1. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although violent crime accounts for approximately only 10% of all crime in most countries, South Africa has shown an increasing trend in the level of violent crime (Schönteich, 2000:5). These crimes are closely scrutinised by the government and the media due to the intense fear it elicits as a result of the element of violence involved. As a violent crime, retail robbery is categorised under robbery with aggravating circumstances. The violent nature of these robberies, as well as their extent, necessitates empirical research in this field.

1.1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

According to Wilson (1984:191) and Taylor (1998:31), robbery is a world-wide phenomenon that has been occurring for centuries. Literature (Macdonald, 1975:10; Wilson, 1984:191) from various countries such as Italy, England, United States of America, Canada, and Australia, support this statement.

1.1.1 Highwaymen, bandits and outlaws

As early as 78 BC, the roads of Italy were overrun with robbers (Wilson, 1984: 191). The sea also experienced an increase in the number of pirates whose vessels would follow merchantmen at a distance, too low in the water to be seen, and attack them at night.

In 1347 and 1348 the town of Bristol, in England, was taken over by a brigand who robbed the ships in the harbour while his men roamed the streets robbing and killing people at will. The situation was still almost as bad four centuries later when bands of robbers attacked houses in the country at night and occasionally burned them down. Bands of footpads, as the robbers were known, armed with knives would attack people who looked prosperous in London’s Covent Garden (Wilson, 1984:164).

In England in the 1800’s, robber bands were much like small armies (Gabor, Baril, Cusson, Elie, Le Blanc and Normandeau, 1987:viii). They would often descend on a town where a fête or festival was taking place and the townsfolk felt secure. They
would take over the town, plunder the houses, set them alight and then they would leave as swiftly as they entered the town. These robber bands would not hesitate to murder anyone during these attacks.

History is full of tales of robbers who were romanticised and others who, in contrast, were crucified. Robin Hood, the thief of Sherwood Forest, is one of the legends that was romanticised. He robbed the rich in order to give to the poor and, according to legend, only harmed others in self-defence or revenge. There is, however, no factual evidence indicating that Robin Hood actually existed, and if he did exist, what his true identity was (Macdonald, 1975:5).

In England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, bandits earned the name of “Knights of the Road” due to their gentlemanly behaviour while committing robberies (Wilson, 1984:408). Dick Turpin was one of the most successful and resourceful robbers of this time and became known as “King of the Highwaymen”. He led a gang that specialised in breaking into country houses and then torturing the inhabitants to force them to hand over any valuables. He was considered daring and brave and mention is often made of one particular hold-up in Epping Forest where he single-handedly stopped two coaches carrying over twenty passengers (Macdonald, 1975:10).

The climax of the American bandit of the Wild West occurred at the end of the Civil War in 1865. Robberies increased as people seeking fortune moved to the frontier and established small towns. These bandits targeted individuals, mail coaches, trains, as well as banks (Gabor et al., 1987:viii). Many of these bandits had spectacular but brief careers in crime. The Dalton gang, for example, started robbing banks in 1890 but were captured when they attempted to rob two banks at once in 1891 (Macdonald, 1975:12).

Many Western heroes practised their robbery profession over many years. Butch Cassidy, who held up his first train at the age of twenty, robbed his last train 22 years later. Other more successful bandits of this time that were in the limelight were the brothers Frank and Jesse James (Macdonald, 1975:15). Jesse achieved more fame than his brother and was the leader of the James-Younger band. He has been referred to as the “King of the Bandits”. Interestingly enough, neither of the James brothers were ever convicted of any crime.
The notorious couple, Bonnie and Clyde, were not as fortunate as the James brothers. They were only active for a short period of time from 1930 to 1932 and were noted more for their violence than for their success in bank robberies. According to Macdonald (1975:323), they killed between ten and twelve people, yet the largest amount they stole during a bank robbery was 1500 dollars.

Even the Ten Most Wanted Offenders of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States of America (USA) in the past fifty years contained five robbery offenders (Fox, 1976:21). The first two of these offenders were Gerald Chapman and George “Dutch” Anderson. They specialised in jewel theft and robbed a post office truck and department store. The next robbery offender on the FBI list was John Herbert Dillinger who was primarily a bank robber. He was considered to be one of the most dangerous Depression-era criminals and gang leaders in the Midwest, having killed a total of ten men and wounding seven others (Fox, 1976:22). FBI director at the time, J. Edgar Hoover, considered the next robbery offender on the list, Arizona Clark “Ma” Barker, to have been the most vicious, dangerous and resourceful criminal the United States had ever seen. According to Fox (1976:23), she was involved in hold-ups of federal payrolls, post offices and banks. She had never been arrested for any crimes as she remained behind the scenes and sent her sons and other criminals to commit the crimes. The final robbery offender on the list was James Earl Ray, who was responsible for the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968. Prior to the assassination, Ray had been a petty hold-up robber and specialised in the robbery of gas stations and grocery stores (Fox, 1976:24).

A well-known Canadian outlaw was Red Ryan, the Toronto gangster of the 1930’s. Fattah (1997:137) states that he was regarded as the Jesse James of Canada. After he was shot dead during the course of a robbery, his body was exhibited in a funeral parlour where approximately six thousand people filed by to see the outlaw hero.

In Australia, a bushranger by the name of Ned Kelly also achieved fame for his exploits as a bank robber between 1878 and 1880. He was known to have worn a home-made suit of armour when committing robberies in order to protect himself from bullets (Macdonald, 1975:27). He often wore disguises, such as police uniforms, to gain people’s trust.

Historical references to robbers in Southern Africa are limited (Crummey,1986:6). However, mention is made of Mashala, “the Robin Hood of the Zambians”, as well as the Hans gang of the Kalahari that robbed farmers of cattle in the Grootfontein area.
between 1906 and 1930. Although no references to bandits could be found in South African history books, various legends are in circulation regarding coaches that were robbed on their way to diamond diggings.

Many of these robbers (also known as highwaymen, bandits and outlaws) were inspired by the Robin Hood legend to become professional robbers. The fact that they violated the law but represented justice of a higher order, led to them being regarded as heroes even though they were the cause of innocent people's deaths (Kooistra, 1983:214).

1.1.2 Revolutionary movements

Many revolutionary movements such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, the Black September Movement in the Middle East, the Tupamaros in Uruguay, the Front DeLiberation du Quebec (FLQ) in Quebec, the Black Panthers and the Weathermen in the United States (Macdonald, 1975:29) have resorted to armed robbery to obtain weapons or to finance their struggle against the government. Like the bandits, these rebels are regarded as common criminals by the authorities and as patriotic heroes by those in favour of their cause (Macdonald, 1975:29). Billingsley (1988:xi) adds that the community often supports and respects these offenders.

Members of these groups have gained both money and attention for their cause from bank robberies, skyjacking of aeroplanes as well as the hijacking of passenger ships. Passengers and crew of aeroplanes and ships are often held hostage by the rebels until they receive a ransom. This, in turn, enables them to further finance their cause as well as making their political views and motives known to the rest of the world.

1.1.3 Robbery at present

Although international comparisons are difficult, the South African crime figures for 1999, measured against those of 90 other Interpol member countries, indicate that as far as property and commercial crime are concerned, South Africa is rating quite well. In this regard, South Africa actually rates better than, for example, Canada and Australia (http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/report.html). In contrast with this, however, South Africa measures unacceptably high with regard to violence, especially robbery.
According to world-wide United Nations statistics, the number of criminal acts of robbery for the period 1986-1990 shows an increase of 63% in relation to the period 1980-1986 (http://www.ncjrs.org/policing/crj359.html). According to the 2001 British Crime Survey the overall level of violent crime in Britain is now 1% below that in 1991 (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk). In Australia, however, statistics indicate that the rate of reported robbery more than doubled in the ten year period from 1975/76 to 1984/85 (see http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch1.html).

According to Myerson (1995:15), approximately 486 people are seriously injured in South Africa every day as a result of criminal violence. He adds that in 1965 a person would have had to live 1560 years to be a probable robbery victim. In 1985, the chances of being robbed doubled and the figure decreased to 820 years. The type of robberies being committed presently have also undergone a transformation. There has been a resurgence in the number of hijackings, cash-in-transit heists, bank robberies, as well as personal robberies being committed.

Official crime statistics indicate that from January to September 2001 (http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/report.html) robbery showed a significant increase of 7.6% in South Africa. In order to comprehend the extent of the problem, definitions relevant to the phenomenon of retail robbery will subsequently be discussed.

1.2 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

To understand the phenomenon of retail robbery, it is necessary to define certain concepts relevant to the topic. Concepts that will be defined include the following: retail robbery, modus operandi and victim.

1.2.1 Retail robbery

Before the terms robbery and retail robbery are defined, the concepts retail and retail store, as they are used in the current study, will receive attention.

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (1998:1003) defines retail as the practice of selling goods in small quantities to the general public at outlets (i.e. shops). In turn a retailer is the person or business that sells these goods to the public.
Retail stores, as defined in the Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1988:821), are a form of supermarket and are defined as self-service shops selling goods such as groceries, household items, as well as a wide variety of other items. For the purpose of this study, small, medium and slightly larger retailers such as cafés and supermarkets will be included. Large superstores which also sell furniture and large appliances will not be included due to the fact that it will not be possible to determine the individual impact of the retail robbery on the owner.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1998:1017), robbery is the action or an instance of stealing. Robbery, as defined by Louw, Van Heerden and Smith (1978:71), is the unlawful, wilful and violent taking away of another person's moveable property and its appropriation without the entitled person's consent. There may be actual violence against the person, or a threat of violence.

In addition, Naudé and Stevens (1988:137) state that robbery is the wrongful and wilful use of violence to force another into allowing property in their immediate control to be stolen. Brown, Esbensen and Geis (2001:90) concur with the above definitions but add the element of fear to the felonious taking of money or goods of value from the person of another or in his\(^1\) presence.

All the above-mentioned definitions, as well as those of Snyman (1992:516) and Bartol (1995:336), indicate that violence or threats of violence are associated with robbery. In Conklin (1972:4), the element of violence present in a robbery incident is also taken note of, but it is emphasised that theft is a just as vital component of robbery and should therefore be included in the definition thereof. Hunt (in Naudé & Stevens, 1988:163) refers more explicitly to this component and considers robbery to be the theft of property by intentionally using violence or threats of violence to induce submission to the taking of it from another.

There is often confusion as to whether robbery should be classified as a violent crime or a property crime. This confusion stems from the inclusion of violence or threats of violence, as well as the theft of money or goods in the above definitions of robbery. Due to the fact that robbery is a form of theft and that money or goods are stolen, it can be considered as a property crime. In this regard, Block (1989:235) emphasises

\(^1\) All future references to the male gender are not gender specific and refer to both genders, except in the results.
that the primary aim of robbery is to acquire money or valuable objects and not to injure victims. Macdonald (1975:40) states that most robbers have no history of violent crime and are known as offenders who repeatedly commit property crimes. Conklin (1972:4) agrees that in robbery the primary motive is theft, whereas violence is used to facilitate the theft.

Gabor et al. (1987:206), however, are of the opinion that the physical, emotional and social consequences associated with robbery confirm that it cannot be exclusively classified as a property crime. Many researchers and most judiciaries also classify robbery as a violent crime (Cook, 1985:480).

In South Africa, robbery with aggravating circumstances is classified as a violent crime (Crime Information Management Centre, 1998:7). According to the Crime Information Management Centre (1998:58), robbery with aggravating circumstances can be defined as the unlawful, intentional and violent removal and appropriation of movable corporeal property obtained by the use or threatened use of violence towards the victim. The two central elements of robbery, namely violence and theft, are highlighted in this definition.

Based on the above-mentioned definitions of a retail store and robbery in general, the following operational definition for retail robbery can be formulated for the purpose of this study: Retail robbery refers to the unlawful, intentional theft of a retailer’s money, goods and/or valuables against his will, with the use or threatened use of violence and force, with or without a weapon.

1.2.2 Modus operandi

Modus operandi is a Latin term which means behaviour, comportment or operational procedure (Horgan, 1979:57). According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (1998:750), it is also defined as a particular method of working or dealing with a task.

In a criminological context modus operandi refers to the career patterns of offenders (Conklin, 1972:ix), whereas Brown et al. (2001:41) simply define it as a crime method. Van Heerden (1985:10) gives a more comprehensive description of the term and regards it as the habits and techniques of criminals which have become stereotyped. He views it as a routine mode of conduct in which individualised techniques are employed.
According to Caldwell (1965:324), \textit{modus operandi} is a means of identification which is based on the fact that many offenders tend to use the same method again when committing a crime. Barnes and Teeters (in Van der Westhuizen, 1993:32) describe it as a system to identify offenders based on the assumption that they leave behind their trademark in the form of the crime they commit and the methods they employ. The routine pattern of actions, individualised techniques and the strength of the habit combined with the success or failure of offenders are, according to Horgan (1979:57), important factors in determining the \textit{modus operandi} of the offenders.

In addition, Marais and Van Rooyen (1990:67) state that this profile not only involves operational methods and techniques, but it also includes the masquerade techniques, secret language, writing and communication signs of criminals. Weston and Wells (1990:104) refer to this as the signature of the offender. These are the procedures an offender engages in to commit a crime successfully. It is a behavioural pattern that offenders learn as they gain experience in committing offences (Bartol, 1995:241).

According to Maree (1995:78), \textit{modus operandi} can even be described more broadly, as it not only involves committing the crime but also the planning process preceding the crime. The various phases of the crime, namely the planning phase, the operational phase and the post-offence phase depict the \textit{modus operandi} of the offender. The \textit{modus operandi} is therefore indicative of the motivation for the crime, as well as the manner in which offenders execute the crime.

In conjunction with Maree (1995:78), Van der Westhuizen (1993:34-39), as well as Marais and Van Rooyen (1990:68-77), agree that references to \textit{modus operandi} can include the following aspects:

- The characteristic actions during the planning phase (which includes determining the most suitable day and time, the target and potential reward, as well as a means of escaping from the scene).

- The characteristic actions during the committing of the crime (which includes the day, date and time when the crime was committed, the spatial distribution of the crime, the type of premises or building targeted, victim preference, the method of perpetration and instruments used, the motive of the criminal, the nature of the property involved, vehicles used during the commission of the crime, as well as personal characteristics and peculiarities of the offender).
• The characteristic actions after the offence (which includes using vehicles with which to flee the crime scene).

For the purpose of this study, the *modus operandi* of the offenders will be examined from the perspective of the victims. As the details of the planning phase cannot be supplied by the victims, the operational definition will, therefore, include only the operational and post-offence phases. On the basis of the above-mentioned discussion, *modus operandi* can be operationally defined as the routine in which individualised methods, techniques and habits are employed by offenders in the operational and post-offence phases of a retail robbery.

1.2.3 Victim

The word victim is derived from the Latin word *victimina* which has two meanings, namely:

• To offer a man, animal or any object or a godly being, or to make an offering during a religious ceremony or
• a person who suffers, is harmed and or destroyed as a result of another’s actions (Drapkin & Viano, 1974:13).

The last mentioned definition is applicable to criminology as the Greek word for victim, *logos*, denotes the scientific study of a victim (Schneider, 1982:60). The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1988:910) defines a victim as a person who is injured or killed by another or as the result of an occurrence, whereas Barkas (1978:7) defines a victim as one who has directly or indirectly suffered as a result of a specific illegal action.

In 1948, Von Hentig was the first criminologist to refer to the crime victim as the injured party in his book *The criminal and his victim* (Drapkin & Viano, 1974:28; Fattah, 1992:29; Von Hentig, 1948:386). Ziegenhagen (1977:1, 5) adds to Von Hentig’s description and views the crime victim as a person who is injured or suffered financial losses as a result of the violation of a law. In this regard, Fattah (1992:58) states that this violation must be intentional in nature.

Nagel (in Ziegenhagen, 1977:6) further postulates that the term victim is appropriate even if the victim is not injured and suffers no deprivation whatsoever. Verwey (1994:19) is in agreement with this statement and the victim is therefore determined
by reference to the offender’s viewpoint and is the person whom the offender wishes to damage, thinks he is damaging or actually does damage.

According to Pretorius (1982:11-12) there are three different criteria for defining a crime victim, namely:

- From a legal point of view one can only be defined as a victim if a crime has occurred. This, however, excludes anti-social behaviour which is also studied within the field of Criminology.

- The experience of victimisation is evaluated and only if one experiences consequences pertaining to the act can one be called a victim. Pretorius (1982:11-12), however, states that for every empirical study a researcher should decide what type of victim they are going to include and then specifically define the victim.

- The nature of the victim does not necessarily have to be a person, but can also be a collectivity, organisation or other societies (Van der Berg, 1997:26). In this regard, Quinney (1972:320) also states that a definition is susceptible to varying definitions.

Van der Walt (1985:34) further distinguishes between two types of victims, namely the active victim who contributed to the victimisation and the passive victim who in no way, consciously or unconsciously, facilitated in the furthering of the crime. He further categorises these victims as being either directly or indirectly affected by the crime, or as being a latent victim who has the potential to become a victim.

For the purpose of this study, a victim will be defined as an individual who has been directly affected and suffered negative effects which may include financial, physical, emotional and social consequences as a result of a retail robbery.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Crime is directly or indirectly a threat to every member of the South African society. It has a negative effect on the victim, the offender, their families, as well as the economy and stability of the country (Kruger, 1978:460). Violent crime, such as retail robbery, gives rise to feelings of fear and insecurity in the community and hampers socio-economic development and productivity.
1.3.1 Extent of retail robbery

According to Schônteich (2000:5), the crime index of the Nedcor Institute for Security Studies indicates that violent crime in South Africa increased by almost 10% between 1998 and 1999, more than any other category of crime. In addition, every third crime reported to the police in 1999 involved violence or the threat of violence (Schônteich, 2000:5).

Statistics (http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200111/prov rsa.html) indicate that in 1994, 39 958 cases of robbery with aggravating circumstances were reported to the police. In 1995, the figure rose to 40 596, then dropped to 33 691 in 1996. This amount decreased in 1997 to 31 737, thereafter increasing to 39 882 in 1998. A steady increase followed in 1999, 2000 and 2001 with the figures being, respectively, 46 383, 51 091, and finally 56 500. As previously mentioned in section 1.1.3, robbery with aggravating circumstances displayed a significant increase in 2001. Figure 1 depicts this increase, as well as the situation since 1994.

![Graph showing the increase in robbery with aggravating circumstances from 1994 to 2001](http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200111/prov rsa.html)


South Africa has also shown an increase in the number of armed robbery attacks against the retail industry (Pretoria Checkers robbed, 2002:8; Pistol-whipped during robbery, 2000:6). Reports published in the media over the past two years concerning this phenomenon confirm this increase (Armed robbers steal substantial amount from Mayor’s Walk Spar, 2000:3; Crime count - Germiston, 2001:2; Crime count - Meadowbrook, 2001:2; Crime count - Melville, 2000:2; Crime count - Steeledale,
2001:2; Crime count - Yeoville, 2000:2; Man held, another on the run after robbery, 2000:2; Murders, robbery in weekend crime, 2000:2; Fourty four thousand rand taken in robberies, 2000:3; Robbers arrested after they fail to get away, 2000:6; Rowers buit R6m. in besiege winkelsentrum, 1999:1; Rowers vasgetrek na skietery op snelweg, 1999:4; Three suspects wounded in highway shootout, 1999:3; Two armed robberies foiled, 1999:1; Two die in shooting, 2000:3; Two men slain in robbery bid, 2000:6).

