

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In today's society the rising crime rate and the government's apparent inability to curb this escalation in crime is a reality. The capability of the government to deal with the high crime rate in South Africa is furthermore questioned. In the Pretoria News of 23 September 2003 it is stated, "Twelve-and-a-half-million crimes have been reported in the past nine years but only 6% of the criminals have been punished" (compare SAPA, 2003:3 and Gifford, 2003:3). Statistics as mentioned in The South African Crime Pages (Van Der Westhuizen, 2002:1) stated that 21 000 people were murdered in South Africa during 2001 whilst a woman is raped every 23 seconds. During the release of the crime statistics by the National Police Commissioner Mr. Jackie Selebi on 22 September 2003, claims were made of success in the fight against crime. This assumption was based on the fact that some crimes has stabilised (compare SAPA, 2003:3 and Gifford, 2003:3). Notwithstanding the claims of success the statistics was characterised by controversy. The statistics were described as outdated by informed role players. The impact that the continued high rate, especially violent crimes, has on South African citizens was highlighted as an indicator that the statistics lacked credibility (SAPA, 2003:3). In this regard Groenewalt (in SAPA, 2003:3) stated "(T)he Minister of Safety and Security must stop making assertions that crime is

stabilising and rather look at the whole picture and see that citizens are being threatened".

In relation to the public's opinion of the high crime rate in South Africa Marsh (1999:178) states: " If half of the stories we hear are true, then we are living in a war zone". The negative publicity and international condemnation due to the high crime rate has an effect on all levels of civilization, from grassroots to international level. During the Inter Trauma Nexus Conference in 2000 Dr. L Davis from the University of Pretoria stated that due to the high crime rate and specifically violent crimes, tourism and investors internationally view South Africa as a "no-go"-zone. Recidivism is one of the factors that contributes to this high crime rate.

In The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996) it is acknowledged that the high crime rate poses a threat to the democracy of South Africa. It causes fear and restricts South African citizens' daily lives. It furthermore deprives citizens of their right to dignity and freedom to make use of the advantages and opportunities that is offered in South Africa. Based on these reasons Government identified crime prevention as a national priority. The emphasis in the battle against crime is not only placed on crisis management of the current situation but furthermore on the pro-active prevention thereof (The National Crime Prevention Strategy, 1996: 1-2).

The researcher found it of interest to note that no reference was made in The National Crime Prevention Strategy to the role that recidivism and repeat offending plays in South Africa's high crime rate. Even though no official statistics exists to determine the impact that recidivism has on the crime rate it is speculated that it could be between 55.3% and 95% (compare Muntingh, 2001:6 and Prinsloo, 1995:4). Based on these indications it is clear that recidivism is a phenomena that cannot be ignored in the battle against the high crime rate in South Africa.

Traditionally the South African citizen is of the opinion that it is the State's responsibility to address South Africa's current crime problem (compare Van Der Westhuizen, 2002:3). In this regard the researcher supports the viewpoint stated in The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996:2), namely that in order to reduce crime it is fundamental that a partnership exists between governmental structures and community based resources.

Against this background this study aims to contribute towards crime prevention and management specifically by means of exploring recidivism as a contributing factor to South Africa's high crime rate. The research study further aims to conceptualise and classify recidivism from a South African perspective in order to compile an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management thereof.

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to the study. It contains the trends in the prevention and management of crime and recidivism in South Africa; the motivation for the study; the problem statement and the aims and objectives of the study. Furthermore a brief overview of the research methodology utilised in the study; key concepts; limitations of the study and the content of the research report will be presented.

1.2 TRENDS IN THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF CRIME AND RECIDIVISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Simplified, recidivism refers to repeat offending. Prinsloo (1995:8) posits that recidivism is an academic metaphor that is widely and sometimes contradictory used in various contexts. This can contribute to dissimilar concepts being compared with each other. The dissimilar use of the concept recidivism can furthermore be ascribed to the lack of formal definition and conceptualisation thereof (compare Beck, 2001:1; Prinsloo, 1995:9 and Champion, 1994:87).

In order to address recidivism in South African it is therefore firstly necessary to understand the phenomena. This entails an exploration of the phenomenon in order to conceptualising recidivism. The aim thereof is to develop a classification system whereby a recidivist can be formally identified and classified. Champion (1994:3) emphasised the importance of

classification as a rehabilitation and crime management tool. It can assist the judicial system with prosecutorial decision-making and the penal system with appropriate offender programme placement as well as the rendering of need directed and specialised treatment programmes.

