightened by passions being less disciplined, precisely when they need more disciplining.

Thus the consequences of rapid social mobility, particularly when an entire 'caste' is involved, present cumulative pressures towards anomie. Rapid mobility after 1964 gave rise and is still giving rise to
expectations out of all proportions to the possibility of their fulfilment. Indeed, it is the very rapidity which drastically reduces the number of openings made available by natural wastage because of the youthfulness of those who have moved in to man the high posts. The strain between 'culturally' reinforced goals and the absence of legitimate means for their achievement will lead to 'illegitimate' practices in so far as the opportunity structure is not expanded.

Accustomed to a rigid social structure where culturally defined norms and goals were in accord with the institutionalized means for their attainment, and behaviour was regulated by widely accepted social constraints, the Zambian successor is propelled into a condition of unaccustomed wealth and power. Under such circumstances previous social norms are no longer applicable and are therefore cast aside. At the same time the Zambian successor moves into no pre-existing social class whose norms would regulate his aspirations, appetites, beliefs, behaviour, etc. Patterns of racial segregation, combined with the political impotence of the expatriate, who still controls considerable wealth, rule out the possibility of his imposing sanctions on the Zambian successor in the same economic class. The absence of any such sanctions only conduces to a more acute condition of anomie.

Given the relatively weak social constraints on human behaviour within the ruling class, the concept of 'window-dressing' Zambianization deserves closer scrutiny. For window-dressing presupposes a deliberate managerial manipulation to withdraw power and responsibility from the newly promoted Zambian while the actual decisions are taken by an expatriate less visibly situated. In this connection one could put up a strong case for regarding the Zambian Personnel Manager, referred to earlier, as being such an example of window-dressing. However, in the general case to validate such an evaluation it is necessary to show that the Zambian concerned is indeed unable to exercise that power and responsibility should he so desire. The analysis of this chapter implies that some Zambians promoted to high positions will not show much interest in taking initiatives, assuming responsibilities and exercising decision-making powers where this would require considerable self-discipline and dedication to the job. Labelling Zambianization as 'window-dressing' on the one hand excuses the failures of Zambians in high positions and on the other legitimizes a very casual approach to work, indulging in the rewards without paying the costs or making the sacrifices. Of course, the expatriate is content to see the Zambian abdicating his responsibilities and commitments, since this not only confirms his racial prejudices but also allows him to continue to make the decisions in his own interests. At the same time this does not necessarily imply that the expatriate deliberately attempts to manipulate the organization to achieve such an end; the Zambian may well play into his hands.

I referred earlier to the tendency for expatriates to blame any failings in the organization on 'Zambianization'. This is a facile explanation which does not require the application of any genuine understanding to the problems involved. By casting blame upon the Zambian in this stereotypical manner the real issues are avoided and responsibility is redirected away from the expatriate. Equally, 'window-dressing' is an easy explanation for the apparent lack of influence and authority of newly promoted Zambians. Bandying around these easy clichés, whites and blacks in the ruling class avoid coming to terms with the real problems of Zambianization; they preclude any serious discussion and investigation. They also legitimize and encourage a very lax, carefree and farcically simplistic approach to problems which are complex and require serious consideration.

NOTES

1 Fanon (1965), p. 141.
2 Ibid.
3 Dumont (1968), p. 66.
4 Ibid., p. 72.
5 Ibid., p. 71.
7 There is no direct evidence to confirm this, and indeed studies show that higher civil servants, for example, come from social origins which were relatively well educated by Northern Rhodesian standards. Thus of the fathers of civil servants 'well over a fifth (24%) are lower middle class white collar workers such as school teachers, clerks and priests, another fifth are merchants small and big, another fifth are semi-skilled city workers and artisans such as medical assistants, tailors, plumbers, apart from six mine workers. All these constitute together over 60% drawn from urbanised lower middle and working class homes, while the bulk of the rest are farmers and fishermen.' (Subramaniam, 1959.)
8 Wilson (1942).
11 There are numerous works on caste mobility. See, for example, Bailey (1967), Silverberg (1968) and Srinivas (1952).
12 For an analysis of the relations between caste and class see, for example, Srinivas (1957).
13 For an interesting psychoanalytic study of the repercussions of the inescapability and permanence of colour, and the black man's consciousness of his colour, see Fanon (1968).
14 The evidence for these statements is based on the field work conducted at just one mine and possibly the only one experiencing the greatest problems of Zambianization. The writer's observations at other mines were superficial but there was a discernible difference in some cases, where the Personnel Manager, for example,
gave the impression that he was on top of his job and regarded it more as a challenge. In one case the Personnel Manager and his immediate assistant seemed to be on very cordial terms with the expatriates and were very self-confident. However, they were definitely the exception rather than the rule. It is significant also that at that particular mine the personnel department was regarded as more important and had retained its authority and function intact subsequent to the succession in contrast to the situation the writer observed at the mine he studied.

18 See Guest (1962b) for a comparison of two successions—one in which the successor regarded his new position as a threat and the other in which he regarded it as a challenge.
20 See, for example, van de Laar (1980), particularly p. 19. As an attempt to compare the expectations of Form V secondary school leavers with the opportunities available, in 1969 I ran an essay competition amongst such students in which they were asked to write on the subject, 'Myself in ten years' time'. The following sets out the results. The 'projected' figures were derived from data in the Manpower Report of 1968 and the 'expected' figures from an analysis of the essays.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational groups</th>
<th>Annual average outputs at form V level</th>
<th>Difference (+ unfilled expectations, − shortfall in expectations)</th>
<th>Projected</th>
<th>Expected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Scientific, engineering occupations</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Medical occupations</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other professional occupations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative, clerical and commercial</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craftsmen and other skilled occupations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Total output to work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(2,400 students) (97 students)

21 Merton (1968), chapters vi and vii.
22 Durkheim (1968).
23 Ibid., p. 382.

ZAMBIANIZATION AND ANOMIE

24 The following figures are taken from Government of Northern Rhodesia (1962), and Government of Zambia (1970). The figures in fact reveal very little, since the number of offences recorded is dependent on a host of variables, of which increases in the incidence of crime is but one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Offences against the penal code</th>
<th>Juvenile delinquency (No. proceeded against)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>29,014</td>
<td>1,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>33,031</td>
<td>1,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>35,688</td>
<td>1,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>43,332</td>
<td>2,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>48,115</td>
<td>1,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>56,778</td>
<td>1,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>58,910</td>
<td>1,902</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>63,397</td>
<td>1,748</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>78,522</td>
<td>1,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>90,031</td>
<td>1,933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Annual reports of the Auditor General produced by the Government Printer, particularly the one for 1967.
29 See notes 11 and 12.
30 See, for example, Rudolph and Rudolph (1965).
32 Merton (1968, chapter vi) refers to the possible responses to structural anomic as forming a typology. What I have refer to as 'illegitimate' would come under Merton's heading of 'innovation'.

Source: M. Burawoy (1969), *A Study of the expectations of Form V students*, Kitwe, Personnel Research Unit, G.I.S.B.