Gibbs and Shelly (1995:309) maintain that retail establishments such as supermarkets, restaurants and bars are prime targets for offenders interested in obtaining cash. The reason for this being that they are among the kinds of businesses that have been least affected by the credit revolution and the account system. They still deal in large amounts of cash and will most likely continue to do so. As a result, these businesses are soft targets for robberies. This is especially true for those who are unable to afford costly security mechanisms.

They are also targeted because their employees are merely ordinary citizens who are not equipped to defend themselves against robbers. Various other factors also play a role in the increase in retail robberies in South Africa. Materialism is a major factor, as these robberies are very lucrative. Unemployment, poverty, and relative deprivation (the gap between an individual’s expectations of life and the possibilities of realising these expectations) are some socio-economic factors that may also contribute to this phenomenon (Crime Information Management Centre, 1998:63).

The climate of violence prevalent in South Africa, as well as the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system, also give these offenders the confidence to orchestrate these daring robberies. According to the Crime Information Management Centre (1998:63), firearms smuggled into South Africa, together with the many illegal firearms already available locally, create a market in which firearms are apparently freely available. The availability of illegal firearms and the number of crime syndicates operating in the country also contribute to the climate of lawlessness and crimes of violence such as retail robbery (Crime Information Management Centre, 1998:63).

1.3.2 Aftermath of robbery

Criminal victimisation has many negative consequences for surviving victims, their families and the community. Conklin (1975:3) states that these consequences can be measured in terms of direct costs, attributable to the offences themselves, and indirect costs, attributable to the reactions to the criminal behaviour.
According to Glanz (1994:21), the impact of robberies on victims can be determined in respect of the negative effects on aspects such as quality of life, financial loss suffered as a result of the offence, injuries sustained as well as the emotional and psychological consequences thereof. Galaway and Hudson (1981:76), however, indicate that the cost of victimisation is the price that is paid for crime and is measured in terms of money, property, pain, suffering, loss of life, fear of crime and the accompanying humiliation.

Some robbery victims may suffer financially as a result of factors which include loss of cash and property, damage to property, medical costs, the loss of working hours and security costs. Due to the intense fear this crime arouses, many victims are traumatised to such an extent that they are unable to speak or continue with their daily activities after the incident (Van Zyl, 2000:5). Furthermore, this traumatic event often results in victims experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms which may include flashbacks and nightmares of the incident, sleep and eating disorders, a diminished responsiveness or psychological “numbing” to the external world, feelings of alienation or detachment from society, difficulty concentrating, and extreme avoidance of anything that reminds them of the event (Barlow & Durand, 1995:192; Gabor et al., 1987:viii).

### 1.3.3 Problems with the investigation of retail robbery

According to Banton (1985:43), retail robberies have a higher detection, as well as reporting rate, than street robberies. The higher detection rate is due to the fact that larger amounts of money are stolen in retail robberies than in street robberies. Retailers also report the crime more often because they have to submit a claim to their insurance company in order to replace the stolen revenue. Lack of police resources, however, hampers the investigation of these crimes. Increased policing requires revenue for the expenditure. Members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) currently have a difficult task of apprehending these offenders with their limited resources (Criminal Justice’s budget down while crime is up, 2000:6).

A major factor influencing the investigation of robbery is manpower or the number of police officers available to address this crime. Between July 1995 and April 2000 the number of SAPS employees decreased by 14%, whereas the South African population increased by about 10% over the same period (http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Crime%20index/00Vol4No2/ThinBlueLine.html). In 1999, South Africa had a civilian to police officer ratio of 408:1, meaning that for every 408 people living in this country, there
was one uniformed police officer or detective available. The situation has not changed drastically and as a result, they are unable to cope with their ever increasing case load.

A further complication is the involvement of gangs and crime syndicates in retail robbery. These robberies are usually committed by gangs consisting of between three and ten offenders (Crime count - Meadowbrook, 2001:2; Crime count - Melville, 2000:2; Crime count - Yeoville, 2000:2; Pretoria Checkers robbed, 2002:8). There is often no obvious link between the various offenders involved and/or many of them often have immunity against prosecution. The investigations are further confounded by police having to apprehend various different suspects for the same robbery. Corrupt officials also play a major role, in that the offenders often have contacts within the police or the criminal justice system and manage to avoid prosecution.

1.3.4 Problems with existing research

Extensive research on the extent, nature, consequences and prevention of robbery in general has been conducted overseas by researchers such as Conklin, Gabor et al., Duffala, Curtis, as well as Dunn. However, a literature search of South African databases, undertaken by information specialists at the University of Pretoria's Academic Information Service, indicated that no specific research regarding retail robbery as such had been undertaken on an international or national level. The fact that each form of robbery is unique (e.g. bank, cash-in-transit, personal and/or retail robbery), necessitates research into these specific forms of robbery.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the fact that information regarding robbery in general is available at present, this study was not purely exploratory in nature and the researcher was guided by available research on robbery in general. This enabled the researcher to compile a focused interview schedule. One of the limitations of these type of interviews, however, is the fact that these interviews do not always yield sufficiently rich data. To overcome this limitation, follow-up interviews were done to obtain information on respondents' feelings and experiences.

The size of the sample might also be viewed as limited, however, it is important to keep in mind that scepticism of research, as well as a need for confidentiality could, in
conjunction with geographical stipulations and cost-effectiveness factors, influence the response rate.

In the current study, the modus operandi of the offenders is determined from the victims’ perspective. Although it is advised that this element would produce richer data if studied from the offenders’ perspective, researchers such as Beck (1999:94) emphasise that victims are a valuable and under-utilised source of information and victim-based research can be a valuable strategy in identifying the characteristics of the modus operandi of offenders.

1.5 VALUE OF THE STUDY

As mentioned earlier, Beck (1999:95) is of the opinion that victims are a valuable and under-utilised source of information and victim-based research can be a valuable strategy in determining the characteristics of the modus operandi of offenders. Knowledge of the modus operandi of retail robbers from the victims’ perspective may, in the first instance, lead to the formulation of various crime prevention strategies. Apart from the fact that it might assist in improving existing preventative measures employed by the businesses, new strategies could also be formulated. This study might also be beneficial in determining which retail establishments are at greater risk of becoming victims of robbery. If one can determine the risk to retail stores, then it could be possible to prevent these robberies.

Retail staff and their families live with the effects of robbery incidents on an increasingly regular basis. Reynolds (1994:180) indicates that the benefits of having knowledge of victim reactions during a robbery, as well as the consequences following the robbery, will be of value in terms of training retail staff to deal with such situations. As a result of this study, potential victims may be informed of possible precautionary measures and of the risks involved in trying to be heroic during an armed robbery. Retail robbery through the victims’ eyes may lead to the discovery of information about the offender and the crime which has, as yet, gone undetected. This better understanding may even save lives in the future, as victims will be equipped with knowledge on factors that can increase their potential for injuries.

The findings that come about as a result of this research will also be advantageous to the SAPS. Police investigators may learn new facts about retail robbery which will lead to a pro-active role in the policing of this crime. More information regarding the
modus operandi of retail robbers might even transform the public’s perceptions and fear of robbery, bringing about a better understanding of the violent nature of robbery.

1.6 AIMS OF THE STUDY

In light of the preceding discussion, the aims of the study are as follows:

(i) To analyse the operational and post-offence phases of retail robberies with specific reference to the day and time of the robbery, the number of offenders involved, the weapons used, the violence or threat of violence exercised, as well as the means of escape.

(ii) To determine the situational factors which play a role in retail robberies.

(iii) To ascertain victims’ reactions during a retail robbery.

(iv) To determine the consequences of retail robberies for the direct victims thereof.

1.7 CONCLUSION

In order to realise the above-mentioned research objectives, the remainder of the study will be divided into various sections. The exposition of the theoretical perspectives to be applied to the phenomenon of retail robbery will be discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 existing research relevant to the study will be highlighted. Based on these two chapters research expectations of the study will be formulated in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 will entail a discussion of the research design of the study, including the sample, measuring instruments, and ethical considerations in evaluating the research expectations. The results of the study will be presented in Chapter 6, followed by a discussion of the results, conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 7.
2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The essential purpose of theory is the explanation of things that can be observed (Williams & McShane, 1999:2). The researcher’s use of theories in qualitative research is substantiated by Huysamen’s (1993:2) statement that it is always advantageous for a research project to be linked to one theory or another because the generally accepted nature of theories heightens the impact of the study and prevents it from being an isolated piece of knowledge.

Various criminology theories such as Merton’s anomie theory, Cohen’s subculture theory, Sutherland’s differential association theory, Hirschi’s social control theory, the subculture of violence theory by Wolfgang and Ferracutti, as well as the conflict theories, can be applied to the phenomenon of retail robbery. However, due to the fact that the *modus operandi* of the retail robber from the perspective of the victim, as well as the situational factors that play a role during a retail robbery and not the causality of retail robbery are the focus of this study, the routine activities theory of Cohen and Felson was selected as a guideline for the research. This theory, which was selected in order to explain the victimisation risk of retail stores, states that the volume of criminal offences is related to the nature of everyday patterns of social interaction (Williams & McShane, 1999:236).

Owing to the fact that the determination of the consequences of retail robbery victimisation is also an aim of the study, three reactionary theories derived from the field of psychology will be discussed in order to serve as a background for the discussion of the experiences of the victims in Chapter 6. These reactionary theories to be highlighted include Burgess and Holmstrom’s crisis theory, Heider’s attribution theory and Janoff-Bulman and Frieze’s theory of victim reactions. In addition, based on these three theories, a *Model of the victim’s experience after a retail robbery* will also formulated for the purposes of the current study.

2.1 ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY

The development of the routine activities theory, as well as the theoretical assumptions thereof, will subsequently be discussed. Thereafter, it will also be applied to the phenomenon of retail robbery.
According to Sheley (1995:334), the routine activities theory has its roots in the ecological tradition and shares the social disorganisation theory’s focus on factors that control the occurrence of crime. The study of ecology has a long history in Criminology and goes as far back as the mid-nineteenth century when Quetelet and Guerry identified regular patterns in the distribution of criminal activities. Messner and Tardiff (1985:241), as well as Williams and McShane (1999:57), state that the research of Robert Park and Ernest Burgess which led to their concentric zone model in 1925, as well as the work of Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay in 1942, reaffirmed the earlier proposition that illegal activities are systematically distributed according to geographical and social boundaries.

Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, the exponents of the routine activities theory, were inspired by Amos Hawley’s theory of human ecology proposed in 1950, in which he emphasised the nature of routine activities as an essential part of everyday life (Sheley, 1995:176; Williams & McShane, 1999:236). As a result they proposed the routine activities approach in 1979 in an attempt to explain the increasing crime rate in America during the 1970’s (Brown et al., 2001:220).

2.1.1 Theoretical assumptions of the routine activities theory

The routine activities approach is intended to explain direct contact predatory violations (Sherman, Gartin & Buerger, 1996:96). According to Messner and Tardiff (1985:242), these violations are illegal acts which involve a direct physical encounter between an offender and a victim.

The routine activities theory essentially states that the volume of criminal offences is related to the nature of everyday patterns of social interaction. According to Williams and McShane (1999:236), routine activity means any commonly occurring social activity that provides for basic needs. Examples of these activities include formal work, leisure activities, obtaining shelter, child rearing, grocery shopping and sleeping. The bulk of these activities occur outside the home and the effect of this has been the convergence, in time and space, of suitable targets for crime and motivated offenders. According to Bonn (1984:213), spending more time outside the home places more people in more situations where they can be targeted by offenders. Routine activities thus place people at greater risk of being a victim of violent crimes such as robbery (Barkan, 1997:102; Reid, 1988:166; Sheley, 1995:176; Vito & Holmes, 1994:145).
As routine activities change, the opportunities for crime are also influenced (Williams & McShane, 1999:237). This change in routine activities therefore changes the opportunities for crime. The shift of routine activities for women, due to their increasing participation in the labour force (Bonn, 1984:213), can serve as an example hereof. As a result of this change, women's possibility for victimisation has increased in relation to their increased exposure to motivated offenders.

According to the routine activities theory, the convergence in time and space of three variables contribute to the likelihood of a crime occurring, namely a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardians (Brown et al., 2001:220). These three variables will subsequently be discussed.

- **Motivated offender**

In the opinion of Williams and McShane (1999:236), Cohen and Felson were not particularly concerned with this factor. To them, offender motivation is assumed and enough existing criminological theories, such as those of Cloward and Ohlin, as well as Merton, focus on the offenders and the influences or factors motivating them to commit a crime. Cohen and Felson wanted the focus of their theory to lie in other areas such as how the routine behaviour of individuals transforms them into suitable targets in situations where there is a lack of guardianship (Maxfield, 1987:276).

- **Suitable targets**

The suitability of targets is influenced by four components, namely the value, physical visibility, accessibility, and inertia thereof (Felson, 1998:57; Cohen & Cantor, 1980:143). The value of a target is influenced by its financial and symbolic desirability, while the physical visibility refers to the risk of being observed during the course of the crime (Dussich & Eichman, 1976:94). Accessibility indicates the ease with which a criminal can approach or leave a target without being noticed. This, in turn, can be linked to the concept of inertia which concerns the ease with which an offender can attain the desired target (Felson, 1998:57). The amount of moveable assets, as well as the resistance shown by the target or individual are taken into account here (Cohen & Cantor, 1980:143).
• Absence of capable guardians

Guardianship pertains to how well a potential target of crime is protected (Sheley, 1995:334). The most significant guardians in society are ordinary citizens going about their daily routines. Felson (1998:53) states that a guardian is not usually someone who brandishes a gun or threatens an offender with quick punishment, but rather someone whose mere presence serves as a gentle reminder that someone is watching. According to Lynch (1987:287), this could include people such as professional security guards or simply the mere presence of someone who may prevent the crime. Physical obstacles or technological mechanisms such as alarms, burglar bars and closed circuit television can also be considered as capable guardians.

According to Cohen and Felson (1979:592), routine activities create a convergence in time and space of motivated offenders and suitable targets, in the absence of capable guardians. If one of these three variables are missing, the likelihood of crime decreases. However, if all of these variables are present, and one of the elements is strengthened, then the probability of crime increases (Williams & McShane, 1999:237).

In addition, the routine activities theory stresses the importance of ecological factors in explaining victimisation. Barkan (1997:103) states that victimisation depends on people’s routine activities, as well as on the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood. According to him, the convergence of motivated offenders and suitable targets in the absence of guardians is, due to physical characteristics of certain areas, more likely in some neighbourhoods than in others (Barkan, 1997:102). These likely neighbourhoods usually include slums and lower-class areas and specific locations within these neighbourhoods are also more vulnerable than others.

The above-mentioned areas are characterised by physical signs of incivility, such as buildings in disrepair, litter, vandalism, and abandoned buildings and cars. Among the social signs of incivility are loiterers, vagrancy, prostitution, and public drunkenness, as well as the visible sale and use of drugs (Lab. 1997:10).

According to Lab (1997:42), there is a direct link between incivility and crime, since incivility may lead to the deterioration of an area. In addition, incivility also causes fear of crime and creates the image that residents are not concerned and therefore
"ripe" for crime. Sherman et al. (1996:96) refer to these areas as hot spots of predatory crime.

2.1.2 Application of the routine activities theory to retail robbery

The routine activities theory can be applied to the phenomenon of retail robbery due to the fact that it may be seen as a direct contact predatory violation. Predatory violations, according to Messner and Tardiff (1985:242), entail the direct physical contact between an offender and a victim, or between the offender and an object which the offender intends to steal or damage.

Landau and Fridman (1993:167) confirm that robbery, as well as murder, can be classified as direct contact predatory violations. According to the routine activities theory, direct contact predatory violations such as robbery may occur when a motivated offender and a suitable target converge in a specific time and place in the absence of capable guardians. Routine activities also affect the exposure of persons and property to risk, which in turn provides varying opportunities for robbery victimisation (Maxfield, 1987:277). Variations in the everyday routine activity patterns of individuals can therefore increase or decrease the possibility that a motivated retail robber and suitable store will converge at a specific place and time in the absence of capable guardians (Maxfield, 1987:276).

The routine activities theory is applicable to retail robbery once the emphasis is placed on the situational opportunities that arise when a motivated retail robber and a suitable target converge in the absence of capable guardians at a specific place and time (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1978:115). The above-mentioned three variables will subsequently be applied to the phenomenon of retail robbery.

- Motivated offender

In accordance with the routine activities theory, the presence of a motivated offender is assumed. It can be accepted that there are sufficient motivated offenders with the ability and expertise to rob a retail store.

Barkan (1997:275), as well as Landau and Fridman (1993:168), state that the primary motivation for robbery is economic or monetary gain. For the robber, a hold-up of a commercial establishment, such as a retail store, will generally net a vast sum of money (Conklin, 1981:296). Although Conklin (1972:69), as well as
Feeney and Weir (in Gabor et al., 1987:27), agree with this statement and money is widely accepted as the primary motive for robbery. Katz (in Barkan, 1997:276) contends that the amount of money that persistent robbers gain from their robberies is too small for economic gain to be their primary motive. He states that respect from their peers may also be a motivational factor. In spite of disagreement amongst researchers concerning the main intent for robbery, the fact that there are individuals whom are motivated to rob a retail store is acknowledged.

- **Suitable targets**

As mentioned previously in section 2.1.1, target selection is influenced by four components, namely the value of the target, physical visibility, accessibility and finally, inertia. Due to the assertion that the primary aim of robbery is economic gain, it can be assumed that the value of the target would play an important role in target selection (Landau & Fridman, 1993:168). Barkan (1997:276) states that retail robberies have increased because retail stores usually have a fair amount of money. According to Brown et al. (2001:220), the increased availability of luxury items in retail stores associated with societal affluence also contributes to a greater suitability of these targets.

Professional robbers - whether gangs or individuals - usually rob persons who, as part of their employment, are in charge of money or goods. They view themselves as taking from the company, not from the actual individuals involved (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:101). The target should also be vulnerable, meaning that the store should have staff who would offer no resistance, have few clients in the building, as well as easily accessible escape routes (Naudé & Stevens, 1988:170).

The physical visibility of retail stores refers to the risk of being observed during the course of the crime (Dussich & Eichman, 1976:94). It is essential for businesses such as retail stores to be visible to all in order to attract customers and to earn money. This visibility, however, could also enable potential robbers to see everything that is happening inside the store and thus make the store a more suitable target.