In relation to the rendering of specialised and need directed therapeutic services Howes (1996) emphasises the role of social change through inter-disciplinary intervention. The important role of the social worker in this process is noted. Howe's view regarding inter-disciplinary intervention concurs with the ones presented in The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996) as well as The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). In both cases the emphasis is placed on holistic services, based on inter-sectoral collaborations and partnerships. The focus is further placed on pro-active crime prevention as the ideal instead of reactive crime control. This can be accomplished through social development programmes (compare White Paper on Social Welfare, 1997:11, The National Crime Prevention Strategy, 1996:1 and Howes, 1996:37).

The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996) aims to prevent crime through a strategy whereby a four-pillar approach is used. The four pillars represent the areas where crime prevention should be developed. The four pillars are indicated in Figure 1.

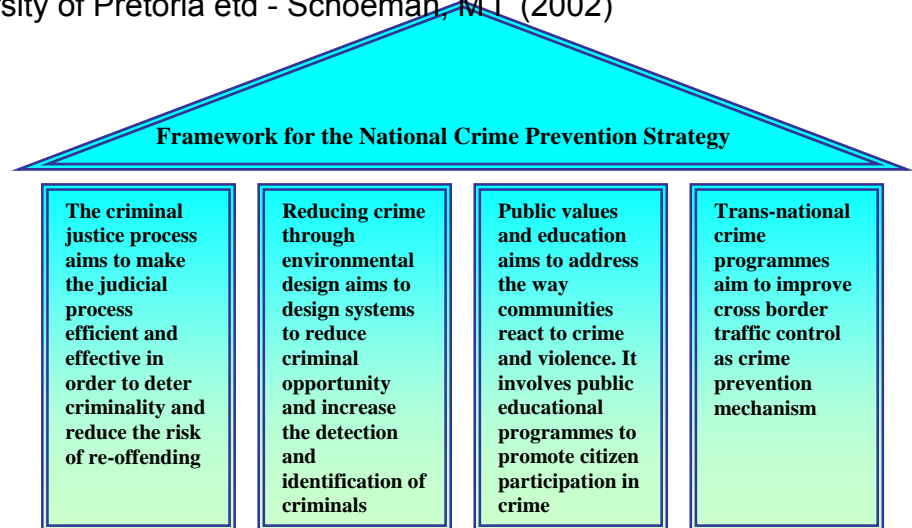


Figure: 1 The four pillar approach to crime prevention (Adapted from The National Crime Prevention Strategy, 1996:5).

From Figure 1 it is apparent that the National Crime Prevention Strategy focuses exclusively on the pro-active prevention of crime.

Addressing crime pro-actively is the ideal but in reality crime and social change can only be accomplished through pro- and reactive intervention. The social service delivery framework as depicted in the Financial Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999:12) identified four service levels. This policy, although currently under revision, is relevant for the study based on the fact that crime was one of the key areas targeted as a priority that needs to be addressed. In the policy emphasis is placed on addressing crime pro- and reactively. These service levels can be depicted as follow:

Table: 1 Addressing crime pro- and reactively

<p>Service level 1 Crime prevention by means of strategies and programmes focussing on the strengthening (empowering) and capacity building of people. Promoting self-reliance of people in the broader community.</p>
<p>Service level 2 Early intervention (diversion) in order to prevent the necessity of statutory intervention.</p>
<p>Service level 3 If statutory processes are necessary, specific need directed services must be available in order to support and strengthen involved parties.</p>
<p>Service level 4 Highly effective care and development services, amongst others, in prison, with the aim to curb further deterioration, to maximise development and well-being as well as to promote reintegration into systems in the community</p>

(Adapted from the Financial Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services, 1999:12)

The purpose of service delivery as presented in the Financial Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999) is, amongst others, to address crime proactively by means of developmental services on various community levels. Reactively crime is addressed by means of the rendering of need directed services.

In the discussion document towards a green paper on Correctional Services in South Africa (2003:26) the rendering of need directed rehabilitation services is highlighted. It is stated that "Rehabilitation should be viewed not merely as strategy to preventing crime, rather as a holistic phenomenon incorporating and encouraging social responsibility, social justice, active participation in democratic activities, empowerment with life and other skills, and contributing to

make South Africa a better place to live in". Key strategies were developed in order to facilitate rehabilitation services, namely:

- The development of individualised need-based programmes;
- The marketing of rehabilitation services;
- Establishing formal partnerships with the community to strengthen rehabilitation programmes and to create a common understanding;
- Promoting the restorative justice approach;
- Combating illiteracy in prisons;
- Increasing productivity to enhance self-sufficiency;
- To increase training facilities for the development of skills

(Discussion paper on Correctional Services, 2003:18).

