

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION OF STUDY

Crime casts fear into the hearts of South Africans from all walks of life and prevents them from taking their rightful place in the development and growth of the country. It results in the deprivation of the rights and dignity of citizens, and poses a threat to peaceful resolution of differences and rightful participation of all in the democratic process.

- National Crime Prevention Strategy (Summary)
(South Africa, 1996:2)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Residential burglary is a property crime that has the highest occurrence rate of all crimes in South Africa. It may therefore have a significant impact on people's perceptions and feelings of safety. The picture that the media portrays of South Africa, locally and abroad, is that the country is burdened with high crime levels. This poses a real challenge to the safety and security of ordinary citizens, and to tourists visiting the country. Crime in South Africa is seen by both political elites and the media as a threat to the stability of the new democracy, and a deterrent to investment (Shaw, 1997:7). Crime has the potential to derail the transformation process in South Africa and to deepen the already existing divisions within society.

According to Glanz (1995:2) crime is given as the reason, for *inter alia*, the lack of foreign confidence and investment in South Africa, for the great exodus of highly skilled and professional persons to other countries and for the problems related to community development. Media-coverage of the "crime problem" is extensive and the fear of becoming a victim of serious, violent crime has become a reality of everyday life. The fear of crime and the consequences of victimization are two of the gravest problems facing ordinary citizens in South Africa (Glanz, 1994: xiii).

Since 1994 crime prevention has become a key challenge to government in post-apartheid South Africa, and various initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the law enforcement capabilities of the State, and to encourage the private sector and research institutions to make a contribution towards crime prevention.

Recognizing the need for research on the 'crime problem' in South Africa, the decision was

taken to focus this study on a specific type of crime that has a geographical manifestation and also impacts on the daily lives of many citizens. **Residential burglary^a** was therefore chosen as the central research theme of this study, for the following reasons:

- Residential burglary has the highest frequency of all crimes in South Africa and the current trend in the number of residential burglaries indicate that this type of property crime will probably remain a serious problem in society for the foreseeable future.
- Residential burglary has a strong geographical association, because every offence can be traced to a specific location and time of occurrence, and involves environmental and social processes of interest to the geographer. It is also believed that the study can contribute not only towards a better understanding of the phenomenon, residential burglary, but also and simultaneously make a contribution to the 'geography of crime', a relatively unknown sub-field of academic endeavour in South Africa.
- Burglary is not only an intrusion of privacy and a way of depriving people of valuable property, it also fosters a climate of fear and anger. Law enforcement agencies on the contrary tend to regard residential burglary as a less serious crime, due to its non-violent nature. In most burglary offences lost property is never recovered, and the protection of property falls primarily within the domain of private security (Brown *et al.*, 1996:443).
- Most of the crime research registered at the National Research Foundation (NRF) since the 1970s was directed towards other types of crime and not residential burglary, creating a much needed opportunity for further research in this area. Only seven studies regarding burglary were registered, of which three were for non-qualification purposes, three for Masters degrees and one D.Phil. study entitled: "Burglary and theft: a criminological investigation of a hundred burglars" by Barnard (1986). One of these studies with the title "The crime of burglary with intent to commit a crime in South African law - a critical analysis" is still work in progress that commenced in 2001. The other two Masters degrees were completed in 1992 and 1997 with the titles "Burglaries in blocks of flats and group housing schemes at Stellenbosch" (Terblanche, 1992), and

^aBurglary can be defined as "the unlawful entry of a house or other structure, with the intent to commit a felony" (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1995:150). In turn, burglary, forms a subcategory of property crime, which can be defined as "the unlawful damage to, or taking of, the property of another, regardless of whether the threat of or actual use of physical violence occurs" (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1995:144). Other types of property crimes include robbery, larceny, vehicle theft, fencing, arson, and fraud. The literature usually distinguishes between two types of burglary, namely: residential burglary and business burglary, depending on the type of target. In the South African context the term housebreaking is used as synonymous to burglary. Under South African Criminal Law provision (Geldenhuys, 1992:142) "housebreaking is committed by a person who unlawfully and intentionally breaks into a building or similar structure, and enters or penetrates it with part of his body or with an instrument with which he intends to control something on the premises, with the intention to commit a crime on the premises."

“Fear of burglary in the Honeydew police district” (Watt, 1997). Although relevant to this study, none of these studies were undertaken in the subject field of geography.

Residential burglary is only one type of crime that is a major problem in South Africa and should therefore not be viewed in isolation. In the following section a general overview is given of developments on the crime scene after 1994 – the beginning of a new democratic dispensation in South Africa – as a background to the study of residential burglary.

1.2 CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

According to Shaw and Louw (1998:4) transitions to democracy are often accompanied by high levels of crime. They argue that, in South Africa, progressing towards a democratic order has broken down old forms of control – formal and informal, legitimate and illegitimate – without any immediate replacement measures. This situation is further compounded by high levels of economic inequality, the presence of large numbers of firearms (both legal and illegal), and a history of political violence.