A retail store has pre-determined working hours every day of the week. The store opens at a specific time and closes at a specific time. This routine increases the risk of victimisation for the owner or manager who unlocks and locks the store. Visibility, therefore, also plays a role in that the offender may be 'aware of the
times when the store is not busy. Knowledge of the stores’ peak trading hours may provide the potential robber with a notion of the time when there will be the least amount of people to observe the offender and the crime.

Retail stores are often open until late in the evening which also increases the vulnerability of the store. This factor can also be linked to the component of accessibility for the reason that the offender has knowledge of when the store would be the most accessible for the robbery to be committed.

The proximity of a store to a major highway, which is an ideal escape route, may also play a role in its vulnerability to robbery. According to Gabor et al. (1987: 183), these routes not only allow offenders to leave the area of the crime quickly, but also provide them with the cover of other traffic.

The next component is inertia, which refers to the ease with which the target can be obtained. In the case of a retail robbery, inertia is also directly linked to the accessibility of the store. The accessibility of retail stores could influence the offender’s decision to commit the crime because gaining access would require more effort on the offender’s part.

Professional robbers, as identified in Conklin’s typology of robbers (to be discussed in Chapter 3), usually strike at banks and businesses, stealing large sums of money. These offenders are committed to robbery because it is direct, fast, and sometimes very profitable (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989:263). When a robber has to choose a target, he prefers a victim who has a large sum of money, such as a retail store (Barkan, 1997:275; Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). This relates to the concept of inertia as it can be used immediately, whereas other items such as jewellery have to be sold first, increasing the possibility of the robber being caught.

The success of a robbery also rests upon the ability of the offenders to approach the target without drawing attention to themselves. Robbers must act quickly in order to obtain their goal, while the amount of resistance offered by the target will influence the ease with which a robbery is carried out. In this regard, Brown et al. (2001:220) also mention that products have become increasingly compact and mobile, further facilitating the task of robbers.

Retail store owners, managers and personnel are also vulnerable to robbery because their employment involves face-to-face contact with large amounts of
people on a routine basis. According to Lynch (1987:295), the risk of victimisation or exposure to motivated offenders is greater for these employees than for those less accessible to the public, such as the store accountant. Lynch (1987:295) also states that individuals who handle money as part of their job, as many retail store workers do, face a greater risk of victimisation than those who do not.

- **Absence of capable guardians**

Einstadter (1995:81) suggests that robbers plan their robberies and select targets which they have been observing over a period of time. These observations enable robbers to determine if there is an absence of capable guardians at their desired target. As mentioned in paragraph 2.1.1, people, as well as technological mechanisms, serve as guardians to property. Individuals that act as guardians to a store may be the owners, managers, employees or the clients of the store. Physical protection by security guards or the patrolling of the area surrounding retail stores by guard dogs may also serve as guardians.

Cohen and Cantor (1980:144) state that the presence of police patrols, traffic officers, security guards, as well as members of a neighbourhood watch, have an important influence upon the offender's decision to commit a certain crime at a specific time and place. Retail robbers must therefore take the actual or perceived presence of protection or guardians into account when attempting a robbery. The presence of eye-witnesses who could observe the crime being committed may, for example, influence the offender not to carry out the intended crime.

Technological mechanisms which could increase the guardianship of retail stores may encompass mechanical and electronic locks, automatic light switches, automatic telephone diallers (which dial through to the police when pressed during a robbery), alarm systems and closed-circuit television (Naudé & Stevens, 1988: 220). These mechanisms, however, are expensive, and not every store owner is able to afford the added security. If this is the case, then the vulnerability of the store increases.

Guardians could have a negative effect on target suitability and complicate the robbery for the offender. The suitability of the target could be affected by the presence of alarms or surveillance cameras, which would increase the visibility of the offender and hamper accessibility. The store owner, manager or any bystander
in retail stores could also have an influence on target suitability for the reason that they may be capable of resisting the offender, or even be in possession of a weapon (Lynch, 1987:294).

In light of the above discussion, the assumption can be made that the daily routine activities of a retail store, its owner or manager and its clients, influences the convergence of three elements, namely a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardians necessary for a direct contact predatory violation to take place.

2.1.3 Evaluation of the routine activities theory

The most important contribution of routine activities theory is probably the argument that crime rates are affected not only by the size of the supply of motivated offenders, suitable targets, or lack of guardianship, but also by the factors affecting the frequency of their convergence in time and space (Sherman et al., 1989:30). In addition to this, Vito and Holmes (1994:411) state that the application of the routine activities theory can provide a framework according to which crime patterns can be studied and crime rates subsequently decreased. Brown et al. (2001:221) have contended that it holds more meaningful implications for crime prevention than ideologically driven theories of crime (Brown et al., 2001:221).

In emphasising both social disorganisation and ecology, the routine activities theory is considered to be a continuation of the Chicago school of Criminology (Williams & McShane, 1999:236). Messner and Tardiff (1985:242) consider the principal contribution of the routine activities approach to be that it organises the insights and observations from the broader ecological tradition into a coherent analytical framework. In other words, it provides an integrated explanation for the many diverse findings of past research on the spatial and temporal distribution of crime.

Williams and McShane (1999:236) state that the popularity of the routine activities theory was the result of a growing interest in victimology and an ecological approach to crime prevention. This theory does not explain why offenders commit crime, but focuses on victimisation and the elements necessary for a direct contact predatory violation to take place. The theory has also made an important contribution to Criminology, due to the reawakening of assumptions about the rational nature of humans and the ability of offenders to select vulnerable targets.
The approach also presents an explanation for recent changes in societal crime rates (Messner & Tardiff, 1985:242). In addition, the routine activities theory can be used to explain rates of victimisation for specific crimes. Certain individuals, based on differences in their routine activities, will be more susceptible to robbery than others. Similarly, certain locations are more susceptible to crime because of the type of prevalent activities and the amount of social activity present (Williams & McShane, 1999:237). Retail stores are examples of locations that are more susceptible to crime as a result of the above reasons.

According to Vito and Holmes (1994:145), the routine activities theory can also be potentially beneficial in situational crime prevention. In their theory, Cohen and Felson mentioned the importance of architectural planning and environmental design through which guardianship may be increased and the amount of suitable targets decreased (Williams & McShane, 1999:222). Guardianship can, for example, be increased by increasing the observation by police patrols as well as bystanders, whereas target hardening, such as security guards at retail stores, aids in decreasing the amount of suitable targets available to offenders.

Sociologists such as Carroll and Jackson (in Reid, 1988:16), have, however, questioned the assumptions of the routine activities theory. They raised the possibility that the dispersal of routine activities away from the home does not necessarily have a direct effect on the crime rate. They state that routine activities are rather a process that influence the structural factors motivating offenders to commit direct contact predatory crimes.

Miethe, Stafford and Lang (1987:185) consider the major limitation of the theory to be the lack of testing with ecological data at actual places where offenders, targets, and weak guardians converge. As they point out, most tests of the routine activities theory lack independent measures of the lifestyles in question and substitute presumed demographic characteristics for them. Although Cohen and Felson do provide data on the personal risks of victimisation in different places, they do not link those individual risks to variations in the amount of time individuals spend in different types of places. Sherman et al. (1989:31) believe that due to Cohen and Felson’s emphasis on the spatial and temporal ecology of crime, the most appropriate unit of analysis for the routine activities approach would be places.

Massey, Krohn and Bonati (in Brown et al., 1996:274) also criticised the assumption of motivated offenders on both theoretical and methodological grounds. Due to the
difficulty of measuring this concept, they suggest replacing it with a measurement of “potential offenders”. Brown et al. (2001:222) state that the assumption of a pool of motivated offenders is perceived by some as neglecting the factors that cause crime. Furthermore, they found that this perspective may blame the victim for putting themselves in hazardous positions as a result of their choices of routine activities and their lifestyles.

Several other matters remain in dispute, namely whether lifestyle better predicts violent or property victimisation, whether target attractiveness and the lack of guardianship are more indicative of victimisation than living near high-crime areas, and even whether time spent away from home predicts robbery (Maxfield, 1987:278; Barkan, 1997:103).

Kennedy and Baron (1993:93) add that the origin of criminal opportunities can only be fully understood if there is knowledge of the motivations or decisions made by the offender, the target and the guardian, prior to the convergence of these three elements. They maintain that these decisions or motivations not only affect their routine activities, but also their actions upon convergence.

There has also been some question as to the validity of the routine activities theory. Barkan (1997:104) states that white-collar crime can not be explained by the routine activities theory. It has also been maintained that the routine activities theory may not explain all violent crime victimisation. Violent crimes are often expressive, irrational acts that require a confrontation between an offender and a victim. It was found, as mentioned previously, that the routine activities theory does not explain the risk of violent victimisation for high-risk groups such as males, low-income individuals, the single, and the young (Vito & Holmes, 1994:146).

Marked discrepancies in victimisation among certain social groups have also been recognised. According to Maxfield (1987:278), recent research has attempted to determine whether these differences can be accounted for by variation in routine activities or lifestyle. Clarke, Ekblom, Hough and Mayhew (in Maxfield, 1987:278) found that, taking into account the amount and type of leisure activity, people over the age of 60 are at a lower risk of victimisation than younger persons are. At the other extreme, Riley (in Maxfield, 1987:278) found that similar lifestyles are associated with victimisation and delinquency amongst adolescents.
According to Lynch (1987:294), the socio-demographic characteristics that are generally associated with victimisation are not influential in predicting the risk of a work environment, such as a retail store. Similarly, Cohen and Felson focus on victimisation resulting from direct contact predatory offences, such as those that occur in a retail store environment (Maxfield, 1987:277).

Sykes and Cullen (1992:132) maintain that an explanation of victimisation based on lifestyle or routines has an intuitive appeal, but lacks specificity. They state that it is necessary to know which routines are associated with different kinds of crimes, and the extent to which the influence of lifestyles or routines might be outweighed by the ill fortune of simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

According to Lynch (1987:284), the measurement of the routine activities theory is also questionable. As lifestyles can include any number of activities undertaken on a routine basis, routine activities should be more narrowly defined in order to simplify empirical research. In spite of this, the emphasis of the pre-requisite variables necessary for a crime to be committed and the fact that offenders select their targets according to the target suitability and absence of guardianship, are of value to the present study.

### 2.2 VICTIM EXPERIENCES

The following theories will be used to provide a theoretical backdrop for the experiences of the victims, as well as the consequences suffered as a result of retail robberies.

#### 2.2.1 Crisis theory

The first theory developed to explain victim reactions was the crisis theory (Resick & Nishith, 1997:40). The exponents of the crisis theory, Burgess and Holmstrom (1986:353), propose that following an event that is beyond a person’s normal resources and abilities to cope, they experience psychological distress (Lurigio, Skogan & Davis, 1990:76). As indicated by Notes (www.angelfire.com/ns/south easternnurse/crisistheory.html), there are four phases of a crisis, namely:
• Phase I is where the person has an increase in anxiety in response to a traumatic event. If the person's coping mechanisms work, there is no crisis, but if the coping mechanisms are ineffective, a crisis occurs.

• Phase II is where the anxiety continues to increase.

• In phase III the anxiety continues to increase and the person asks for help. If the individual was emotionally isolated before the trauma they probably will not have adequate support and a crisis may occur.

• Phase IV is characterised by the active crisis where the person's inner resources and supports seem to be inadequate. The person often ruminates about the incident and wonders what they did or how they could have avoided the trauma. Relationships with others suffer and they view others in terms of how they can help solve the problem such as listening to the person's ruminations about the incident and giving advice. They often verbalise that it feels like they are losing their mind.

Reynolds (1994:69) maintains that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is often diagnosed under these circumstances. Where an individual has experienced a psychologically traumatic event outside the limits of normal experience that involved a serious threat to the person's life or physical integrity for example, a life-threatening situation, the destruction of one's home, seeing another person mutilated or killed, or being the victim of physical violence, PTSD can develop (Carson & Butcher, 1992:156). Sue, Sue and Sue (1994:192), however, state that not everyone who is exposed to a traumatic event develops PTSD and that other factors such as the person's individual characteristics, their perception of the event, and the existence of support groups also have an influence. They further state that victims of trauma whose experience leads them into developing a generalised perceived loss of control are likely to develop the most severe PTSD (Sue et al., 1994:192). PTSD is usually characterised by the following symptoms:

• The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced by the individual and they may have intrusive, recurring thoughts or repetitive nightmares about the event.

• The individual persistently avoids stimuli associated with the trauma; for example, they try to avoid activities related to the incident or block out the memory of certain aspects of the experience. Situations that recall the traumatic experience provoke anxiety.
• The individual may experience persistent symptoms of increased arousal, such as chronic tension and irritability, often accompanied by insomnia, the inability to tolerate noise, and the complaint that “I just can’t seem to relax”.

• The individual may experience impaired concentration and memory.

• The individual may experience feelings of depression. In some cases they may withdraw from social contact and avoid experiences that might increase excitation and this is commonly manifested in the avoidance of interpersonal involvement, loss of sexual interest, and an attitude of “peace and quiet at any price” (Carson & Butcher, 1992:156).

Carson and Butcher (1992:156) note that it is important to keep in mind that the criteria for PTSD specify that the reaction last for at least one month; if the length of the reaction is less than that, it would be considered a “normal” stress reaction to a clearly threatening situation. They further state that in all cases of post-traumatic stress, conditioned fear - the fear associated with the traumatic experience - appears to be a key causal factor in developing PTSD symptoms (Carson & Butcher, 1992:159).

Resick and Schnicke (in Resick & Nishith, 1997:42) proposed that PTSD often results from an inability to integrate the event with prior beliefs and experiences. They state that when new, incompatible events occur, the person either alters the new information to fit prior beliefs (assimilation) or alters the prior beliefs to accept the event (accommodation). Over-accommodation to the event is also possible, with victims making statements such as “No one can be trusted” or “I am never safe”.

Lurigio et al. (1990:76) indicate that if new attempts to cope with the traumatic event are ineffective, the agitation and symptomatology of a victim will increase. However, it has been proposed that such distress is limited - within four to six weeks, the person will resolve the crisis either adaptively or maladaptively (Lurigio et al., 1990:76).

When a person feels competent to handle a stressful situation, a task-oriented response is typical and involves adaptive behaviour that is directed primarily at dealing with the requirements of the stressor (Carson & Butcher, 1992:147). Typically, this response means the individual objectively appraises the situation, works out alternative solutions, decides on an appropriate strategy, takes action, and evaluates feedback. Carson and Butcher (1992:147) state that task-oriented responses may involve making changes in one’s self, one’s surroundings, or both, depending on the situation. The
action may be overt, as in showing one’s spouse more affection, or it may be covert, as in lowering one’s aspiration and not expecting too much of the world. The action may involve retreating from the problem, attacking it directly, or trying to find a workable compromise. Carson and Butcher (1992:147) consider any of these actions to be appropriate under certain circumstances. Janis (in Carson & Butcher, 1992:177), however, also found that individuals who are outwardly calm and appear to feel invulnerable to real danger are likely to have more post-crisis problems than individuals who have been “part-time worriers” beforehand.

When a person’s feelings of adequacy are seriously threatened by a stressor, a defence-oriented response tends to prevail, that is, behaviour directed primarily at protecting the self from hurt and disorganisation, rather than at resolving the situation (Carson & Butcher, 1992:147). Carson and Butcher (1992:147) indicate that there are two common types of defence-oriented responses. The first consists of responses such as crying, repetitive talking, and mourning that seem to function as psychological damage-repair mechanisms. The second type consists of the so-called ego- or self-defence mechanisms and include such responses as denial and repression which relieve tension and anxiety and protect the self from hurt and devaluation (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1986:356). These mechanisms protect an individual from external threats, such as failures in work or relationships, and from internal threats, such as guilt-arousing desires or actions (Carson & Butcher, 1992:147). They also appear to protect the self in one or more of the following ways:

- by denying, distorting, or restricting an individual’s experience;
- by reducing emotional or self-involvement; and
- by counteracting threat or damage (Carson & Butcher, 1992:147).

The above defence mechanisms are ordinarily used in combination rather than singly, and are often combined with task-oriented behaviour. However, ego-defence mechanisms are considered maladaptive when they become the predominant means of coping with stressors (Carson & Butcher, 1992:148). The individual’s reaction is considered maladaptive if they are unable to function as usual or if the person’s reaction to the particular stressor is excessive (Carson & Butcher, 1992:151) and may include inappropriate coping strategies such as denial or alcohol abuse (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1986:361).

Through either of the above strategies, overt distress should be alleviated within approximately six weeks (Lurigio et al., 1990:76). Resick and Nishith (1997:40)
indicate that a victim of crime should try to resolve the crisis as quickly as possible and avoid developing maladaptive coping strategies. However, the crime victim’s pre-victimisation adjustment is also a strong predictor of the measure to which the victim will adjust after victimisation. Burgess and Holmstrom (in Lurigio et al., 1990:54) state that victims with pre-existing emotional and psychological problems such as anxiety attacks, will have more difficulty than those whose social functioning and emotional state were normal prior to victimisation. Furthermore, being a previous victim of crime is an important life stressor that can also affect victim recovery and is generally associated with serious symptoms as well as poorer adjustment following victimisation.

2.2.1.1 Application of the crisis theory to retail robbery

Zedner (1994:1223) states that crime and violence cause psychological trauma and, it is assumed for the purposes of this study, that robbery is no exception. The crisis theory indicates that a victim would experience psychological distress after a retail robbery as this would be beyond his/her normal resources and abilities to cope (Lurigio et al., 1990:76). As retail robbery entails violence or the threat of violence (as discussed in section 1.2.1), the threat to a victim’s life could result in them experiencing PTSD symptoms after the robbery which may include flashbacks; nightmares; painful memories of the retail robbery; a psychological “numbing” to the external world; feelings of alienation from society; sleep and eating disorders; and avoidance of anything that reminds them of the event (Barlow & Durand, 1995:192; Gabor et al., 1987:viii; Nomoyi, Davis, Theron & Klopper, 2000:98).

The impact of the retail robbery depends, in part, upon the ability of the victims to deal with the resulting emotional trauma and their adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies (see Model of the victim’s experience after a retail robbery, section 2.2.4). Various factors would influence a retail robbery victim’s choice of coping strategy as either adaptive or maladaptive. Carson and Butcher (1992:147) state that an adaptive strategy includes task-oriented responses which may involve making changes in one’s self, one’s surroundings, or both, depending on the situation. In terms of retail robbery, this task-oriented response may involve the victims becoming more cautious or vigilant, improving the security measures in their stores or changing their cash pick-up routines.
2.2.1.2 Evaluation of the crisis theory

In terms of the time frame for recovery proposed by the crisis theorists which is that the crisis should be resolved within four to six weeks, it has been found that the majority of improvement occurs within the first three months following a crime (Lurigio et al., 1990:76). However, in a study conducted by Friedman, Bischoff, Davis and Person (in Lurigio et al., 1990:57), it was found that robbery victims were still plagued by disturbing and repetitive thoughts of the incident three months following the crime. Furthermore, many rape victims continue reporting problems with fear, anxiety, depression, social adjustment, sexual dysfunctions, and self-esteem for years after the event (Resick & Nishith, 1997:40). Rape victims report experiencing distress in a study done by Friedman, Bischoff, Davis and Person (in Lurigio et al., 1990:57) longer than six weeks after the incident, meaning they have not become symptom-free in six weeks.