As in the case with both the National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996) and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) the emphasis is also on addressing crime holistically. In line with these discussed strategies on crime, the researcher aimed to focus on addressing recidivism and re-offending pro- and reactively by compiling an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism.

In relation to the inter-disciplinary team Howes (1996) identified the following role players that should participate in the crime prevention and management process, namely social workers, law enforcement agencies, the judicial system and

socialising agencies that are responsible for the teaching of values and norms, such as families as well as community members. This implies that the prevention and management of recidivism and crime is the responsibility of various role players in society. In this process formal and informal community structures as well as governmental systems take co-responsibility for preventing and managing the escalation in the crime rate (Howes, 1996:37).

In conclusion it can be stated that there is a link between the management and prevention of crime and recidivism. It can be assumed that any action to prevent and manage crime will have an indirect effect on the reduction of the recidivism rate. Actions aimed at the prevention and management of recidivism will thus inevitably have an impact on reducing the crime rate in South Africa. The motivation for this study can directly be linked to the researcher's need to contribute to crime prevention and management.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE RESEACH TOPIC

The motivation for this study is based on the negative impact of crime in South Africa and the role that recidivism plays as a contributing factor within this context. The choice of the research topic was furthermore motivated from a literature perspective, focussing specifically on the role that recidivism studies can play in crime prevention and management. The study is lastly motivated by the researcher's personal interest in the

topic as a social worker, working in the Department of Correctional Services, who is on a daily basis involved with recidivists. From this perspective the researcher aims to promote forensic social work as an important specialization field for social workers working in the crime prevention and management environment.

The impact of crime in South Africa is reflected in previous and current statistics. In 1994 statistics indicated that an average of 7177 serious offences were committed annually per 100 000 people in the population of South Africa (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997:83). In 2003 the statistics indicated an increase of 12% in attempted murder, 5.8% in assault and 8.2% in robbery (SAPA, 2003:3). As early as in 1950 Venter (1987:187) already estimated that 36.8% of the prison population consists of recidivists. In 1995, according to Prinsloo, 55.3% of all offenders, as recorded by the Criminal Record Centre in South Africa, committed further crimes (Prinsloo, 1995:4). Even though the statistics as quoted by Prinsloo represent re-offending and not recidivism, it can still give an indication of the possible extent of the recidivism rate in South Africa. During his speech at the opening of the Ekuseni Youth Centre in 1996 the then President, Nelson Mandela, referred to the recidivism rate of 94%. The effect of recidivism in South Africa can therefore not be denied and is evident in the burden that it places on the penal system. Over population of prisons increased from 19.3% in 1995 to 62.9% in 1999 (Van den Berg, 2000:18). In the Annual

Inspecting Judge of Prisons Report (2002/03:25) submitted by Judge Fagan to Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, he stated: " Our 188 307 prisoners are crammed into prisons with a capacity for 110 924 prisoners". The result of this overcrowding, according to Judge Fagan, is that prisoners are housed in awful conditions that contribute to the spread of contagious diseases. He further mentions the stress suffered by staff as well as their inability to render effective rehabilitation services under such circumstances.

In the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997:83) it is stated that offenders processed by the court far outnumber the persons available to provide services to them. As member of the Department of Correctional Services, the researcher experiences that overpopulation, as well as inadequate personnel resources to administer the needed services in the South African penal system, are taking its toll on effective service rendering. Within the framework where legal resources and institutions responsible for execution of sentences are already overburdened, recidivism is a phenomenon that South Africa cannot afford.

Literature indicates that recidivism is not only a localised problem but also an international one (compare Largan & Levin, 2002:1 and Prinsloo, 1995:10). From the perspective of recidivism as an international recognised phenomenon the importance of this study was also recognised by the American Embassy in South Africa. By means of the United State of

America's independent visitors programme, the researcher was sponsored to explore recidivism as well as crime prevention and treatment programmes in six American states during 2002. Through her visit to America the researcher had the opportunity to confirm the importance of this study on recidivism. During the visit the researcher discovered that internationally recidivism rates are utilised as part of crime management strategies.

