

**Geo-analysis of offenders in Tshwane: towards an urban ecological
theory of crime in South Africa**

by

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**Geo-analysis of offenders in Tshwane: towards an urban ecological
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SUMMARY

The identification of ecological risk factors for delinquency is a widely employed approach to a problem in which there is no single root cause. A number of theoretical and practical approaches typically provide insight into delinquency. The ecological approach in particular focuses on aspects within the urban environment that can be used to explain the disproportionate number of offenders emanating from particular locations. Remarkably, few ecological studies of delinquency have been forthcoming in South Africa which is an astonishing fact for a country plagued with high and rising levels of crime for much of its recent history.

Most explanations for the high crime levels in the country centre either on the legacy of apartheid or the transition to democracy. In terms of the former, the apartheid system was premised on the segregation of South African society and the concomitant socio-spatial marginalisation of ‘non-white’ communities. In the context of state repression, marginalisation and a consequent insurrectionary struggle, levels of crime and violence spiralled out of control. The transition to democracy in turn resulted in a

number of changes occurring in the country, most notably the rigorous transformation and restructuring of the criminal justice sector. Despite, or perhaps because of, these changes levels of recorded crime remain alarmingly high fourteen years into democracy with seemingly no end in sight and no local theory eminent to guide appropriate action.

This thesis aims to contribute towards for a better ecological understanding of delinquency in South Africa based upon the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and quantitative techniques. The thesis presents a geo-analytic perspective of offenders residing within the city of Tshwane, and where possible, translates this knowledge towards an urban ecological theory of crime in South Africa. The findings of the study are used to provide practical insights into effective crime reduction policy initiatives. The study is based on an analysis of offender records obtained from the South African Department of Correctional Services (DCS) during the beginning of 2006.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Geoinformatics), is my own and original work except where acknowledged. This work has not been submitted for a degree at any other tertiary institution.

Gregory Dennis Breetzke

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* My life and success is not determined by the absence of problems but by the
presence of God *

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