Burgess and Holmstrom (1986:355) state that it should be kept in mind that research on adaptation to stress is still a relatively new field and that one major problem appears to be the lack of a classification system to organise data on adaptive responses. Cohen (1987:285) adds that researchers, health practitioners and the public want to know which coping strategies are most adaptive, but that question cannot be simply answered. Cohen (1987:286) further notes that the context must also be considered when assessing adaptiveness and that a particular strategy may be adaptive in one situation but not in another. The possibility, however, also exists that continuous life changes and serious life stresses may equip the victim with more effective coping strategies, thus facilitating post-crime adjustment and recovery (Lurigio et al., 1990:76).

Lurigio et al. (1990:76) further argue that the crisis theory does not explain why particular symptoms are developed by victims. They also state that it does not predict which victims are more likely to have more problems with recovery or what variables may affect the reactions and recovery of victims. Despite this criticism, the crisis theory can be used in conjunction with the next theory to serve as theoretical background for victim’s experiences and reactions after a retail robbery.

2.2.2 Janoff-Bulman and Frieze’s theory of victim reactions

Janoff-Bulman and Frieze’s theory of victim reactions after victimisation is based on the premise that all individuals have three basic assumptions namely, the belief in
personal invulnerability: the perception of the world as meaningful and comprehensible; and the view of the self in a positive light (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:3). They state that criminal victimisation may result in a victim questioning these assumptions and by doing so destroy the stability with which these victims are ordinarily able to function. Subsequently, assumptions are shattered and victims of crimes are no longer able to see their world as safe. Janoff-Bulman (1992:51) affirms that this traumatic event has a profound effect on a victim’s fundamental assumptions about the world, while Wortman (1983:199) adds that these assumptions can indeed affect an individual’s reaction to a victimising experience.

- The assumption of invulnerability

According to Janoff-Bulman (1992:51), each person maintains an illusion of invulnerability. Indestructibility and the continuity of a secure existence are taken for granted by most individuals and Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983:4) state that this illusion of invulnerability is based on the belief of most individuals that “It can’t happen to me”. They contend that this perception of invulnerability can be maladaptive (see discussion in section 2.2.1, the crisis theory) if it keeps people from engaging in effective preventive behaviours or causes them to be slow to recognise that a crime is taking place. Such a person might take longer to initiate coping strategies to deal with the crisis, and might therefore cope less effectively with crises that demand immediate action (Wortman, 1983:209).

The experience of victimisation may shatter a victim’s assumption of invulnerability and they can no longer say that it will never happen to them. The destruction of this assumption manifests itself in the victim’s pre-occupation with the fear that they will be victimised again (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:3). Symptoms of psychological distress such as feelings of intense anxiety and helplessness may accompany the victim’s lost sense of safety (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:4; Perloff, 1983:42; Wortman, 1983:197).

Perloff (1983:42) distinguishes between two types of vulnerability namely, unique vulnerability (more vulnerable than the average person) and universal vulnerability (equally as vulnerable as everyone else). She asserts that victims with perceptions of unique vulnerability may be more prone to maladaptive coping and anxiety, low self-esteem, and depressive symptoms than victims with perceptions of universal vulnerability (Perloff, 1983:42). Perloff (1983:42) further suggests that victims with a sense of unique vulnerability should be more likely to attribute the
misfortune to internal causes (e.g. personal traits or behaviours), while victims with a sense of universal vulnerability should be more likely to attribute the misfortune to external causes (e.g. chance or environmental factors) (see section 2.2.3, attribution theory).

- **The world as meaningful**

The assumption of invulnerability rests, in part, on the basic belief that events are comprehensible and orderly and, therefore, controllable. An example of this would be the belief that misfortune can be prevented by engaging in sufficiently cautious behaviours. According to Lerner’s just world theory (in Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:5), individuals believe that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. The world is considered to be meaningful because people know what to expect and why negative events occur.

The world, however, does not appear meaningful to victims who feel they were cautious and are good people. Being victimised, therefore, does not make sense to them and destroys their feelings of stability and safety. Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983:6) state that this loss of meaning seems to focus on the question “Why did this event happen to me” and result in victims developing coping strategies to restore their previous assumption.

- **Positive self-perceptions**

People generally operate under the assumption that they are worthy and maintain a high level of self-esteem (Van der Berg, 1997:57). The experience of being victimised may lead to a questioning of these self-perceptions. The trauma of victimisation often activates negative self-images and victims may then see themselves as weak, helpless, needy, frightened and out of control. Victims of crime invariably experience a profound threat to their autonomy which upsets their equilibrium in life (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:6). Victimisation interferes with a positive self-image by creating a feeling of unworthiness, impurity and self-blame (see attribution theory, section 2.2.3 for discussion) and thus changing the positive self-image into a negative one.
As a result, victims often develop certain coping strategies to restore the above assumptions and find meaning in the incident. Cognitive restructuring is a coping mechanism in which victims re-interpret their experience to reduce the adverse effects of the incident. According to Wortman (1983:207), there are five cognitive mechanisms that may minimise the impact of victimisation, namely:

- finding meaning in the episode;
- engaging in downward comparisons (e.g. thinking of themselves as being better off than other victims);
- amplifying the incident;
- evaluating the event as a personal growth opportunity or believing that it will bring some or other benefit.

Victimisation examines the emotional power of victims and has an impact on the personal assumptions they hold about the world around them. Through cognitive restructuring these assumptions are restored and victims obtain meaning from the negative incident. Research by Silver, Boon and Stones (in Lurigio et al., 1990:60) indicates that if victims understand their victimisation or make sense of it, they report less psychological distress, greater self-esteem and better social adjustment. Thus, if victims believe that they are better off than other victims, or learn something positive out of the incident, recovery and adjustment after victimisation are facilitated.

2.2.2.1 Application of Janoff-Bulman and Frieze’s theory of victim reactions to retail robbery

According to Perloff (1983:42), one of the most common reactions to victimising events such as crime is a drastically heightened sense of vulnerability. It is, therefore, postulated that the assumptions that victims of retail robberies have about the world around them may be shattered as a result of the robbery. In accordance with Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983:4), prior to the robberies victims may have felt that robberies only happen to other people and this would, therefore, denote the victims’ shattered assumption of invulnerability. Awareness of the possibility of death or serious injury is made painfully obvious in violent victimisations such as robbery (Perloff, 1983:42). Janoff-Bulman (1992:61) affirms that the confrontation with real or potential injury or death breaks the barrier of complacency and resistance in a victim’s assumptive world, and a profound psychological crisis is induced. Subsequently, victims of retail robberies may suffer emotionally because all their existing assumptions regarding their invulnerability, the world as meaningful, and
their own positive self-perceptions regarding their environment have been destroyed as a result of victimisation. Due to the shattering of the assumption of invulnerability, robbery victims also often endure psychological distress (Van der Berg, 1997:58) and, as a result, may experience symptoms that are characteristic of PTSD (Nomoyi et al., 2000:98).

In addition, robbery victims who feel they took all the necessary precautionary and security measures, such as alarms, security guards, armed response and panic buttons, might be unable to understand why their stores were selected as targets. In this regard, they may also experience negative self-perceptions and wonder what they could have done differently to prevent the robbery.

McKendrick and Hoffman (1990:25) also note that the violence associated with retail robbery can have far-reaching effects upon the quality of life of the individual victim as well as the community as this violence creates fear which disrupts social interaction in the community, as well as destroying interpersonal and intergroup relationships. In this regard, Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983:4) state that individuals who have been robbed report being more afraid of another robbery than their neighbours and they feel distrust towards some individuals, especially strangers. Janoff-Bulman (1992:78) declare that robbery is a crime that involves offenders who intend to harm and the victimisation is, therefore, human-induced. As a result of this intentional, human-induced victimisation, the victim suddenly views the world as malevolent, not simply because something bad has happened, but because the world of people is now seriously tainted and trust in others is also severely disturbed. In response to human-induced victimisation such as retail robbery, many victims experience anger, rage, and an intense desire for revenge but this is often compromised by the victim’s self-questioning which is particularly apt to follow human-induced victimisation (Janoff-Bulman, 1992:79).

Victims who survive violent robbery attacks also often sustain serious injuries requiring long-term or even permanent medical treatment (Glanz, 1994:21). These victims may have difficulty considering the world as meaningful and having been victimised may not make sense to them. Macdonald (1975:50) states that great expenses are incurred by retail robbery victims to improve security measures which safeguard their stores, thereby restoring the assumption of invulnerability.

A number of media articles (Armed robbers steal substantial amount from Mayor’s Walk Spar, 2000:3; Murders, robbery in weekend crime, 2000:2; Pistol-whipped
during robbery, 2000:6; Two die in shooting, 2000:3; Two men slain in robbery bid, 2000:6) depict these devastating negative consequences of retail robberies which result in a shattering of positive self-perceptions, a loss of meaning and the assumption of invulnerability previously felt by the victims thereof. These negative consequences include great financial loss, physical injuries and loss of life, as well as an increased fear of repeat victimisation. According to Janoff-Bulman (1992:79), the foundations of social harmony are fractured in victims of crimes such as retail robbery and their sense of community and social order are radically disturbed.

Victims of retail robberies may make use of cognitive restructuring to adaptively minimise the impact of the victimisation. These cognitive coping mechanisms could include victims finding meaning in the retail robbery that would otherwise be incomprehensible or by feeling lucky to be alive when other robberies have resulted in the death of victims. Victims can also amplify the retail robbery and make it seem much worse than it actually was. The impact of the retail robbery can also be minimised by victims believing that the robbery was a personal growth opportunity and that they can now make changes to prevent a future robbery from occurring.

2.2.2.2 Evaluation of Janoff-Bulman and Frieze’s theory of victim reactions

Wortman (1983:198) indicates that there is a growing consensus that such assumptions as stipulated in Janoff-Bulman’s theory may play an important role in the coping process of the victim, since they are likely to have a profound influence on how a victimising experience is initially appraised as well as on behaviour and coping attempts following a crisis. Wortman (1983:200) further notes that little research has been done in this regard and that in subsequent research on the role of assumptions in the coping process, it would be useful to assess whether particular assumptions are adaptive or maladaptive when crises are experienced.

Taylor, Wood and Lichtman (in Wortman, 1983:208) have questioned whether cognitive restructuring mechanisms are in fact adaptive. They declare that the ability to see things in a positive light may lead a person to accommodate to situations that are quite undesirable and those who are skilled in the use of these cognitive mechanisms may have little motivation to take coping actions that would improve their situation in the long term (Wortman, 1983:208).
2.2.3 Attribution theory

An area which has generated a great deal of research attention among social psychologists concerns the impact of a person's attributions of causality for a victimising experience on subsequent coping and adjustment (Wortman, 1983:198). Wortman (1983:198) further mentions that Heider's attribution theory has been one of the most influential topics in social psychology for the past four decades, it is not surprising that it should capture the attention of researchers working on reactions to victimisation.

Attribution theorists such as Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983) and Perloff (1983) have contributed to understanding of why the victims of crime, both direct and indirect, experience difficulties to cope subsequent to victimisation (Lurigio et al., 1990:127). These theorists argue that any attempt to understand human behaviour must take into account the attributions, or reasons, that people ascribe to events. In order to understand why certain reactions occur among both direct and indirect victims of crime, it is important to examine what actually happened to the victim, their attributions for why it occurred, and what they think it means (Lurigio et al., 1990:127).

In terms of criminal victimisation, Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983:3) argue that being the victim of crime changes an individual's attributions about the safety and just nature of the world, often creating intense feelings of vulnerability. In response to these feelings, victims may develop certain coping strategies (see previous discussion, section 2.2.2)

According to Miller and Porter (1983:151), any account of the victimisation process must consider the phenomenon of self-blame. Self-blame refers to the victims' tendency to attribute the victimisation to personal factors. Miller and Porter (1983:139) further indicate that there are two counter-intuitive findings relating to self-blame namely, that the victims of negative events are often found to exaggerate the extent to which they are responsible for their fates and that the degree of self-blame evidenced by victims of negative events has been found to correlate positively with subsequent coping. Wortman (1983:203) states that blaming oneself may be more tolerable than the conclusion that no one knows who is to blame, and/or that the person is living in a meaningless, chaotic world where events occur at random.
There are two types of self-blame, namely behavioural self-blame, where the victims attribute the causes of victimisation to their own actions or behaviour, and characterological self-blame which takes place when victims attribute their victimisation to personality traits and inadequacies (Lurigio et al., 1990:58). Friedman (in Lurigio et al., 1990:58) states that crime victims who attribute their victimisation to their own actions or behaviour manifest less psychological disturbances than victims who attributed their victimisation to personality traits and inadequacies. Wortman (1983:204) adds that behavioural self-blame may even be quite adaptive. Characterological self-blame leaves victims with little confidence that future victimisation can be prevented, while behavioural self-blame opens up the possibility of controlling or preventing future victimisation through behavioural changes. Characterological self-blame is also often associated with depression and helplessness (Miller & Porter, 1983:147). If external factors which are within the victims’ control are to be blamed for victimisation, future victimisation can also be controlled.

2.2.3.1 Application of the attribution theory to retail robbery

In accordance with the attribution theory, it is assumed that victims of retail robberies would make attributions about why the robbery occurred and they may question their attributions regarding the safety of their store. Lurigio et al. (1990:58) confirm this by stating that being the victim of crime changes an individual’s attributions about the safety and just nature of the world and often creates intense feelings of vulnerability.

Retail robbery victims could perceive their personal characteristics, such as gender or race, to be the cause of their robbery victimisation. Researchers (Barkan, 1997:274; Block, 1977:49; Bonn, 1984:206) have determined that robbery is an inter-racial phenomenon in that individuals from different racial groups victimise one another, meaning that individuals are at risk for victimisation due to their racial characteristics. According to Miller and Porter (1983:147), this characterological self-blame is presumed to undermine the perception of control and thus lead to the victim of retail robbery experiencing feelings of helplessness and depression.

In addition, retail robbery may also result in victims attributing the robbery to their own actions or behaviour, such as having a set routine, a lack of vigilance, lack of security mechanisms such as armed response, closed-circuit television and panic buttons, insufficient personnel present in the store, or being a Lotto retailer (Lotto-geld lok skurke glo, 2002:4). It is also possible, however, that the victims may blame themselves for the losses suffered as a result of them not attempting to resist the
robbers. In addition, if victims resist the robbers, they may attribute the severity of the victimisation to the fact that they resisted. The victims may also attribute the victimisation to external factors in their control, such as being situated in a high-crime rate area, or the store being visible from the outside thereby enabling robbers to monitor activity within the store without entering it. Through this behavioural self-blame retail robbery victims may feel capable of controlling or preventing future victimisation by making behavioural changes. The above factors are all within the control of the victims, but there are also factors which are out of their control to which the robbery could be attributed, such as infrequent police patrols in the area and only a few customers being present in the store at the time of the robbery. The victims can not control this and it may lead to more intense feelings of vulnerability and fear.

2.2.3.2 Evaluation of the attribution theory

Miller and Porter (1983:149) maintain that it has become increasingly popular to view causal explanations or attributions as important determinants of affective and behavioural reactions to negative life events. The strength of the relation between a person’s explanation for a negative life event and his or her reaction to the event, however, may depend to a large extent on the nature of the event itself (Miller & Porter, 1983:149).

According to Miller and Porter (1983:140), the functional analyses of self-blame all have the virtue of being able to account for both the existence of self-blame and its positive consequences, but these accounts are not easily separated conceptually or empirically. They moreover state that future work in this area may sharpen the conceptual distinctions among these explanations and provide empirical evidence that helps assess their differential validity. The questions of when self-blame occurs, what forms it takes, and its relation to the coping process are just some of the important issues that Miller and Porter (1983:151) feel should be addressed by future researchers, in addition to consulting a wide range of victim groups when considering attribution and self-blame.

2.2.4 Model of the victim’s experience after a retail robbery

In order to understand the experiences of the victims and the consequences of retail robberies, a Model of the victim’s experience after a retail robbery is formulated for the purpose of this study.
Figure 2. Model of the victim's experience after a retail robbery
The crisis theory, the attribution theory, and Janoff-Bulman and Frieze’s theory of victim reactions form the basis of the **Model of the victim’s experience after a retail robbery**. This model is based on the assumption that when individuals experience a crisis or traumatic event which causes psychological distress, they develop adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies. Victims make certain attributions (or find certain reasons for the retail robbery) and develop adaptations in order to deal with the shattering of three basic assumptions namely, the assumption of invulnerability, the world as meaningful, and the individual’s positive self-perception.

Prior to a robbery victims may have felt that robberies only happen to other people and this would, therefore, denote the victims’ shattered assumption of invulnerability. Subsequently, victims of retail robberies may endure psychological distress because their existing assumptions regarding the world as meaningful, and their own positive self-perception regarding their environment have been destroyed as a result of victimisation. Symptoms of psychological distress such as feelings of anxiety and helplessness may accompany the victim’s lost sense of safety due to the shattering of these assumptions. The threat to a victim’s life could also result in them experiencing PTSD symptoms after the robbery which may include nightmares; painful memories of the retail robbery; feelings of alienation from society; sleep and eating disorders; and avoidance of anything that reminds them of the event (Barlow & Durand, 1995:192; Gabor et al., 1987:viii; Nomoyi, Davis, Theron & Klopper, 2000:98).

In addition, robbery victims who feel they took all the necessary precautionary and security measures, such as alarms, security guards, armed response and panic buttons, might be unable to understand why their stores were selected as targets. In this regard, they may also experience negative self-perceptions and wonder what they could have done differently to prevent the robbery. The destruction of the assumption of vulnerability may further manifest itself in the victim’s pre-occupation with the fear that they will be victimised again.

The vulnerability of victims can be distinguished as either unique vulnerability (more vulnerable than the average person) or universal vulnerability (equally as vulnerable as everyone else). Victims with perceptions of unique vulnerability may be more prone to maladaptive coping and anxiety, low self-esteem, and depressive symptoms than victims with perceptions of universal vulnerability (Perloff, 1983:42). However, victims with a sense of universal vulnerability should be more likely to attribute the retail robbery to external causes which are chance or environmental factors beyond their control, such as the presence of police patrols or the crime-rate in the area. Retail
robbery victims are unable to control these aspects and it may lead to more intense feelings of vulnerability and fear.

The victims may also attribute the victimisation to external factors in their control, such as a lack of security mechanisms such as armed response, closed-circuit television and panic buttons, their occupation or position in the store, insufficient personnel present in the store, or the store being visible from the outside thereby enabling robbers to monitor activity within the store without entering it. The victims' reaction is considered maladaptive if they are unable to function as usual (Carson & Butcher, 1992:151) and may include inappropriate coping strategies such as denial, repression or alcohol abuse (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1986:361).