Ms. Savage, the Director of research, Connecticut Department of Corrections indicated during a personal interview (October, 2002) that the American Federal and State Departments of Corrections consider recidivism rates as an important measure of the correctional system's performance. This in turn affects the formulation of policies and programmes with the aim of improving services and reducing recidivism (compare Langan & Levin, 2002:1, and Beck, 2001:1). Literature indicated that recidivism scales are similarly utilised in Europe (Illescas, Sanchez-Meca and Genoves, 2001:47). In this regard Maltz (2001: 26) states, "One of the more important uses of recidivism analyses is in estimating the characteristics of offender population. Knowing how many people recidivate, the frequency in which they do so, when they terminate their criminal career, and other characteristics of their offending behaviour are useful in many policy related areas". In Canada the Nuffield scale, a recidivism risk prediction instrument, assists the National Parole Board with pre-release decision-making and forms part of the normal case management

documentation prepared for inmates considered for release (Research and Statistical Branch, Correctional Services of Canada, 1989:1).

In South Africa not much is written about recidivism. Research on the topic is limited to the studies of J. H. Venter in 1952 and Prinsloo in 1995 (compare Prinsloo, 1995 and Venter, 1987:186). The researcher was also unable to trace any research on recidivism in Africa. In a personal interview with Professor Prinsloo (May 2000) he confirmed that there is a definite need to conceptualise recidivism in order to address the phenomenon in South Africa through prevention and management of repeat offending. Judge Fagan's opinion concurs with that of Professor Prinsloo stating that "Information on the rates of recidivism for the various age groups of offenders, types of crimes and in the different provinces, would be most helpful in planning strategy" (Annual Inspecting Judge Report 2002/03:22). This research study focuses on recidivism from a South African context.

Currently in South Africa, even though recidivism is one of the factors that play a contributing role towards the rising crime rates, it is not utilised in risk prediction or as a management tool for the prevention or management of crime. The researcher is of the opinion that risk prediction of re-offending could play an important role as crime management mechanism in South Africa. From the researcher's experience as a social worker within the Department of Correctional

Services as well as her involvement in supportive services to victims of crime, she concluded that it is imperative to explore recidivism in order to address the problems created by crime and recidivism in South Africa.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The high crime rate that is currently prevalent in South Africa is a reality. Furthermore with an estimated recidivism rate of between 55.3% and 95% (compare Muntingh, 2001:6 and Prinsloo, 1995:4) the role that recidivism plays as contributing factor towards the high crime rate cannot be ignored.

As stated earlier in this chapter, limited research has been done on recidivism in South Africa. Due to the lack of statistics as well as the existing conceptual and operational confusion regarding recidivism as phenomenon, no scientific basis exists where upon prevention and management strategies can be based. Furthermore, uncertainty exists whether current rehabilitation programmes are effective as crime management tools (compare Schoeman, 1998:2; Welch, 1996:99; Prinsloo, 1995:22 and Venter, 1987:187). Problem areas included the following:

- Recidivism as phenomenon is not uniformly conceptualised and no classification system exists whereby a recidivist can be formally classified;
- No profile of the South African recidivist exists which could assist with the development of need directed

multi-professional and inter-disciplinary prevention and management strategies;

- Recidivism contributes to South Africa's high crime rate but no action plan exists to address the phenomenon; and
- Uncertainty exists regarding the role players that should take co-responsibility within an action plan for recidivism.

In order to address recidivism in South Africa it is important to have a classification system in place as well as to design an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism. Based on the problem statement the aim and objectives of the study were formulised.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

De Vos, Shurink and Strydom (1998:6) posit that goals imply "the end towards which efforts or ambitions is directed" whilst objectives reflect "the more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable conceptions of such "end towards which effort or ambition is directed". The goal therefore can be viewed as giving an indication of the research aim whilst the objectives focus on the specific focus of the study in reaching the identified aim.

The aim and objectives of the study are as follows:

1.5.1 Aim

The aim of the study was to formulate a classification system for the South African recidivist in order to compile an inter-

disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism.

1.5.2 Objectives

In order to reach the mentioned aim, the following objectives were formulated for the study:

- To conceptualise and define recidivism within the South African context;
- To develop a classification system whereby an offender can be classified as a recidivist;
- To compile a profile of the South African recidivist;
- To develop an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism.

Derived from the aim and objectives of the study, research questions were formulated.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDY

De Vos (1998a:115,116) posits that research commences with one or more questions or a hypothesis. Based on the fact that limited research regarding recidivism as South African phenomenon has been done, the study is exploratory in nature. For the purpose of exploratory studies the formulation of hypotheses are not required as exploratory studies often give way to hypotheses development (De Vos & Fouche, 1998:78, Grinnell & Williams, 1990:140). The following research questions were formulated for the study:

- What are the constructs relevant for the development of a classification system for recidivism?
- What is the typical profile of the South African recidivist?
- What components should an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism comprise of?
- Which role players should be included in an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism?