Victims with a sense of unique vulnerability are conceivably more likely to attribute their misfortune to internal causes (e.g. personal traits or behaviours). As mentioned earlier, criminal victimisation such as retail robbery may change an individual's attributions about the safety and just nature of the world, often creating intense feelings of vulnerability. In response to these feelings, victims may develop coping strategies which may include self-blame which refers to the victims' tendency to attribute the victimisation to personal factors. There are two types of self-blame, namely behavioural self-blame and characterological self-blame. Behavioural self-blame is where the victims attribute the causes of victimisation to their own actions or behaviour. Retail robbery may result in victims attributing the robbery to their own actions or behaviour, such as having a set routine, a lack of vigilance, or being a Lotto retailer (Lotto-geld lok skurke glo, 2002:4).

Characterological self-blame takes place when victims attribute their victimisation to personality traits and inadequacies (Lurigio et al., 1990:58). Retail robbery victims could perceive their personal characteristics, such as gender or race, to be the cause of their robbery victimisation. Barkan (1997:274), as well as Bonn (1984:206), have determined that robbery is an inter-racial phenomenon in that individuals from different racial groups victimise one another, meaning that individuals are at risk for victimisation due to their racial characteristics. This characterological self-blame is presumed to undermine perceptions of control and may contribute to feelings of helplessness and depression. As a result of this behavioural self-blame, some retail robbery victims may also feel more capable of controlling or preventing future victimisation by making behavioural changes.
Carson and Butcher (1992:147) state that victims often develop adaptive coping strategies which may include task-oriented responses such as making changes in one’s self, one’s surroundings, or both, depending on the situation. In terms of retail robbery, this task-oriented response may involve the victims improving the security measures in their stores, or changing their behaviour for example, by becoming more cautious or vigilant, or changing their cash pick-up routines, thereby restoring the assumption of invulnerability.

When a person’s feelings of adequacy are seriously threatened by a stressor, a defence-oriented response might also prevail, that is, behaviour directed primarily at protecting the self from hurt and disorganisation, rather than at resolving the situation (Carson & Butcher, 1992:147). Carson and Butcher (1992:147) indicate that there are two common types of defence-oriented responses. The first consists of responses such as crying, repetitive talking, and mourning that seem to function as psychological damage-repair mechanisms. The second type consists of the so-called ego- or self-defence mechanisms and include such responses as denial and repression which relieve tension and anxiety and protect the self from hurt and devaluation (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1986:356). These mechanisms protect an individual from external threats, such as guilt regarding the victims’ responsibility for the robbery (Carson & Butcher, 1992:147). However, ego-defence mechanisms are considered maladaptive when they become the predominant means of coping with stressors (Carson & Butcher, 1992:148).

Cognitive restructuring is another adaptive coping mechanism in which victims re-interpret their experience to reduce the adverse effects of the incident. There are various cognitive mechanisms that may minimise the impact of victimisation, the first being finding meaning in the retail robbery. If victims understand their victimisation or make sense of it, they are more likely to experience less psychological distress, greater self-esteem and better social adjustment. The second mechanism of cognitive restructuring entails victims believing that they are better off than other victims of retail robberies. Finally, if victims evaluate the robbery as a personal growth opportunity or believe that it will bring some or other benefit, their recovery and adjustment after victimisation are facilitated. Through these cognitive restructuring mechanisms the basic assumptions of the victims of retail robberies are restored (Lurigio et al., 1990:60) and victims come to terms with the victimisation and resume normal functioning.
2.3 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 2, one criminology theory and three theories from the field of psychology were discussed with the aim of providing structure to the study on retail robbery. The routine activities theory which examined how variations in the routine activities of individuals may affect the possibility that a motivated retail robber and suitable target will converge at a specific time and place in the absence of capable guardians, was highlighted in order to provide a framework to indicate which stores and victims are at greater risk for retail robbery.

Reference was also made of psychology theories that were relevant to the current study in terms of the victims’ experiences and reactions after victimisation. These theories included the crisis theory, Janoff-Bulman and Frieze’s approach to victim reactions and the attribution theory. These theories stated that when an individual experiences a crisis or traumatic event which causes psychological distress, they make certain attributions and develop adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies in order to deal with the shattering of three basic assumptions namely, the assumption of invulnerability, the world as meaningful, and the individual’s positive self-perception. Based on these theories and existing research on robbery in general, a Model of the victim’s experience after a retail robbery was formulated to serve as a framework for the current study.
3. EXTENT, NATURE AND PREVENTION OF ROBBERY

In this chapter existing research and literature relevant to the extent, nature, consequences and prevention of robbery will be considered. Research on retail robbery per se is limited, therefore, robbery in general will be explored in this chapter. Where possible, the few available studies pertaining specifically to retail robbery will be referred to. This information will, in conjunction with the theories discussed in Chapter 2, serve as a guideline for the remainder of the study.

3.1 EXTENT OF ROBBERY

As indicated by the first national commercial crime survey in South Africa, businesses are the victims of a varied number of crimes, including robbery, but the type and level of victimisation is influenced by the type of business, the business location, the risks that they are exposed to, as well as the crime prevention measures employed by these businesses (Naudé, Prinsloo, Maree, Ladikos & Joubert, 2000:80). Crimes like retail robbery require special attention due to the negative influence they have on South Africa’s image abroad and the negative consequence of this on foreign investments, tourism and the value of the local currency (http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/report.html). Upon studying the perceptions of various businesses regarding certain problems faced by them, it was determined that these crimes are generally regarded as the most serious problem facing the South African business sector (Joubert, Ladikos, Maree, Naudé & Prinsloo, 1999:90). According to Naudé et al. (2000:74), the financial burden of businesses is increased by crimes such as retail robbery in terms of higher operating costs, such as insurance, security costs and, subsequently, reduced profits.

Statistics obtained from the Crime Information Analysis Centre (http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/report.html) show that the chances of becoming a victim of a serious violent crime against the person, such as robbery, are just above one out of ten crimes reported to the police, while the chances of becoming a victim of property related or commercial crime are nearly seven out of ten crimes reported to the police. As is the case with any crime, there is the possibility that a dark figure exists for retail robbery. In this regard, Block (1989:233) and Ruback (1994:424) state that victims often only report crimes that were successfully completed. Retail robberies, however,
will have a higher report rate than some crimes due to insurance claims that require docket numbers. Burke and O’Rear (1993:18), Cook (1987:367), as well as Zimring and Zuehl (1986:3, 4), emphasise that the incorrect classification of crimes in police statistics may also account for dark figures. In South Africa retail robbery is classified as robbery with aggravating circumstances along with various other crimes such as carjacking, the hijacking of trucks, cash-in-transit robberies, and bank robberies. However, since 1996 these four crimes are also recorded separately whereas retail robbery is not. This increases the difficulty in determining the real extent of this phenomenon.

A spatial analysis of robbery with aggravating circumstances in South Africa indicates that robberies occur most frequently in the Metropolitan areas of Gauteng, Greater Durban and Greater Cape Town (http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/report.html). This finding correlates with a statement made by Laub (1997:16), namely that those people who live in urban areas are more afflicted by crime than are residents of rural or suburban areas. Research (Bard & Sangrey, 1986: 177; Block, 1977:61; Hough, 1986:127; Normandeau, 1981:4; McClintock & Gibson, 1961:vii; Pratt, 1980:96) indicates that this pattern is particularly relevant to robbery in that it mainly occurs in urban areas. Table 1 depicts the number of robbery with aggravating circumstances cases reported to the police from January to September 1994-2001 (http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/crime/roba.html).

Table 1
Robbery with Aggravating Circumstances (1994-2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>5005</td>
<td>4469</td>
<td>3695</td>
<td>3799</td>
<td>4649</td>
<td>5231</td>
<td>5698</td>
<td>6108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>2221</td>
<td>2138</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>1486</td>
<td>1667</td>
<td>1604</td>
<td>1455</td>
<td>1677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>28200</td>
<td>26527</td>
<td>20952</td>
<td>22444</td>
<td>29534</td>
<td>33192</td>
<td>37490</td>
<td>41305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwazulu-Natal</td>
<td>12538</td>
<td>13261</td>
<td>12190</td>
<td>11682</td>
<td>14150</td>
<td>16058</td>
<td>17215</td>
<td>17707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>2918</td>
<td>2714</td>
<td>2767</td>
<td>2628</td>
<td>2756</td>
<td>3294</td>
<td>3682</td>
<td>4037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>3610</td>
<td>3405</td>
<td>2442</td>
<td>2384</td>
<td>2967</td>
<td>3254</td>
<td>3817</td>
<td>4220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>2967</td>
<td>2358</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>2331</td>
<td>2490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>4957</td>
<td>4753</td>
<td>4017</td>
<td>3865</td>
<td>5457</td>
<td>5975</td>
<td>7572</td>
<td>9743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSA</td>
<td>62877</td>
<td>60354</td>
<td>50414</td>
<td>50406</td>
<td>63432</td>
<td>70810</td>
<td>79561</td>
<td>87610</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is evident from Table 1, Gauteng has by far the highest incidence of robbery with aggravating circumstances with a total of 41 305 for the year 2001. Robbery with
aggravating circumstances in Gauteng accounts for approximately 47.15% of the total figure in South Africa. In comparison with the 1994 figure of 28 200, this figure has escalated by 13 105. The anonymity of city life, as well as the virtually unlimited targets in urban areas such as Gauteng, may account for the higher incidence of robbery in the city.

Further reasons why Gauteng has the highest rate of robbery are as follows:

- This Metropolitan area is the largest in South Africa and has the highest population density. Felson (1998:32) states that high density fosters many small grocery or retail stores which are easy to rob when patronage is light. There are, therefore, a variety of targets to choose from (Crime Information Management Centre, 1998:61).
- Gauteng has the highest unemployment rate and as a result, retail robbery can be viewed as an alternative means of acquiring money (see section 3.1.1).
- Accessibility to highways facilitate the escape of the robber.

Various other reasons, however, could also have an effect on the increase in retail robbery on a national level.

### 3.1.1 Reasons for the increase in robbery

The following reasons contribute, individually or in conjunction with one another, directly or indirectly to the high retail robbery rate in South Africa.

- **Economic advantage**

Conklin (1998:308) states that the economic advantage that a specific crime holds, as well as the expressive rewards such as excitement, respect within the peer group and/or a feeling of power that the offender achieves from committing a crime such as robbery, can serve as a motivation for the crime. Research regarding armed robbery (Conklin, 1972:5) supports the view that robbery is a fast, direct and rewarding means of obtaining money or goods (Fourty four thousand rand taken in robberies, 2000:3; Rowers buit R6 m. in besiege winkelsentrum, 1999:1).

According to Wright and Rossi (1986:143), the financial gains that often accompany a robbery, can be an important motivational factor to commit this crime. As mentioned previously in section 2.1.2, the economic advantage that an individual can obtain from...

- **Poverty**

Due to the fact that this social phenomenon usually goes hand in hand with unemployment, low income, high inflation and a rise in the price of consumer goods, it could lead to an increase in crimes such as retail robbery. Landau and Fridman (1993:68), as well as Bartollas and Dinitz (1989:263), reported a relationship between robbery and unemployment. Barkan (1997:275) confirms that aspects such as poverty, real or relative economic deprivation, unemployment and a decrease in work-force opportunities (legitimate means of financial success) can precipitate retail robbery. In agreement with the above statement, Nel (1996:2) emphasises that crimes such as retail robbery will be difficult to prevent unless aspects such as economic inequality are dealt with. He also states that the gap between the haves and the have-nots must be reduced.

However, it has been pointed out (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch2.html) that socio-economic factors such as poverty and unemployment are not always reason enough for committing crimes such as armed robbery. According to Vold (1958:171), unemployment is a contributing factor, a predisposing condition for involvement in robbery, but rarely the main reason for involvement in this crime. In this regard, Felson (1998:34) also states that too much crime is committed by people who are not poor and that many poor nations have low crime rates. If poverty was the only cause of crime, then poor countries would have the highest number of robbers. This, however, is not the case.

- **Urbanisation**

According to United Nations reports (http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/xpress/dex/dex9802.html), urbanisation can also influence the violent crime rate of a country. They assume that the growth of industry and cities often results in social disruption that produces alienation and ultimately crime. According to the Crime Information Analysis Centre (http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/reports/crime96.html), the factors that follow are associated with urbanisation and may lead to an increase in retail robbery:
An increase in squatter areas that are difficult to police.
Unemployment.
Loss of family structure.
An increase in relative deprivation.
The development of needs and expectations that cannot be realised.
The availability of opportunities to commit crime.

By generating new social problems, the migration from rural to urban areas complicates the relationship between economic development, crime and social control (http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/xpress/dex/dex9802.html). Moving to cities leads to fundamental changes in traditional structures and customs. The family and the church as agents of social control are particularly challenged by emerging new value systems, and can no longer reinforce norm-conforming behaviour, especially among adolescents.

The people who migrate to the cities first are the youngsters (18-30 years), only to find massive unemployment. The distinction between rich and poor in the city is stark and at the same time the material possessions of the rich become the measure of success (Pelser & De Kock, 2000:86). A strong and vicious cycle of rising expectations is created and the only support many of them may find is their peer group. The vast difference between themselves and the more privileged sector of the population, as well as economic deprivation, may drive them to become involved in criminal gang activities (Pelser & De Kock, 2000:86).

- Relative deprivation

Relative deprivation refers to the gap between an individual’s expectations of life and the possibilities of realising these expectations. The larger this gap, the greater the relative deprivation and possible involvement in property related crimes such as robbery.

According to Ekpenyong (1989:31), as well as Katz (1996:172), the emphasis that is placed on materialism plays a significant role in crimes such as retail robbery. Unrealistic material expectations that are positioned upon individuals are often impossible to achieve in a legal manner which results in them utilising illegitimate means of obtaining material possessions. In this regard, it can be postulated that armed robbery will continue as long as there is a need for material possessions.
Pelser and De Kock (2000:88) state that since large numbers of disillusioned South Africans perceive the new government to be failing in its mission to "create a better life for all", unmet expectations and relative deprivation are likely to continue to contribute significantly to violent crimes and other forms of violent conflict in South Africa.

- **Climate of violence in society**

The climate of violence prevalent in South Africa, as a result of the apartheid regime, is a further factor that can lead to violent crimes such as retail robbery. Various researchers (Esterhuyse, 1997:18; Katz, 1991:280; Stavrou, 1993:70) agree that the political, social and economic changes since 1994; the transformation to a democracy; unrealistic material expectations that are created by members of the community and that cannot be achieved; political conflict; the unique socio-economic circumstances of South Africa; as well as the history of apartheid, serve as a breeding ground for violence. It has also been found that violent crime rates in developing countries, like South Africa, have doubled since the 1970’s and 1980’s. This could be due to political instability within these countries (http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/xpress/dex/dex9802.html).

According to the Inter-departmental Strategy Team (1996:4), the climate of violence in South Africa may lead to violence becoming an accepted means of resolving social, political and even domestic conflict. In support of this, Stavrou (1993:70) postulates that South Africa is caught up in such a destructive pattern of violence that it is viewed as normal and as a way of dealing with conflict. This view is in accordance with the subculture of violence theory of Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1982:161) which is based on the assumption that individuals have a favourable attitude towards the use of violence. These theorists state that, with time, individuals become members of a subculture of violence where violence is deemed appropriate in certain situations and acts as a means of handling conflict. To deprive someone violently of their money or possessions might, therefore, be viewed as only part of the robber’s "normal" acquired behaviour.

- **Dehumanisation, discrimination and marginalisation**

According to Fattah (1976:108), dehumanisation can also lead to an increase in violent crimes such as robbery. As a result of dehumanisation and, therefore, a disregard for life, offenders are more willing to turn to violent crimes that may result in the death of
the victim. This dehumanisation is evident from the fact that victims are often seriously injured or even killed during a retail robbery, even though that was not the primary motive of the robbery.

Pratt (1980:165) warns that discrimination or the labelling of a potential victim as belonging to a specific ethnic group or gender may also precipitate robbery. In regard to this he stresses that robbery is often the result of racial discrimination. Gabor et al. (1987:11) support this opinion by indicating that a significant number of robberies are rationalised on the grounds of exposure to racial discrimination.

The historical marginalisation and experiences of powerlessness of black South Africans who were socially, politically and educationally marginalised often contributed to severe feelings of rejection. Naudé (1999:3) states that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 subjected black youth to inferior education. Since 1976 many youths went without the benefit of a proper formal education for almost two decades. Parents and schools became unable to socialise, discipline or control the youth. The political situation also undermined the central position occupied by the youth and many youths found new identity in gangs and other criminal activities (Naudé, 1999:3). At present, even with new legislation in place, the youth is still in a disadvantaged position.

- **Other criminogenic factors**

Peer pressure, alcohol and drug abuse, various biological factors (e.g. abnormal testosterone levels) and psychological factors (e.g. uncontrollable aggression and impulsiveness) can also be linked to retail robbery.

The use of alcohol and drugs leads to a lowering of inhibitions. These lowered inhibitions cause individuals to do things that they would not usually do and, therefore, facilitate the commission of crimes such as retail robbery (Conklin, 1995:298). In addition, once an individual has become dependent on alcohol or other drugs, they have formed an expensive habit. In order to obtain the necessary money to support their addiction or dependence, robberies are often committed (Gabor et al., 1987:27).

The influence of the media, particularly in terms of reporting about the ease with which robbers commit and get away with their crimes, may also motivate potential robbers to become involved in these crimes (Burke & O’Rear, 1993:21; Macdonald,
According to Levi (1994:345), the learning from violent role models on television, as well as from increasingly dysfunctional criminal families and neighbourhoods, teach people how to respond negatively to tension. This aspect, in addition to the differences in individual temperament and life circumstances, play a major part in accounting for variations in the degree of violence involved in robberies. These variations are as a result of the combination of the above-mentioned factors and their influence upon the level of violence involved in each retail robbery. In addition, Naudé et al. (2000:77) state that factors such as deliberate choice, opportunity, as well as routine activities also play a contributing role.

- **Ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system**

The ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system and insufficient punishment with regard to serious crimes may, according to the Crime Information Management Centre (1996:27), influence the increase in robbery. The shortage of police personnel and resources, resulting in large docket loads due to these shortages, makes effective policing increasingly difficult. These factors, as well as a poor relationship between the police and the community, which has its origin in the apartheid years, all contribute to a high robbery rate and low arrest figures (http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/reports/crime96.html). Prinsloo, Joubert, Ladikos, Maree and Naudé (2000:6) confirm that a poor relationship exists between the police and the community and mention that the limited role played by the police in community education, particularly in advising businesses on security matters, supports the public's apparent negative attitude towards the police.

The Nedcor Project on Crime, Violence and Investment (1996:5) indicates that for every 1000 crimes committed in South Africa, approximately 450 are reported, 230 solved, 77 offenders prosecuted, and 36 offenders sentenced to prison of which only eight serve a sentence longer than two years. The low arrest rate, light sentences, the ease with which offenders receive bail and the early release of prisoners on parole all contribute to punishment not being a deterrent for potential robbers. These factors often also influence the amount of bravado associated with robberies as well as the frequency at which they are committed.

- **Availability of firearms**

The legal and illegal import, use, distribution, dealing and ownership of firearms and ammunition is an important factor that gives rise to high robbery rates in South Africa

Wright and Rossi (1986:14) indicate that, in order to seize arising opportunities but also to defend against surprise attacks, violent predators such as retail robbers maintain a constant readiness for violence. They often literally sleep with a firearm under their pillow and drive with one in their glove compartment.

Myerson (1995:14) agrees with the above and states that there has been a noticeable increase in the number of robbers acquiring firearms to commit robbery. The weapons are employed for instrumental purposes, namely to gain access to money and goods with relative ease and less resistance; to protect themselves from armed victims; and to ensure a safe escape from the crime scene (Conklin, 1995:304). The availability of legal as well as illegal firearms and ammunition make it easier for criminals to commit crimes, such as retail robberies, which would otherwise have been very difficult or even impossible (Burke & O’Rear, 1993:23).

According to Cook (1987:366), robberies of commercial establishments such as retail stores, are more likely to involve a gun than other forms of robbery such as street robbery. This may be due to the fact that retail robbers have to subdue a greater number of victims simultaneously during a retail robbery (Rowers buit R6 m. in besiege winkelsentrum, 1999:1).

According to Kirsten (1997:12), firearms used during crimes such as robberies are usually obtained illegally in the following ways:

⇒ By smuggling firearms from neighbouring countries. Countries such as Mozambique and Swaziland are the largest suppliers of illegal firearms to offenders in South Africa. In particular, firearms are smuggled directly or via Swaziland into South Africa (http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/reports/crime96.html).

⇒ By illegally importing the firearms.

⇒ As a result of theft and loss of firearms by private persons and members of the SAPS.
The poor control of aspects such as official weapons arsenals, the issue of weapons to security forces, and existing legislation controlling firearms, facilitate the above-mentioned factors. In addition, the illegal importing and smuggling of firearms in South Africa, as well as the fact that firearms are stolen during other crimes, such as farm attacks, vehicle hijackings and residential burglaries, contribute to more and more firearms being in illegal possession. Four million of the 13 million firearms currently in circulation in South Africa are estimated to be in the possession of illegal owners (Davis, 1999:113). In some cases, firearms are bought from friends, firearm dealers or the owners of pawn shops. A large number of firearms are also bought on the black market (Davis, 1999:113).

It was found that in 1998 a total of 29 694 firearms had been reported stolen to the SAPS, including those lost or stolen from police and defence force members. A disconcerting fact is that of the almost 30 000 firearms reported stolen, only 1 764, or 6%, had been recovered during the same 12 month period (http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Crime%20Index/Vol%203%20No%202?Firearms.html). Presently, this figure may have escalated even higher.

- **Availability of targets**

The greater availability of targets such as retail stores can also influence the crime rate for robbery (Conklin, 1972:88; Vito & Holmes, 1994:79). Conklin (1972:39) notes that an increase in these targets offers more opportunities for retail robbery. This assumption is in agreement with the routine activities theory of Cohen and Felson which states that the availability and visibility of targets increases the risk of crime (Felson, 1998:58). The vulnerability of the victim (see section 2.1.2), as well as the victim being unaware of the risk of retail robbery, can influence the accessibility of the victim and the availability of targets, thereby facilitating victimisation.

### 3.2 NATURE OF ROBBERY

The *modus operandi* that robbers follow while committing a robbery, as well as the profiles of robbers and their victims, will be discussed next. This will be done by means of the analysis of relevant existing literature available on robbery and, where possible, retail robbery specifically.
3.2.1 *Modus operandi* of the robber

*Modus operandi* refers to the routine in which individualised methods, techniques and habits are employed by offenders in the committing of a retail robbery. Due to the fact that the *modus operandi* of the offender is indicative of the motivation for the crime and is depicted in various phases of the crime, namely the planning, operational and the post-offence phases (Van der Westhuizen, 1993:34-39), existing literature regarding the planning phase will, in spite of the fact that the focus of the study is only on the operational and post-offence phases, be included in the subsequent discussion as it provides valuable background information on styles of career robbery and target selection.

3.2.1.1 Planning phase

Landau and Fridman (1993:168) state that robbery is a rational mode of behaviour, one that usually requires careful planning in order to achieve its goal of monetary gain. Glick (1995:219) points out that offenders make certain decisions and exercise strategic choices in order to minimise the risk of failure and arrest. The identification of a suitable target, the day, time, place and means of committing the crime, attaining weapons, the choice of co-workers as well as the various roles allocated to each of them are some of the aspects that are taken into account in the planning phase before the commission of a crime such as robbery (Letkemann, 1982:219; Marais & Van Rooyen, 1990:69; Snow, 1995:78).

The possibilities that the physical environment offers in terms of traffic flow, the absence of police patrols and/or other guardians as well as the ease with which the offender can leave the crime scene are also considered in the planning phase (Horgan, 1979:262). Obtaining special material such as guns, masks or other special clothes, and a getaway car also forms part of the planning phase (Livingston, 1996:166).

The presence of bystanders is also taken into account by most robbers (Maree, 1995:171). Possible identification by the victim, as well as the presence of more than one person in a retail store, can, for example, discourage a criminal to rob a specific store. The physical danger that a crime like retail robbery holds, or the chances that a criminal can be physically injured or killed in confrontation with the victim, are all taken into account when planning a robbery (Conklin, 1995:304).
Gabor et al. (1987:60) emphasise that leaving or escaping from the crime scene often holds more danger for the offender than what the actual committing of the crime does. In a media article (Robbers arrested after they fail to get away, 2000:6), six armed robbers robbed a retail store of R50 000. The money and all six robbers were captured shortly afterwards in their getaway car in the vicinity of the retail store, illustrating this risk and indicating the importance for retail robbers to consider various escape routes.

Planning and decisions regarding the above-mentioned factors, prior to committing the crime, usually determine the offender’s actions while committing the crime. According to Einstadter (1995:70), the amount of planning and the behaviour of the criminal can influence the style of robbery. The following styles of career robbery, which are also relevant in the case of retail robbery, can be identified:

- **The ambush**

This type of robbery is the least planned of all and depends almost entirely on the element of surprise. All participants literally attack an establishment guerrilla fashion and attempt to obtain whatever might be found in cash or other items of value. The chances of violence are high in this type of robbery. As a rule it is a style employed by less systematic robbers (Einstadter, 1995:81).

- **The selective raid**

The selective raid is characterised by minimal planning. Sites are tentatively selected and cased - even though very briefly. Site conditions are analysed to some degree before the robbery is attempted (Einstadter, 1995:81). There is a tentative plan of approach, however, the planning may be accomplished very casually and several robberies may be committed in rapid succession.

- **The planned operation**

Planned operations are well planned and well structured robberies where all aspects are considered and each participant knows what their role during the robbery is. According to Einstadter (1995:81), there may be rehearsals or “dry runs” in order to ensure that all possible conditions are taken into account and risks are held at a minimum.
The time spent on planning varies from person to person and is influenced by aspects such as previous criminal experience, despair due to personal circumstances, the number of individuals involved in the crime, the availability of weapons as well as the presence of an immediate opportunity to commit a crime (Morrison & O’Donnell, 1994:5). It appears that gangs may, on average, spend more time and effort in planning a robbery than individual robbers.

Although a lack of planning often reflects the lack of security in the places robbed (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch3.html), a spontaneous decision may also be made by robbers to commit a robbery (Gabor et al., 1987:59, 201). In this case prior planning is limited. Gabor et al. (1987:59, 201), however, add that most robbers who commit robbery on the spur of the moment or when the opportunity arises have previously decided that they are prepared to commit a crime. A spontaneous robbery is usually associated with the fact that robbers came across a suitable target at a specific time.

3.2.1.2 Operational phase

The circumstances prevalent when robberies occur, for example the day, time, and place, as well as the various methods and instruments used during robberies will now be discussed.

3.2.1.2.1 Days on which robberies occur

An Australian study indicated that weekends are the most popular days to commit robbery (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch3.html). Although no reason was given for this, it might be assumed that this is also applicable to South Africa (Murders, robbery in weekend crime, 2000:2) and retail robbery per se. However, since research regarding retail robbery per se is limited and it is not classified separately from other forms of robbery (see section 3.1), no certainty exists as to which day of the week poses the greatest risk for retail robberies.

3.2.1.2.2 Times at which robberies occur

Approximately half of all violent crimes take place at night, with the largest proportion occurring between 6pm and midnight (Laub, 1997:16; http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch3.html). Although research in this regard is limited, media articles have indicated that retail robberies often occur during these times.
(Armed robbers steal substantial amount of money from Mayor's Walk Spar, 2000:3; Pretoria Checkers robbed, 2002:8; Robbers arrested after they fail to get away, 2000:6; Two die in shooting, 2000:3). However, many articles also indicate that retail robberies occur during the day (Man held, another on the run after robbery, 2000:2; Murders, robbery in weekend crime, 2000:2; Rowers vasgetrek na skietery op snelweg, 1999:4).

3.2.1.2.3 Areas where robberies occur

As mentioned previously in section 3.1, robbery is an urban phenomenon occurring mainly in large urban cities in areas known as hot spots (Sherman, Gartin & Buerger, 1989:39). This may be due to the fact that offenders are clustered in certain areas of the city and that there are virtually unlimited targets in these urban areas, such as Gauteng (Punch, 1979:151; Rhodes & Conly, 1981:169)

According to Duffala (in Jeffery, 1977:205), areas targeted for retail robbery often display the following characteristics:

- Proximity to main or through routes which provide fast escape routes.
- Little traffic on the streets.
- Few or no other traders to act as guardians.

Retail robbers often pick establishments that are set back from the street where there are few or no other traders or they position themselves inside the store so as to be invisible from the street. Visibility from outside is an important factor that is taken into account by retail robbers and they often place “lookouts” outside the store to report any threat of intrusion (Conklin, 1981:298).

Although some experienced robbers prefer to rob stores that are near police stations because they feel that storekeepers in such locations do not install security devices or have weapons because they assume that they are significantly protected by the closeness of the police, some offenders avoid stores located in a heavily patrolled area (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch3.html).

Duffala (in Sherman et al., 1989:29) also found that stores near vacant land or away from other places of commerce are more likely to be robbed than those in dense commercial areas.
3.2.1.2.4 Victim-offender relationship

It has been found by various researchers (Barkan, 1997:274; Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:98; Bonn, 1984:206; Conklin, 1972:viii; Cook, 1987:365; Curtis, 1974:48; Glick, 1995:216; Landau & Fridman, 1993:168; Laub, 1997:17; Macdonald, 1975:175; Vito & Holmes, 1994:261) that the majority of violent crimes are committed by strangers. Karmen (1996:63) states that strangers are preferred targets because they will have greater difficulty in providing descriptions to the police and identifying suspects from pictures or line-ups. Crimes committed by strangers differ from crimes committed by non-strangers in that stranger-to-stranger crimes, such as retail robbery, are more likely to involve two or more offenders and the presence of a weapon (Karmen, 1996:64; Laub, 1997:17).

3.2.1.2.5 Number of offenders involved in robberies

Robberies are more likely to involve multiple offenders, meaning two or more offenders (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:98; Curtis, 1975:92; Pretoria Checkers robbed, 2002:8). Laub (1997:17), as well as Karmen (1996:64), agree and state that this is a characteristic regularly encountered in robberies.

3.2.1.2.6 The role of threats and violence during robberies

Robbery is unique in its direct confrontation with the victim where a convincing show of force and the demonstration of total control of the encounter are crucial variables essential to its successful completion (Einstadter, 1972:20). As mentioned previously in section 1.2.1, one of the major elements of robbery is that it entails violence or threats of violence.

According to Luckenbill (1980:364), violence during a robbery can manifest itself in three ways:

- In the first instance, the offenders can threaten with violence by means of verbal threats or symbolic signals, such as cocking their firearms, indicating that injury will follow unless the victims comply.

- Secondly, the offenders can make use of prodding force which means that the victims will be marginally physically injured to convince them not to take the threats lightly.
• Finally, the offenders can also use incapacitating force in which the victims are immediately put out of action by hitting, stabbing or shooting them.

An offenders’ decision whether to use threats and violence or not during a robbery is influenced by aspects such as the offenders’ morals, as well as the nature and characteristics of the selected target (Morrison & O’Donnell, 1994:51). These and other factors influencing the use of violence will be discussed at a later stage.

• Use of weapons

Robbery, as defined in Myerson (1995:17), refers to the stealing of goods, money and/or valuables with the threat of violence, physical harm and force, with or without a weapon (see section 1.2.1). The two forms that robbery can assume, namely armed and unarmed robbery, can be inferred from this definition (Macdonald, 1975:38). Armed robbery (where a weapon is used for instrumental purposes to intimidate, threaten or injure) as well as unarmed robbery (where a person is verbally or physically threatened without the presence of a weapon) are both associated with an element of violence, even though nobody is actually injured (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:98; Pettiway, 1979:2).

The use of firearms has significantly increased the level of violence associated with crime in South Africa (Inter-departmental Strategy Team, 1996:30). It has been found that commercial robbery offenders are more likely than other offenders to use weapons due to their willingness to participate in violence (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:98; Cook, 1987:366; Dunn, 1976:4).

The above-mentioned is confirmed by media articles (Armed robbers steal substantial amount from Mayor’s Walk Spar, 2000:3; Pistol-whipped during robbery, 2000:6) indicating that weapons and, more specifically, firearms are used to commit retail robberies in South Africa. Research by Macdonald (1975:293), Normandeau (1981:304), as well as Wright and Rossi (1986:108), confirm that approximately four out of every five armed robbers make use of firearms.

Most robbers only show their weapon to ensure that the victim relinquishes money without an argument. Maree (1995:134), as well as Morrison and O’Donnell (1994:58), however, emphasise that if offenders are prepared to take firearms to a crime scene, they will also be motivated to use it if the circumstances require it. For
this very reason it is essential to understand the reasons why offenders bring a firearm to a crime scene and sometimes make use of it.

According to Inciardi and Pottieger (1978:62), weapons are considered as tools of the trade, whereas researchers like Thio (1988:176) consider weapons to be instrumental in the achievement of a specific goal, namely obtaining money. Conklin (1995:304) agrees with Thio and states that robbers usually employ weapons to acquire money more easily and with less resistance; to protect themselves from armed victims; and to ensure a safe escape from the scene of the crime. According to Conklin (1972:110-112) a weapon serves four functions during a robbery:

- Firstly, it creates a buffer zone between victims and offenders. It instils fear in the victims and allows the offender to keep the victims at arm’s length. Offenders can also cover a large area and control more than one victim with the aid of a firearm.

- Secondly, a weapon is used to intimidate and frighten victims to such an extent that they will offer no resistance (Kleck & DeLone, 1993:56).

- In the third instance, offenders make their intentions known and indicate the seriousness of the situation by displaying their weapons. If they do not succeed in intimidating the victim, they often increase the level of intimidation by additional methods such as cocking the firearm, placing it against the victims, or using the blunt instrument to hit the victims.

- Finally, a weapon facilitates and ensures the escape of the offenders and decreases the risk of capture (Gabor et al., 1987:88; Luckenbil, 1980:367). According to Beirne and Messerschmidt (1991:99), a weapon helps to keep victims, witnesses and the police from hindering a rapid escape.

A firearm also influences the power relationship between the victim and the offender in the sense that it is a credible threat and can be used to kill the victim. The fact that a firearm poses a great threat for the victim, as well as heightening the chances of success, are the most important reasons why most robbers use firearms (Kleck, 1991: 172).

The presence of a weapon, however, has the effect of causing assaultive acts that would not otherwise have occurred. This phenomenon is referred to as the “weapons effect” (Van der Hoven, 1998:32). The mere sight of a weapon can elicit aggression
from angered persons, because of the learnt association between weapons and aggressive behaviour (Van der Hoven, 1998:33). Conversely, the presence of a weapon can have the effect of compliance without an actual physical attack on a victim.

Although handguns like pistols and revolvers are popular choices due to their easy handling and ability to be concealed, AK 47’s, R-1 and R-5 rifles are often used in retail robberies (Myerson, 1995:101). Other weapons, such as knives and pangas are also used in these robberies.

- **Injuries associated with robberies**

It is assumed that the possession of a firearm may increase the likelihood of the death of victims. As mentioned previously, a firearm may elicit aggression from angered persons because of the learnt association with aggressive behaviour. According to Kleck and DeLone (1993:61), sixteen prior studies have found that robbers with weapons are less likely to injure their victims than unarmed robbers due to the fact that victims are less likely to resist an armed robber (also see victim resistance and precipitation, section 3.2.1.2.7).

Approximately one out of three victims of violent crime suffers some form of physical injury (Barkan, 1997:274; http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/ascii/wv96.txt). The case fatality rate for gun robbery is three times as high as for robberies with knives, and ten times as high as for robberies with other weapons (Conklin, 1995:304; Cook, 1987:366; Cook & Moore, 1995:273). Cook (1987:359) also found that one in every 750 robbery victims is killed, and one in every 40 is seriously injured. Serious injuries like gunshot wounds, knife wounds, broken bones, and loss of consciousness are less common during a robbery (Laub, 1997:21). Research conducted by Conklin (1981:57) found that 80% of all robbery victims usually escape without injury. Some may require hospitalisation, even if only for a brief time, because of injuries they sustained during the robbery. Media articles (Murders, robbery in weekend crime, 2000:2; Two die in shooting, 2000:3; Two men slain in robbery bid, 2000:6) indicate that staff in retail stores are quite frequently physically assaulted, and are sometimes killed, during robbery attacks.

Myerson (1995:98) states that although injury and death is not the primary motive of robbery, some victims are often injured without reason. The presence of bystanders
and the type of weapon used are situational factors that might influence the degree of violence, brutality and injury during a robbery (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:99).

The age of robbers also affects the level of violence in a robbery in that young robbers are more likely to use force to injure victims than older and more experienced robbers (Curtis, 1975:92). Although Sykes and Cullen (1992:157) support this statement, they also warn that older, more experienced robbers will not hesitate to use force if the circumstances necessitate it.

The size of the group committing the robbery also influences the degree of aggression and violence employed (Macdonald, 1975:139; Maree, 1995:133). In addition, Myerson (1995:97) emphasises that if more than one offender is involved in a robbery the risk of injury is significantly increased. Cook (1985:483) also confirms that when three or four persons participate in a robbery the risk of injury increases due to the fact that group dynamics lead to heightened violence.

3.2.1.2.7 Victim resistance and precipitation

Victim resistance can be defined as actions by the victim that encourage or precipitate a behavioural response or arouse emotions in the offender that increase the chance of victimisation (Laub, 1997:18). The victims’ decision to offer resistance depends upon their assessment of the robber’s ability to injure them (Karmen, 1996:63).