1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH

A combined quantitative - qualitative approach was utilised for the study. De Vos (1998b:358) argues that compelling reasons exist for a researcher to make use of a single research approach. These arguments are based on the assumption that using multiple paradigms can make a study expensive, time-consuming and lengthy. It is furthermore questioned if researchers have the skill and training to utilize combined approaches in one study. In this regard the researcher concurs with Mouton and Marais (1990:169) that phenomena researched in social sciences are sometimes so enmeshed that a single approach would not succeed in encompassing its full potential. For the purposes of this study the researcher is of the opinion that in order to explore recidivism as phenomenon both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were

necessary. The researcher therefore chose to use the research approach of triangulation.

Creswell (1998:202) indicated that by means of triangulation, the researcher uses multiple and different sources, methods and theories of data collection in order to provide corroborating evidence. Creswell as quoted in De Vos (1998:360) developed three triangulation models, namely a two-phase, dominant-less-dominant and mixed methodology design model. The researcher is of the opinion that the two-phase model where the quantitative phase (phase 1) of the research is separated from the qualitative phase (phase 2) was the most appropriate for this research study. The aim of the quantitative phase of the research was to compile a profile of the South African recidivist. This profile was a prerequisite for the qualitative phase of the research, which was directed towards the formulation of an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism.

1.8 TYPE OF RESEARCH

The research type used in this study is applied research. De Vos, *et al*/ (1998:8) state that the aim of applied research is to address problems that the professional experiences in practice. For the purpose of this study applied research with a developmental focus was used. Developmental research as applied research is directed towards knowledge development and utilisation in order to understand a phenomena as well as

providing possible solutions for practical problems (De Vos *et al*, 1998:11).

The aim of this study was to develop the knowledge base on recidivism through the conceptualisation of the phenomena, as well as to develop a classification system and profile of the South African recidivist. Knowledge was also developed and utilised to compile an action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN

An exploratory research design was followed in this study. The purpose of exploratory research is to explore an unknown or little known about phenomenon with the intent to seek an explanation for relationships between variables (compare Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:42, Grinnell and Williams, 1990:150, Mouton and Marais, 1990:43 and Rubin and Babbie, 1989:86). According to De Vos and Fouche (1998:124) the aims of an exploratory study, amongst others, are to gain new insight into a phenomenon, to develop central concepts and constructs and to determine new priorities for future research.

By making use of an exploratory research design the researcher aimed to gain new insight into recidivism as phenomenon. This was established by means of the conceptualisation of recidivism, the development of a classification system and profile of the South African recidivist and finally by compiling an inter-disciplinary action

plan for the prevention and management of recidivism. These planned actions paved the way for the identification of aspects for future research studies in the final chapter of this research report. For the social work profession knowledge development and utilisation on recidivism will contribute to the development of forensic social work.

1.10 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND PROCEDURE

The research procedure was complementary to the exploratory study whereby an unknown phenomenon was explored. A combined quantitative-qualitative approach was followed making use of methodical triangulation and more specifically Cresswell's two-phase model (De Vos, 1998:360).

The research process unfolded as follows:

- A literature study was conducted in order to conceptualise and operationalise recidivism as well as develop a classification system whereby a recidivist could be formally classified. By means of the literature study crime and recidivism was explored from a theoretical perspective. Due to the complexity as phenomenon and concept of recidivism various complementary theories were studied. Since not one theory only is applicable to recidivism, the researcher followed an eclectic approach to design an integrated, holistic model on recidivism. This model, according to the researcher, addresses the identified gap that exists in current theories on recidivism and crime. The literature study further

assisted with the identification of constructs as derived from the characteristics of the recidivist.

- Based on the identified constructs an eco-metric scale, namely the Psycho-social Functioning Inventory for Recidivism (PFIR) was developed in partnership with Perspective Training College. The aim of the scale was to compile a profile of the South African recidivist.
- During the quantitative phase of the study the PFIR scale (see Attachment 1) was administered and the data processed by means of a computerised software package (SPSS for Windows). Based on the data analyses the profile of the South African recidivist was compiled.
- The qualitative phase of this study commenced after the quantitative research was completed. During the qualitative phase of the study interviews with experts in the field of crime prevention and management were conducted. A semi-structured interview schedule (see Attachment 2) was utilised to guide the interview. The aim of the interviews was to develop an inter-disciplinary action plan for recidivism based on the profile of the South African recidivist.
- The data were analysed by means of open coding whereby themes were identified (compare Creswell, 1998:151).
- Finally, an interdisciplinary action plan was compiled and conclusions and recommendations were made for the prevention and management of recidivism.