As mentioned earlier, research (Cook, 1985:483; Gabor et al., 1987:104; Inciardi & Pottieger, 1978:62) indicates that victims are less likely to resist when an offender is armed with a firearm. According to Block (1989:237), as well as Karmen (1996:66), individuals who are confronted by two or more robbers are also less likely to offer resistance. In general, men offer resistance more often than woman do, and young people more than older persons (Macdonald, 1975:201). Previous exposure to robbery victimisation also influences resistance in that individuals are more immune to the fear associated with robbery the second time around (Gabor et al., 1987:104).

Victims can and do resist their assailants in a variety of ways. Almost three out of four victims of violent crimes take some form of self-protective measure, ranging from trying to reason with the offender to using a weapon. Laub (1997:19) found that the most common form of self-protection among victims is non-violent resistance and evasion. He also found that victims using non-forceful methods of resistance during a
robbery reduce the risk of robbery completion and suffer less attack and injury (Laub, 1997:19). Victim resistance may also increase the likelihood that the robber will be delayed or detained long enough for the police to arrive and capture the robber (Kleck & DeLone, 1993:56).

Beirne and Messerschmidt (1991:98), as well as Kleck and DeLone (1993:59), however, state that those resisting more forcefully are likely to precipitate further violence by the offender. In this regard, Gabor et al. (1987:88) mention that victims resisting armed robberies are three times more likely to be seriously injured than those who do not resist. Victim resistance, or the lack thereof, however, can not guarantee that the victim will not incur any injuries (Macdonald, 1975:29). In one instance, a manager tried to resist robbers and as a result he was kicked and punched, sustaining only minor injuries (Armed robbers steal substantial amount of money from Mayor’s Walk Spar. 2000:3). In another incident, one customer was killed and another two wounded when they resisted robbers (Two armed robberies foiled, 1999:1).

### 3.2.1.3 Post-offence phase

One of the most important aspects of the post-offence phase is successfully leaving the scene of the robbery. According to Maree (1995:111), robbers take various factors into account when leaving a crime scene. These factors include road signs such as stop signs, robots, yield signs and mini-circles; accessibility to highways; danger zones like sharp bends, pedestrian crossings, bus stops and dead-end streets; as well as the prescribed speed limit for the specific route.

Prior to the robbery, a getaway vehicle is usually stolen for use during the robbery (Livingston, 1996:166). After the robbery is completed, this vehicle is disposed of or abandoned in a secluded area. On occasion, weapons and additional accessories such as disguises or special outfits are also disposed of.

As mentioned previously, the primary goal of robbery is monetary gain (Landau & Fridman, 1993:168). On completion of the robbery, in the case of more than one offender, the financial spoils are also divided amongst the various participants.
3.3 OFFENDER PROFILE

Due to the fact that it is not possible for victims to conclusively ascertain offender characteristics, such as their exact age, the determination of the offender profile in retail robberies was excluded as a goal of the study. Although research concerning the profile of offenders involved in retail robbery is limited, available information regarding the gender, age and race of robbers in general, will be discussed as a means of background information to the study. Conklin’s typology of robbers (1972:69) will also receive attention in the following section.

3.3.1 Gender

The assumption that robbery offenders are in most cases male, is in concordance with research (Barkan, 1997:274; Bonn, 1984:206; Dunn, 1976:12; http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/ascii/wv96.txt; Karmen, 1996:64; Reid, 1988:232; Weston & Wells, 1990: 351; Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1982:259) indicating that robbery-related crimes are most often committed by males. Women are both less violent and less frequent offenders than men (Gelsthorpe, 1996:139). According to Fox (1976:265), women seldom commit robbery, although they may occasionally be used as decoys or participate with men in other manners, such as to act as look-outs.

3.3.2 Age

Persons under the age of 25 account for almost two-thirds of robbery arrests (Barkan, 1997:273; Reid, 1988:232; Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). Although research (Bonn, 1984:206; Cook, 1976:175; http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch2.html; Karmen, 1996:64; Macdonald, 1975:125; Stevens, 1999:64) confirms that robbery is a crime that is primarily committed by younger persons. It is also possible that these crimes are committed by older individuals.

3.3.3 Race

It appears that black people are involved in robbery more often than white people (Barkan, 1997:274; Karmen, 1996:64; Pettiway, 1979:277; Reid, 1988:232; Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). In the USA, however, robbery offenders are predominantly white (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/ascii/wv96.txt). This could be attributed to the fact that in America blacks are a minority group, whereas in South Africa they are
the majority population. In South Africa 97.1% of all violent offences are committed by blacks, while they constitute 75% of the total population (Naudé, 1998:9).

Restricted and isolated from the institutionalised means to achieve the dominant goals (see section 3.1.1), many blacks in South Africa are also caught up in what Cloward and Ohlin refer to as the differential opportunity structure. The concept of differential opportunity refers to the uneven distribution of legal and illegal means of achieving economic successes in society, especially as access is divided disproportionately by social class or status (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1996:56). These youths are, therefore, more likely to commit crime (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1996:56; Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1982:264).

3.3.4 Use of alcohol and drugs

There is substantial evidence of a correlation between alcohol and drug use and violent crime (Conklin, 1995:298; Goldstein, 1989:22; Reynolds, 1994:54; Stevens, 1999:65). According to Goldstein (1989:23), as well as Karmen (1996:64), robbery arrestees often test positively for the use of drugs or alcohol (Goldstein, 1989:23; Karmen, 1996:64). A three phase survey was conducted in police holding cells by the Medical Research Council, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Institute for Security Studies, and the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa, in conjunction with the Crime Information Analysis Centre of the SAPS. Results from the third phase of this survey indicate that in Gauteng, 36.7% of all persons arrested for violent offences during 2000 tested positive for drugs (http://www.saps.org.za/media/brief2001091.htm).

As mentioned previously in section 3.1.1, one explanation that has been offered to explain this correlation, is that alcohol and drugs may reduce inhibitions and trigger law-violating behaviour in some individuals (Conklin, 1995:298). Another possible explanation is that crimes like retail robbery are often committed to obtain money for more drugs and alcohol (Gabor et al., 1987: 27).

3.4 CLASSIFICATION OF ROBBERS

Robberies that are similar in appearance may be, as noted by Conklin (1972:60), committed by quite different types of offenders. He developed a standard classification for robbers as professionals, opportunists, addicts, and alcoholics which
can be applied to the phenomenon of retail robbery. These various classifications will be discussed next.

- **Professional robbers**

Professional robbers have a long-term commitment to robbery because it is direct, fast, and sometimes very profitable (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989:263). Although little skill is required, these offenders often employ sophisticated planning in their robberies, exhibiting greater skill than other robbery offenders (Barkan, 1997:275; Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:101).

Their planning includes the neutralisation of security measures near the target, and the investigation, prior to the robbery, of all possible escape routes (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:101; Conklin, 1972:64). They undertake their robberies as a group in which each member has an assigned role. However, the structure of their gangs is generally temporary and fluid (Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). Targets tend to be commercial establishments such as retail stores, and firearms are usually employed (Curtis, 1975:92). They seek out profitable targets ("big scores") and typically commit four or five robberies per year (Barkan, 1997:275).

The goal of professional robbers is typically to obtain money to support a lavish lifestyle which indicates a degree of hedonism (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989:263). Since these robbers are generally unemployed, they also depend upon robbery for their livelihood (Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). Once their funds are nearing depletion, planning for the next "score" is initiated. In the USA, professional robbers are fewer in number than other types and tend to be white, in their mid-twenties, and from middle- or working class backgrounds (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989:263; Conklin, 1972:69; Curtis, 1975:92). Conklin (1972:64) identified two types of professional robbers. The first commits robbery almost exclusively, whereas the second commits other types of crime in addition to robbery.

- **Opportunist robbers**

Opportunist robbers, on the other hand, are rarely committed to robbery (Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). As their name implies, these men commit robberies when they have the opportunity to do so (Barkan, 1997:275). Conklin (1972:70), in reference to the USA, noted that opportunist robbers, usually young lower-class blacks, are probably the most common type of robbers (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989:263). The
robberies they commit are not elaborately planned and frequently involve non-commercial or smaller targets, such as cafés (Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). They are not dependent upon robbery as a primary source of income, and therefore the money they acquire from these offences can be considered a supplementary income (Curtis, 1975:92; Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98).

These offenders rarely use weapons of any kind, but because they tend to commit these robberies with accomplices, the group itself becomes the "weapon" (Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). In addition, Curtis (1975:92) found that they employ force more than professional robbers. When an opportunity arises (e.g. a small retail store where there is limited guardianship with few customers and employees), these offenders will strike.

- **Addict robbers**

Addict robbers also display a low commitment to robbery, preferring less risky forms of property crime to acquire cash. However, in desperation for funds to support their habit, they are occasionally forced to engage in robbery (Barkan, 1997:275; Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989:263; Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98). Barkan (1997:275) as well as Curtis (1975:92) state that addict robbers generally plan their robberies less carefully than professional robbers, but more carefully than opportunist robbers. According to Curtis (1975:93), the day-to-day tension and instability associated with addiction does not lend itself easily to learning and maintaining professional skill or gaining the trust of partners in a carefully planned, high-risk robbery. Their desperation, however, may result in little planning and a careless selection of targets, which increases their chances of being apprehended. If an addict robber carries a weapon it is likely to be an unloaded gun (Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98).

- **Alcoholic robbers**

Alcoholic robbers rarely consider how much money they will steal or what they will do with it once they have it (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989:263). The alcoholic robber is debilitated by alcoholism and is intoxicated when perpetrating the offence. Barkan (1997:275), as well as Bartollas and Dinitz (1989:263), mention that commitment to robbery is low, and that the crime often occurs as an afterthought to an assault.

Firearms are usually not employed unless the offender routinely carries one (Barkan, 1997:275). Alcoholic robberies are not planned and robbers are less likely to take
precautions. For this reason alcoholic robbers are caught a higher proportion of the time than other robbery offenders (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989: 263).

3.5 VICTIM PROFILE

Certain categories of people, in terms of attributes like gender, age and race may be burdened by crime much more than others (Karmen, 1996:77). The successful completion or the failure of retail robberies is dependent upon certain demographic characteristics of the victims in conjunction with their actions during the robbery. In this regard, Hindelang, Gottfredson and Garofalo (1978:241) have stated that the routine activities of individuals are related to their demographic characteristics. Existing research regarding the profile of robbery victims will subsequently be discussed.

3.5.1 Gender

According to Bonn (1984:206), robbery tends to involve more female victims because they are less likely to offer resistance. However, other research (Barkan, 1997:274; http://www.ncjrs.org/policing/cri359.htm; Karmen, 1996:77; Macdonald, 1975:1999; Zedner, 1994:1212) indicates that robbery victims are more often men than women and that the rate of physical injury is greater for males (Laub, 1997:21).

Gabor et al. (1987:183) ascribe the high victimisation rate of men to their lifestyles. In conjunction with the routine activities theory, they postulate that men are more accessible as a result of their lifestyles and routine activities which usually involve work away from home. Widom and Maxfield (in Maxfield, 1987:278), however, indicate that in cases where women report patterns of behaviour and lifestyles similar to those of males, personal victimisation of women is much higher.

3.5.2 Age

The victims of robbery are usually older than the individuals who victimise them (Bonn, 1984:206; Macdonald, 1975:199). In this regard, data from the 1998 British Crime Survey (Zedner, 1994:1212) shows that robbery is twice as likely to occur to those under 45 years of age. Meadows (1998:94), however, states that individuals that are 35 years and older have a lower victimisation rate than those in younger age groups. Karmen (1996:80) agrees that younger persons, specifically between the ages
of 12 and 24, suffer higher personal robbery rates. Persons aged 19-24, according to Laub (1997:21), are also more likely to sustain physical injuries during the course of a robbery because they tend to offer resistance.

Lynch (1987:294) is of the opinion that younger individuals working in highly accessible areas such as retail stores are at less risk of injury than would be expected by virtue of their age and setting. This may be due in part to their robustness relative to older individuals. Potential offenders may think twice about robbing a store where younger people work who are perceived to be capable of greater resistance and pursuit (Lynch, 1987:294).

3.5.3 Race

Rates of victimisation also vary by race. Research (Sheley, 1995:73) indicates that robbery is an intra-racial phenomenon. This implies that individuals from the same racial group are more inclined to victimise one another. Barkan (1997:274), Block (1977:49), Bonn (1984:206); Conklin (1972:33), Cook (1987:365), and Curtis (1974:161; 1975:90), however, regard robbery as an inter-racial phenomenon in that individuals from different racial groups victimise one another. They also indicate that black robbers are more inclined to target white people for robbery. Dunn (1976:15) supports this opinion and states that commercial activity and money is concentrated mainly in the white sector. Curtis (1975:90) also states that robbery is “an ideologically straightforward way of redistributing income, of grasping at what has been economically withheld”.

However, due to their numbers, as well as their lifestyles, the rate of violent victimisation is higher for blacks than for whites. Research (Barkan, 1997:274; Karmen, 1996:89; Laub, 1997:15; Vetter & Silverman, 1986:98) has indicated that black males have the highest rate of victimisation for crimes such as robbery and white females the lowest rate. Vito and Holmes (1994:145) state that a higher victimisation rate for inner-city blacks is partly a function of their lifestyle that increases the probability of crimes like robbery.

3.5.4 Occupation

Widom and Maxfield (in Maxfield, 1987:278) found that people working in particular jobs suffer disproportionately from certain crimes. Persons in the labour force have a higher risk of victimisation than persons who stay at home (see routine activities
theory, section 2.1.2), but it is unclear exactly what about work exposes one to victimisation (Lynch, 1987:286). Attributes of the occupational role itself can be a source of differences in victimisation rates. Certain occupations make their incumbents attractive targets for robbery (Lynch, 1987:286). If an individual’s employment, for example, involves face-to-face contact with large numbers of people on a routine basis, their risk of victimisation is greater than those who are less accessible to the public. If an individual handles money as part of their job, they are at greater risk than people who do not (Lynch, 1987:295; Reynolds, 1994:15). A retail store employee would therefore be at great risk of robbery victimisation.

3.6 CONSEQUENCES OF ROBBERY

As a result of media articles (Fourty four thousand rand taken in robberies, 2000:3; Murders, robbery in weekend crime, 2000:2; Pistol-whipped during robbery, 2000:6; Two men slain in robbery bid, 2000:6) indicating some of the negative consequences of retail robberies for the victims, it was decided to also include a section on the consequences of robbery in general.

3.6.1 Financial consequences

Victims whose property is destroyed or damaged as a result of a robbery often suffer great financial losses. These financial losses are even greater if the victim is underinsured or has no insurance at all. This may then force retail owners to close the store and move to another location, thereby reducing the supply of goods to local customers and raising the prices charged by remaining stores (Conklin, 1975:6).

According to Macdonald (1975:50), those victims who sustained serious physical injuries may also face expensive medical costs. Victims are largely responsible for these costs as the coverage of medical aid schemes is often limited. In the case of the victim’s death as a result of the incident, the loss of economic support for the family and dependants, as well as funeral costs, represent other financial consequences (Macdonald, 1975:50).

Many victims are also unable to return to work for some time, if ever, after a robbery. In addition, considerable expenses are incurred by victims to improve security measures safeguarding their houses or businesses. These measures may include security guards, bullet-proof glass and surveillance cameras (Macdonald, 1975:50).
Expenses such as these are in turn made possible by increasing consumer prices, which means that the man in the street is affected. Furthermore, taxes are used to sustain the criminal justice system, as well as to maintain South Africa’s prisons, which respectively prosecute and then house the very criminal responsible for the victim’s declining financial situation (Conklin, 1975:6).

3.6.2 Physical consequences

Victims who survive violent robbery attacks often sustain serious injuries requiring long-term or even permanent medical treatment (Glanz, 1994:21). Cuts and bruises, as well as broken bones, are the most common injuries resulting from robberies (Barkan, 1997:107). Long-term injuries could also include being paralysed and confined to a wheelchair as a result of a gunshot or knife wound, or having a speech or hearing impediment as a result of a blow to the head.

In instances where firearms are employed by offenders, and victims do resist, offenders often increase the level of intimidation by cocking the firearm, holding it up to the victims’ heads, or using the blunt instrument to hit the victims. According to Conklin (1995:304), this type of behaviour may lead to serious injury or death.

3.6.3 Emotional consequences

Crime and the violence associated with robbery may cause psychological trauma for the victims (Zedner, 1994:1223). Many robbery victims experience symptoms that are characteristic of the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Nomoyi et al., 2000:98). This disorder is diagnosed after a person has experienced a traumatic event outside the limits of normal experience that involved a serious threat to the person’s life or physical integrity (Reynolds, 1994:69).

Victims often experience the following PTSD symptoms after a robbery: flashbacks where they relive the entire event; recurrent dreams or nightmares; painful and intrusive memories of the traumatic event; a diminished responsiveness or psychological “numbing” to the external world; feelings of alienation or detachment from society, difficulty in developing close relationships with others; problems with sleeping; loss of appetite; being easily startled; difficulty concentrating; and avoidance of anything that reminds them of the event (Barlow & Durand, 1995:192; Gabor et al., 1987:vii; Nomoyi et al., 2000:98).
3.6.4 Social consequences

According to McKendrick and Hoffman (1990:25), the violence associated with robbery can have far-reaching effects upon the quality of life of the individual victim as well as the community. They noted that violence creates fear which disrupts social interaction in the community, as well as destroying interpersonal and intergroup relationships. In addition, violence restricts lifestyles due to the fact that people turn their homes and businesses into forts as a result of fear.

Conklin (1972:2) concluded that robbery is the most feared crime due to the fact that it entails a double element of fear, namely losing one's property and, especially, risking the loss of one's life. It is this intense fear which may prompt community members to take the law into their own hands and turn to vigilantism or people's courts. Violence and fear of violence often leads to dehumanisation and alienation from others. The extent of violence in the country also desensitises people, leading to moral decay where people no longer feel the need to question violent actions such as those associated with retail robbery (McKendrick & Hoffman, 1990:29).

Crime reduces trust and attachment to neighbours and to the community as a whole. Conklin (1975:9) stresses that by reducing solidarity, informal social control in the community, which is probably more effective in preventing crime than formal methods of social control such as the police, is weakened.

3.7 PREVENTION OF ROBBERY

The prevention and control of violent crime is one of the most important and most difficult priorities of the state and, in particular, the community. Various strategies that can be employed in the prevention of robbery and specifically retail robberies will be discussed in this section.

3.7.1 An effective state policy on community and social development

The state has the specific responsibility to establish an effective urban development policy which should be aimed in particular at cleaning up squatter areas, providing adequate housing, public transport systems and recreational facilities, especially for young people (Naudé, 1999:5). An adequate public health and education policy; an effective criminal justice system; economic and job-creation policy; as well as
assistance and support programmes for problem families and high-risk individuals, are other important functions of the state in the fight against crimes like retail robbery. High-risk individuals should be identified early so that they may receive the necessary psychological and medical treatment to prevent violent behaviour. This is a long-term crime prevention strategy focusing specifically on primary prevention of violent and other crimes.

Two of the pillars of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (Inter-departmental Strategy Team, 1996:68) also make provision for the implementation of adequate urban planning in order to limit opportunities for crime as well as for promoting community values and education (Naudé, 1999:5).

3.7.2 Effective law reform

Effective law reform focuses in particular on adequate and fair legislation, which has unfortunately not always been the case in South Africa in the past. McKendrick and Hoffman (1990:472) point out that structural violence, which is violence sanctioned by the state, has been a feature of South Africa’s recent past.

Racial discrimination enforced by legislation during the apartheid era is another important reason for inter-group and political violence that remain a problem in some parts of South Africa. The freedom struggle that resulted from such legislation and the general culture of violence and disregard for the law associated with the struggle, are still important reasons for the current high incidence of violent murders and robberies in South Africa (Naudé, 1998:111).

Cook (1987:375), as well as Gabor et al. (1987:173), are of the opinion that stricter legislation and effective sentencing are important strategies in the prevention of crimes like retail robbery. Block (1977:101) adds that changes in law enforcement techniques and stricter punishment can have a preventative influence on robberies, especially in cases where they are planned.

Naudé (1998:111) states that the following measures, many of which are currently being investigated, can be applied to decrease the robbery rate in South Africa in view of the country’s high incidence of violence:
• The death penalty as compulsory sentence for certain offences

Legislation that makes the death penalty compulsory for the most brutal violent crimes, is something that is often mentioned in crime prevention circles. It could also be applied to cases such as a murder committed during the course of a retail robbery. The death penalty, however, was abolished in South Africa in 1995 because it denied the unqualified right to life and was considered an irrevocable form of punishment (Neser, 1998:58). Although there is considerable community pressure for the re-introduction of the death penalty, Naudé (1998:112) states that research findings on the deterrent effect of the death penalty have been contradictory and at present it is assumed that it has no deterrent effect.

• Legislation regarding firearms

According to Zimring and Zuehl (1986:38), any law, regulation or policy that decreases the use of firearms during the course of violent crimes will also significantly decrease the number of deaths associated with these crimes. The control of firearms involves a wide variety of legal measures that restrict the purchase, possession, use and sale of firearms and is an important strategy in reducing deaths as a result of violent crime (Robin, 1991:12). In addition, Inciardi and Pottieger (1978:48) state that even a partial disarmament would significantly decrease the rates of violence present in society. In this regard, South Africa recently passed the Firearms Control Act (Act 60 of 2000) which restricts gun ownership by limiting the amount of firearms allowed to be purchased by individuals.

According to Robin (1991:14), firearms should be controlled as follows:

⇒ A waiting period and investigation of the applicant's background in order to prevent firearms being issued to incompetent people, people who represent a high risk, criminals and drug abusers, should be compulsory.
⇒ The imprisonment of offenders using a firearm while committing an offence should be compulsory.
⇒ Special legislation should also be promulgated granting permission only under special conditions for people to carry a firearm on their person outside their homes or places of work.
⇒ A ban should be placed on dangerous firearms, such as snub-nosed handguns.
⇒ The sale of plastic handguns that render the use of metal detectors futile should be prohibited.
Schönteich (in Naudé, 1998:17), however, maintains that the focus should rather be on controlling illegal firearms and heavy penalties for the use of firearms in offences. According to him, it is a common misconception that high levels of ownership of legal firearms give rise to violent crime involving firearms, such as retail robbery. However, the theft and loss of firearms by private persons and SAPS members (as mentioned in section 3.1.1) are a major source of firearms used in robberies.

The South African government has identified crimes committed with firearms as priority crimes within the National Crime Prevention Strategy and efforts such as joint operations with Mozambique, improved border control and breaking organised crime rings have made some progress in reducing the number of illegal weapons entering the country (http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Crime%20Index/Vol%203%20No%202/Firearms.html).

- **Effective law enforcement**

Effective law enforcement is another measure with which to address violent crimes such as retail robbery. These measures may include visible policing in high risk areas in terms of heightened police activity, road blocks and patrolling and can act as a short-term deterrent to retail robbers. Increased visibility of the police, however, may also cause the displacement of retail robberies to other less guarded areas.

However, the possibility of improving law enforcement and policing in general is minimal, due to the limited human resources available in South Africa for active police work (see section 3.1.1). Policing is impeded by limited manpower in high risk areas in Gauteng where the ratio of police officers to residents is 1:249, thereby making the prevention of crimes such as retail robbery a difficult task (Davis, 1999:143). The fact that only a small percentage of retail robbers are therefore apprehended by the police, strengthens the public’s view of the police as ineffective.

- **Compulsory minimum sentences**

Legislation should make provision for compulsory minimum sentences in the case of offences involving a firearm, as well as cases involving armed career criminals and habitual violent offenders. This is especially important in South Africa due to the fact that offences involving firearms are considered priority crimes. Federal legislation in America provides for a person who has been convicted of three violent crimes or serious drug offences and who was in possession of an illegal firearm, to be sentenced
to at least 15 years of imprisonment without the possibility of parole (Naudé, 1998:112). In 1997, South Africa passed similar legislation stating that offenders convicted of crimes involving firearms would face mandatory sentences.

- **Legislation to strengthen pretrial detention**

A 1988 study in America on the pre-trial release on bail of alleged violent offenders has shown that 18% of such defendants reoffended while on bail (US Department of Justice, 1992:1). This type of “revolving-door justice” has a very negative effect on the public’s confidence in the judicial system, as well as on the ability of the police to obtain the co-operation of the community to report offences. South Africa’s number of prisoners awaiting trial are approximately a quarter of the total prison population (Oppler, 1998:15).

In 2001, inspecting Judge Fagin (National Symposium on Correctional Services, 1 August, 2000) played an integral part in the release of awaiting trial prisoners whose bail was set at R1000 or less. This was done in order to ease the overcrowding in South African prisons, as 35.8% of the total prison population serves a sentence of less than two years. It has been advised that diversionary measures such as community based corrections should be considered as an alternative to prison. In this regard, inspecting Judge Fagin (National Symposium on Correctional Services, 1 August, 2000) made a reference to Robert Gangi, the Executive Director of the Correctional Association of New York, who stated that “building more prisons to address crime is like building more graveyards to address a fatal disease”.

- **Restrictions on early release on parole**

Despite the problem of overcrowding in South African prisons, it is essential to restrict the early release on parole of violent offenders such as retail robbers and to introduce longer prison sentences. Research in America has shown that violent offenders serve only about 37% of their sentences, and that 51% of violent offenders are released within two years and 76% within four years, despite the fact that a number of studies have shown that people on parole have a high rate of recidivism (US Department of Justice, 1992:7). In South Africa, it is estimated that between 85% and 94% of released offenders will reoffend within five years (Muntingh, 2001:6). In spite of the problem of overcrowding in prisons, South Africa reviewed its parole conditions and the recommendation has been made that serious offenders be required to serve at least half of their sentence before there can be any possibility of parole (Naudé, 1998:112).
• Improved training of justice personnel

Another strategy for fighting rising rates of criminality is to improve the training and education of justice personnel. Police, lawyers, judges and corrections officials need training to raise their skill levels in terms of interaction with victims. International meetings for the exchange of knowledge and experience can help in this process, enabling criminal justice systems to work better. Countries need to improve training, collect better data, develop prevention strategies and give more priority to policy development and research. However, funds for training are scarce, thereby ultimately contributing to the heavy burden of rising crime (http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/xpress/dex/dex9802.htm).

The US Department of Justice (1992:42) has recommended improved training of public prosecutors in order to ensure a greater number of convictions for serious crimes such as robbery. In South Africa, the training of public prosecutors has been improved in terms of their knowledge of the law in order to increase their efficiency and, therefore, ensure speedy trials. Naudé (1998:13) further suggests that judges should also have access to sufficient support equipment such as computers to increase their effectiveness. Moreover, an electronic centralised database would avail immediate and reliable data on hardened offenders to all of the role players in the criminal justice system.

3.7.3 Situational crime prevention

Situational crime prevention involves the manipulation of a situation to reduce the incidence of crime (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch1.html). It is based on the assumption that people actually choose to commit crime and that the decision to do so is a rational one. Offenders are seen as rational decision makers who weigh up the risks and expected profits of crime before deciding to become involved. Therefore, the aim of situational crime prevention is to increase the risks and decrease the profits of a crime in order to discourage potential offenders (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armed robbery/ch1.html; Lab, 2000:146). According to Lab (2000:149), opportunity-reducing measures could include target hardening, removing the means for criminal activity, or increasing surveillance. As most retail robbers are assumed to be rational offenders who weigh the pro’s and con’s of committing a crime situational crime prevention could be used to prevent this crime (Walklate, 1996:303).
Clarke and Mayhew (in Walklate, 1996:303) describe situational crime prevention measures as:

- being directed at specific crimes;
- managing, designing or manipulating the immediate environment in which crime occurs;
- ensuring that these measures are systematic and permanent;
- reducing overall opportunities for crime.

Territoriality is also an important aspect of situational crime prevention and refers to the ability of legitimate users of an area to lay claim to the area (Lab, 2000:27). It entails creating a sense of ownership and belonging, which results in social control being established. In this regard, the position of a legitimate users' retail store site and the buildings on the site can play an important role in the vulnerability and risk of the business with regard to crime (Naudé & Stevens, 1988:209). This aspect, as well as other factors that appear to influence an offender's selection of stores for robbery will subsequently be discussed.

### 3.7.3.1 Choice of surroundings and site

In the case of large commercial establishments, it is essential that management carry out thorough research with respect to the site of the business. The small businessman, however, has a more difficult task in that most cases he alone has to decide on the location. Naudé and Stevens (1988:209) note that aspects such as vulnerability, risk and cost-effectiveness must be kept in mind when making a location choice.

According to Keogh (in Naudé & Stevens, 1988:210), the following factors must be considered when a suitable location for a retail store is sought:

- **The crime rate in the neighbourhood**

  It is important for the prospective businessman to check the crime rate of the neighbourhood in which the site is situated. If the crime rate is high, the crime risk for the retail store will also be high (Naudé & Stevens, 1988:210). This also means that the risk to employees will increase with the result that they will be hesitant to work for such an establishment.
• Police patrols

The close proximity of the police to the robbery target appears to act as a deterrent for many offenders (refer to guardianship in the routine activities theory, section 2.1.2). Police patrolling in the area of the target seems to have a stronger effect than does a nearby police station (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobery/ch8.html; Pretoria Checkers robbed, 2002:8).

Police presence could take the form of either foot patrols or mobile patrols, and would be most effective during the times favoured for retail robberies (see section 3.2.1.2.2). However, since the police mainly patrol residential areas (J. van der Linde, personal communication, 2 April 2002), criminals are given the opportunity to rob businesses situated in more isolated areas.

Although patrolling may act as a deterrent, it may also influence the choice of site. An area which is patrolled could be an indication that there is a high crime rate in the neighbourhood, resulting in fewer businesses operating in the area.

• The presence of juveniles

Naudé and Stevens (1988:210) warn that the presence of adolescents can present problems to a small commercial establishment like a retail store. They do, however, add that not all juveniles are criminals, but that the greater the concentration of juveniles in the streets of a neighbourhood, the greater the possibility that crimes like robbery will occur. This view is supported by research conducted by Pelser and De Kock (2000:86)(previously discussed in section 3.1.1).

Lab (2000:149) suggests deflecting offenders by offering alternatives to undesirable actions. These alternatives may include a meeting place for youths away from highways or businesses. These alternatives may, therefore, provide other activities with which the youth can occupy themselves, instead of turning to criminal activities such as robbery.
• Access to highways

Many small businesses are dependent on motorists who use highways. Naudé and Stevens (1988:211) indicate that this can also be a risk factor because highways offer the criminal an efficient and easy escape route (see section 3.1).

• Other businesses

According to Naudé and Stevens (1988:211), one of the best methods of establishing how safe an environment is, is to contact other businesses and ask them what they think of the area the store is situated in. Most businessmen will readily discuss any robberies or problems that they may have experienced. The precautionary measures of other businesses can also be taken note of, as prior robberies may have resulted in businesses employing additional safety measures. These increased safety measures may therefore be indicative of a higher risk of retail robbery.

3.7.3.2 The buildings

As in the case of the choice of the site, safety aspects are often not taken into account with respect to the buildings on the site. Aspects such as the aesthetic appearance of the building often take precedence over safety features such as alarms, cameras, wiring and reinforced doors and windows.

Hemphill (in Naudé & Stevens, 1988:211) stresses that a building should be designed in such a way that it will protect the business against damage from within as well as from without. To accomplish this, he makes the following recommendations:

• Situation of the building

When a building is being planned, the architect should bear in mind the situation of the building on the site. The building must be situated in such a manner that police cars and other passers-by are afforded the maximum view of it. Naudé and Stevens (1988:212) note that it would be advantageous, if possible, for the interior of shops to be visible from the outside. Although high visibility enables an offender to case the interior of the store without going inside, high visibility into the interior of shops enables passing pedestrians to observe a robbery in
progress. This may act as a deterrent for some offenders (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch8.html).

- **Layout of the terrain**

As far as the layout of the terrain is concerned, big trees and thick shrubs, in particular, can be hindrances because they afford the prospective robber the cover he requires and prevent the criminal from being visible from the street. It is therefore better to plant low shrubs near a building and in such a way as to provide maximum visibility of the buildings (Naudé & Stevens, 1988:212). Van der Schyff (2002:63) agrees with the above and emphasises the importance of eliminating any hiding places for robbers, as well as potential escape routes that may be used.

- **Lighting**

In the opinion of Naudé and Stevens (1988:212), as well as Van der Schyff (2002:63), lighting, both interior and exterior, remains one of the most effective deterrents against armed robbery. Gabor et al. (1987:182) suggest increased lighting immediately outside the store. Regular inspections are necessary to check that the lights are in working order because lights are often deliberately smashed to provide the necessary cover for robbers. It is therefore advised that outdoor lights are covered in wire mesh to prevent their bulbs from being broken (Naudé & Stevens, 1988:213).

3.7.3.3 **Target hardening**

The hardening of robbery targets through the installation of security measures have the potential to decrease the incidence of robbery (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch10.html; Lab, 2000:149). Target hardening refers to the physical protection of a target (Gabor et al., 1987:182) and could entail the use of safety devices such as alarm systems, television cameras and security personnel.

Research conducted on the impact of alarms (Lab, 1997:35) has indicated that this measure has a valuable deterrent effect on household burglary. The impact that alarms have in the deterrence of retail robberies has not been determined.
Although the deterrent effect of formal surveillance measures (Lab, 2000:149), such as cameras, has not been proven yet (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch10.html), and such technology, according to Van der Schyff (2002:63), rather assists in damage control and in later apprehending the robbers than preventing these crimes, closed-circuit television is one form of target hardening being used increasingly in retail stores. In the event of a robbery, the robber will most likely be photographed on one of the store’s cameras - this will facilitate the identification of the offender. However, the quality of the picture for this purpose has to be good and the technical level and standard of equipment is not always satisfactory.

Security guards are costly, especially for smaller retail stores. During an armed robbery the possibility of violence is often increased as a direct result of the use of security guards, especially armed guards (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch10.html). However, they are an important deterrent to robbery and may increase the employees’ sense of security (Naudé & Stevens, 1988:220; Van der Schyff, 2002:63).

According to Hemphill (in Naudé & Stevens, 1988:221), patrol services cost less than hiring full-time security personnel, but are less effective. The observant robber becomes aware of the routine of the patrol and can rob the store between patrols. It is therefore advised that patrolling not be carried out according to a fixed routine. Gabor et al. (1987:183) support the above statement and suggest that changing routines, such as the times at which cash deposits are made to the bank, can keep offenders off guard.

3.7.3.4 Example of a situational crime prevention programme

In 1976, the Southland Corporation, owners of the 7-Eleven retail stores, established a successful seven step preventative programme against armed robbery (Gabor et al., 1987:189). These steps incorporate simultaneously the considerations of increased surveillance, target hardening, territoriality and profit reduction:

- Step one encourages employees to look vigilant and in control of the store. They are encouraged to look active when the store is empty and to keep it clean, uncluttered and the shelves well stocked. Such behaviour is said to signal to would-be robbers the fact that those running the store are in command. This is basically the principal of territoriality (Jeffery, 1977:45).
• Step two aims at heightening the visibility of robbers from outside the store. Surveillance of the area immediately surrounding the cash register is particularly important here. This can usually be achieved through simple physical design manipulations, such as by making sure that there are no signs or objects obstructing the view of the cash register from outside the store.

• During step three employees are encouraged to be active in monitoring people inside or in the immediate vicinity of the store. Employees are told to take an active stance in response to suspicious behaviour. Gabor et al. (1987:189) suggest that persons loitering or observing a store are to be stared down or, if this does not work, the police are to be called (Van der Schyff, 2002:63).

• Step four also involves active surveillance. Employees are encouraged to greet people entering the store and to establish sufficient eye contact with them. Such behaviour is said to make potential offenders feel more conspicuous and make them fear later identification.

• Step five is designed to discourage potential robbers by indicating that a robbery would not be profitable for potential robbers. Employees are told to place large bills into a drop box or safe as soon as they receive them. This is to be done as conspicuously as possible so that the public and potential robbers will realise that there is little to be gained by robbing the store. Signs on the store window stating that the key to the safe is not kept in the store are also a means of indicating that a robbery of the store will not be profitable.

• Step six focuses on special measures to be taken at night. Employees are advised to ensure that the amount of money in the cash register is at a minimum and that there is good illumination around the store. In this regard, it has been found that cash reduction measures, such as having a minimum amount of money on the premises, have been effective in the prevention of crimes such as retail robbery (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch10.html).

• Step seven insinuates that lying to robbers can be dangerous and that fraudulent security devices and signs do not fool robbers. According to the programme, telling the truth means safety to the employees (Gabor et al., 1987:190).
Research (Gabor et al., 1987:190) indicates that programmes of this nature can be beneficial both in terms of bringing about a reduction in robberies and in decreasing the amount of money taken in the incidents that have taken place. Critics of situational crime prevention strategies claim that, although it may prevent crime from occurring in a particular area or on a particular target, crime may be displaced in terms of time (temporal displacement), place (spatial displacement), mode of operation (tactical displacement), as well as target (target displacement) (Cornish & Clarke, 1987:935; Lab, 1997:75).

The type and extent of displacement resulting from a particular crime prevention strategy is difficult to determine. It will depend on a whole range of factors which include, among others, the commitment of the offenders to the robbery, the skills possessed by the offenders, and the reasons for their involvement in the crime. Despite the above criticism, it is important to keep in mind that displacement is by no means the inevitable outcome of situational crime prevention measures. (http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/armedrobbery/ch1.html). Furthermore, the value of situational crime prevention lies in the fact that it entails the manipulation of the environment which can be controlled and, therefore, adapted to suit specific individual situations.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The first part of this chapter concerned various factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the robbery rate in South Africa. Based on the fact that robbers tend to follow a confirmed routine in the commission of their crimes, the modus operandi that robbers usually follow before, during and after a retail robbery, were elaborated upon. The profile of the robbers, the victims, and subsequently, research pertaining to the consequences of robbery in general were highlighted. Various strategies that could possibly make a contribution in the prevention and control of robbery, were also emphasised.