In summary the research strategy and process can be presented as follow:

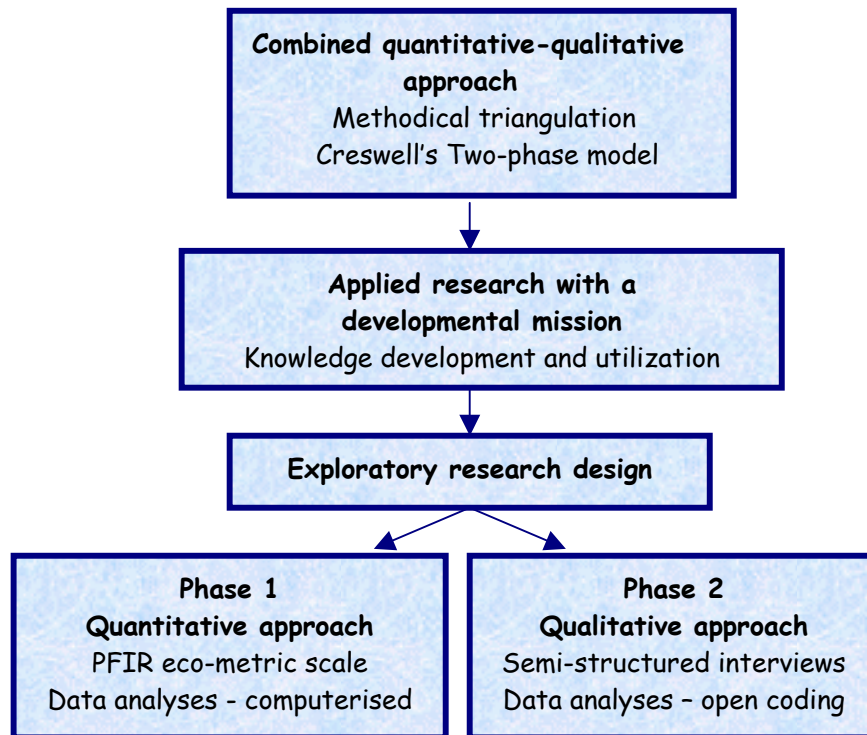


Figure: 2 Research strategy and process

1.11 PILOT STUDY

As a "dress-rehearsal" for the main investigation Strydom (1998:179) posits that a pilot study should consist of a literature study, experience of experts, a preliminary exploratory study and an intense study of strategic units. These elements were included in the pilot study for this research and will subsequently be discussed.

The researcher's visit to America formed an integral part of the pilot study. It gave her the opportunity to explore the feasibility of a study on recidivism. It furthermore assisted her with the access to literature as well as to explore expert opinions.

- **Literature study**

As stated previously in this chapter limited studies have been done on recidivism in South Africa and, as far as the researcher could determine, no studies in Africa. The researcher therefore explored international resources as well as the limited local literature sources that were available. Information from the Internet formed an integral part of the literature study.

The literature study was of importance in this research so far as it aided with the development on the knowledgebase on recidivism. It furthermore contributed to the identification of constructs in which recidivism as phenomenon is rooted.

The literature study further aided to conceptualise crime and recidivism from a theoretical perspective. Due to the complexity of the concept recidivism, the researcher followed an eclectic approach to integrate complementary theories. These theories included behaviourism, the social process theories, the labelling theory and the coping and relapse theory.

As already discussed, constructs that are characteristic of the recidivist was used in order to compile the PFIR eco-metric scale.

- **Consultation with experts**

Local as well as international experts in the field of crime prevention and management were consulted for a broader perspective regarding the research topic. Experts served as an important source during the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study. The experts that contributed to this research study were as follows:

South African expert

Prof. J. Prinsloo - Head of Division, Institute for Criminological Sciences, University of South Africa previously conducted research on recidivism in 1995. His expertise proved valuable in the conceptualisation of recidivism from a South African perspective.

American experts

The following experts played an important role during the literature study phase of this research. From their various fields of expertise in crime prevention and management they contributed by linking the researcher with literature sources for this study as well as shared their experiences regarding crime prevention and management strategies. These experts included the following:

- Prof M. S. Umbreit - Director, Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota;
- Ms. L Newlin - Community Notification Coordinator, Department of Corrections Liaison, Minnesota Center of Crime Victim Services;

University of Pretoria etd - Schoeman, M I (2002)

- Ms. D King - Assistant Warden, Correctional Corporation of America, Correctional Treatment Facility;
- Ms. M. Whitaker - Correctional Program Specialist, Special Projects, National Institute of Corrections.

Other experts who were consulted in order to explore the viability and feasibility of the study were the following people who are all stationed in the Connecticut Department of Corrections, Connecticut, USA:

- Ms. C Czuba - Program Director, People Empowering People Program;
- Ms. Susan Savage - Director of Research;
- Mr. Doug Kulmacz - Director of Volunteers in Corrections;
- Mr. L. Mayer - Director of Correctional Enterprises.

- **Feasibility of the study**

A need to explore recidivism as South African phenomenon was identified through interviews with national and international experts, from the literature study as well as the researcher's personal experience as a social worker working in the Department of Correctional Services. Recidivism was furthermore identified by the Department of Correctional Services as priority subject for research (Annual Report from the Inspecting Judge, 2002/03:22).

The researcher obtained permission to do research within the Department of Correctional Services (see Attachment 3). The

fact that the researcher is an employee of this Department made the study feasible due to the access to the necessary infrastructure and respondents.

- **Study of strategic units**

In order to compile a profile of the South African recidivist, it was necessary to assess the social functioning of the recidivists. This assessment process formed part of the quantitative phase of the research and a questionnaire (see Attachment 1) was utilised as data collection method. The researcher could not find an assessment scale that could be used for the purposes of this study. Hence she requested that Perspective Training College that specialises in eco-metric scale development assist her with the development of a scale. As a result the standardised PFIR scale was developed by the Perspective Training College.

During September 2003 the semi structured interview schedule (see Attachment 2) that was utilised (qualitative phase) for the expert interviews were tested by means of a pilot interview with a social worker at Baviaanspoort Management Area. She was not included in the main study.

1.12 RESEARCH POPULATION, SAMPLING AND SAMPELING METHOD

Arkava and Lane (in Strydom and De Vos, 1998:190) distinguish between the research universe and population. The universe is defined as "all potential subjects who

possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested" whilst the population sets the boundaries for the study unit (Strydom & De Vos, 1998:190). In this regard Grinnell and Williams (1990:118) defines the research population as "the totality of persons or objects with which a study is concerned". A sample in turn is inclusive of the population considered for inclusion in the study (Strydom & De Vos, 1998:191).

Due to the combined quantitative-qualitative nature of the study different universes, populations and samples were identified for each phase of the research.

Quantitative phase of the study

For the quantitative phase the research **universe** consisted of recidivists who are currently serving a prison sentence. The **population** was identified from correctional facilities in Gauteng where more than twenty-five percent of the offenders were re-offenders. This was inclusive of medium and maximum classification prisoners. Juvenile and female correctional facilities were not included in the sample as none of these prisons in Gauteng had a re-offending rate of more than twenty-five percent. The population for this study can be broken down as follows:

Table: 2 Population for the quantitative phase of the study (Source: Department of Correctional Services: October 2002).

Correctional facility	Prison population	Re-offenders	Re-offender percentage
Baviaanspoort Maximum	541	154	28.4%
Baviaanspoort Medium	1228	454	36.9%
Leeukop Medium A	1296	388	29.9%
Leeukop Medium C	1290	329	25.5%
Modderbee	3307	1144	34.5%
Pretoria Central	2437	758	31.1%
Zonderwater medium A	1487	573	38.5%
Zonderwater medium B	1137	437	38.4%
Total	12723	4237	33.3%

Respondents for the quantitative study were selected by means of **non-probability sampling** by making use of the **accidental sampling** technique. Accidental sampling is also known as convenient or availability sampling (Strydom and De Vos, 1998:198). Strydom and De Vos (1998:198) posit that "Any case that happens to cross the researcher's path and has something to do with the phenomenon, gets included in the sample until the desired number is obtained".

The total population that was classified as re-offenders in the specific correctional facility was called to participate in the study. The reasons for this were twofold: Firstly, the researcher wanted to conduct the research on a voluntary

participation basis. Secondly, no detailed records are kept by the Department of Correctional Services that could demarcate the sample according to the selected criteria. It was therefore necessary to clarify it with the offenders themselves. The criteria included the following, namely offenders who previously served an imprisonment or community correction sentence, who re-offend within the specified five year survival period and was found guilty of a crime and sentenced to a further term of imprisonment or community corrections.

The researcher briefed the re-offenders who responded to the call on the criteria for inclusion in the study as respondents. Those who fell within the specified criteria were again informed about being voluntary respondents. As a result of this process 198 respondents were included in the sample and agreed to complete the PFIR scale.

Qualitative phase of the study

The **population** for the qualitative phase of the research comprised of experts in the field of crime prevention and management. The **sample** was drawn by means of snowball or chain reference sampling. Schurink (1998:254) states that the aim of snowball sampling is to gain a holistic understanding of a subject from the perspective of a specific group or organisation. The researcher requested respondents to identify other experts for inclusion in the sample. The identification of respondents was guided by

making use of theoretical sampling (compare Schurink, 1998:254). The final sample consisted of nine experts in the field of crime prevention and management representing social workers, criminologists and educationalists. The size of the sample was determined by the saturation point at which no new data could be obtained.

1.13 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics can be defined as "a set of moral principals which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students" (Strydom, 1998:24). Singleton (in Strydom, 1998:34) states that ethical issues become relevant in research when conflict arises between the values of the community regarding freedom and privacy as well as the methods of data generation. These aspects were addressed by the researcher through obtaining permission from the Department of Correctional Services to conduct research within the organisation (see Attachment 3). An internal study guide was also appointed by the department to monitor the research study. The Research Proposal and Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria also cleared the research proposal and data gathering methods. Lastly, in the case of both the quantitative and qualitative phase of the research, respondents signed a consent form (see

Attachment 4) confirming their voluntary participation in the research study.

1.14 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Relevant concepts will be defined in the relevant chapters. In this chapter the key concepts for the study are defined as follows:

- **Recidivism**

Recidivism can be defined as an individual's tendency to engage repeatedly in criminal conduct (compare Prinsloo, 1995:8 and New Dictionary of Social Work, 1995:56).

The mentioned definition is vague and tends to describe a behaviour pattern that can be associated with a type of offender. In this regard a hiatus exists whereby the definition of recidivism does not address the phenomenon holistically. An example of a gap is that it is unclear whether recidivism is associated with certain types of offences and sentences and if a person who violates his parole conditions could be classified as a recidivist.

For the purpose of this study recidivism will be defined as a behaviour process or pattern whereby an offender who previously served a prison or community corrections sentence, commits a further unspecified offence (within the survival period) and is found guilty of the offence and

sentenced to the further care of the Department of Correctional Services.

- **Inter-disciplinary**

"Inter" can be defined as an adjective describing "something as moving, existing, or happening between similar things or groups of people" (Collins Cobuild Student's Dictionary, 1990:294). The definition indicates that a group of people is striving towards a similar goal or purpose. *Discipline* in turn refers to a particular activity or subject associated with professional studies. Through the combination of these two concepts it can be assumed that inter-disciplinary refers to professional groups of people striving towards the achievement of a shared goal or purpose.

The New Dictionary of Social Work (1995) does not define an *inter-disciplinary* approach or *inter-disciplinary* team but describes an interprofessional team. An interprofessional team can be defined as a group "comprising of members trained in different professional disciplines that work towards a common problem through continuous communication, re-examination and evaluation of individual efforts towards team objectives and taking group responsibility for the final outcome". It is evident that clear comparisons exist between the definition of *interprofessional team* and *inter-disciplinary* team. Based on

these similarities the researcher posits that the concept could be perceived as being synonyms.

For the purpose of this study *inter-disciplinary* refers to the interactional partnership that is formed between persons of various professional groups striving towards achieving a similar goal and objective.

- **Classification system**

Champion (1994:2) postulates that a classification system differentiates between people according to their particular characteristics. Clear and Dammer (2000:413) concurs and add that a classification system comprises of standardised criteria whereby offenders are placed into groups for the purpose of assigning appropriate correctional programmes.

For the purpose of the study a classification system is viewed as being a professional tool whereby an offender can be classified as a recidivist based on standardised criteria.

1.15 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One limitation for the study was the lack of local research as well as research from an African perspective on the subject.

Although it was not intended with the study to label offenders as "recidivists" the researcher is aware of the possible negative impact that labelling can have on any

person. This will be specifically addressed in Chapter 4 (point 4.4).

1.16 CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The content of this report is divided into eight chapters. The outline of the chapters is as follows:

Chapter 1 provided a general introduction and orientation to the study.

Chapter 2 aims to conceptualise and operationalise recidivism as phenomenon.

Chapter 3 explores the causative factors of crime, recidivism and chronic offending.

Chapter 4 provide a theoretical perspective on recidivism and crime.

Chapter 5 reflects the empirical study and findings on the quantitative phase of this research study.

Chapter 6 focuses on the profile of the South African recidivist.

Chapter 7 reflects the presentation and interpretation of the empirical findings from the qualitative phase of the study.

Chapter 8 presents the inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the study.