1.2.1 Trends in crime statistics

Comparative evidence suggests that crime also increases markedly in periods of political and social transition coupled with instability and violence. According to Shaw (1995:217) this was the case in Eastern Europe during the transition to democracy and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The same phenomenon was experienced in South Africa after the 1994 elections, where the transition to a new democratic order was initially associated with an increase in criminality. Recent statistics from the South African Police Service (SAPS)(South Africa, 1999) however, indicate a stabilising trend, although most of the crime categories remain at a high level.

A comparison of the crime ratios for the 16 most serious crime categories for the period 1994 to 1999, provided by the Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of the SAPS, is given in Table 1.1. An analysis of the figures pertaining to the crime data shows that in none of the 15 areas did the crime ratios increase or decrease significantly over the six year period. Changes in the crime tendencies remain marginal, confirming that crime has stabilised on relative high levels.

From Table 1.1 it is evident that residential burglary (housebreaking) had the highest occurrence rate compared to the other crimes.

TABLE 1.1: A COMPARISON OF CRIME RATIOS IN SOUTH AFRICA BETWEEN 1994 AND 1999 (PER 100 000 OF THE POPULATION)

CRIMES	RATIO PER 100 000 OF THE POPULATION (1996 CENSUS)					
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
VIOLENT CRIMES						
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	219,8	202,8	166,7	169,0	209,6	226,3
Attempted murder	70,7	67,2	70,7	68,3	69,8	66,7
Murder	69,5	67,5	63,9	59,6	59,0	55,3
SOCIAL FABRIC CRIMES						
Assault (serious)	544,3	559,8	571,2	568,9	555,6	595,1
Common assault	501,6	519,5	509,0	489,6	473,1	515,3
Rape	109,8	120,3	125,1	126,5	117,0	119,1
PROPERTY RELATED CRIMES						
Housebreaking - residential	590,3	618,2	610,9	604,9	633,3	663,4
Theft - out of/from vehicles	472,7	480,8	446,7	427,5	447,3	447,7
Theft - motor vehicle	270,0	256,0	239,7	244,1	255,2	240,4
Housebreaking - business	230,5	218,8	217,8	214,9	223,4	216,4
Other robbery	83,9	103,6	127,7	127,8	147,4	166,8
Shoplifting	173,6	159,7	154,2	154,7	149,5	153,1
COMMERCIAL CRIME						
All fraud, forgery, mal-appropriations, embezzlements, etc	162,0	154,6	154,1	154,3	147,4	155,1
VIOLENCE AIMED AT PROPERTY						
Malicious damage to property	317,4	325,2	323,0	308,1	302,8	308,7
Arson	29,4	24,7	24,9	23,8	24,0	23,0

Source: *Monthly Bulletin on Reported Crime in South Africa: SAPS (CIAC): 12/99*

The 1995 Nedcor Project Survey (1996:70) found that 18 per cent of all households reported at least one crime during 1995. When evidence of this nature is compared to the statistics of other countries (such as Norway, Austria, France and Australia), South Africa does not stand out as substantially more 'crime-ridden'. However, the difference lies in the incidence of violent crime. South Africa has a "violence index" significantly higher than the international average for countries that provide reasonably reliable data (The Nedcor Project, 1996:70). The crime statistics of the CIAC (1999), confirm that South Africa had one of the highest violent crime rates in the world, especially with regard to murder, rape and robbery.

Cognisance should also be taken of the fact that under-reporting of crime in South Africa, as

in the rest of the world, is so extensive that it may contribute to an incorrect reflection of official reported crime figures. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 1997) included a number of questions regarding the under-reporting of different crimes in a representative countrywide survey among adults in February 1997, representing 2 220 South African households. The results of this survey are presented in Table 1.2.

TABLE 1.2: UNDER-REPORTING OF CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

PROPERTY RELATED CRIME	PERCENTAGE UNDER-REPORTING
Property snatched from victim of his/her household	46
Bicycle theft/motorcycle theft	30
Fraud, forgery, embezzlement, etc.	29
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	25
Housebreaking (residential)	21
Theft from or out of vehicles	16
Vehicle theft (excluding motorcycles)	12
VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST ADULTS	
Common assault	40
Rape/attempted rape	37
Murder	22
Serious assault/attempted murder	19
VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN	
Serious assault/attempted murder	41
Rape/attempted rape	30
Common assault	20
Murder	6

Source: HSRC, 1997

With regard to property related crimes, under-reporting varied between 12 per cent for vehicle theft, 21 per cent for housebreaking, and 46 per cent for property snatched from households. Property crimes that are usually covered by insurance policies, such as vehicle theft, tend to be less under-reported. As far as crime against adults and children is concerned, under-reporting varied alternatively between 19 per cent for serious assault and 40 per cent for common assault, and for children, it varied between 6 per cent for murder and 41 per cent for serious assault and attempted murder.

According to Shaw and Louw (1998:2), victim surveys conducted in the late 1990s by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, however, suggest that aggregated police statistics indicating general trends and crime patterns, may be more accurate than had previously been assumed.

1.2.2 Impact of crime

According to The Nedcor Project's National Crime Survey (1996:73), the estimated cost of crime for the national 1996/7 budget year amounted to a minimum of R31,3 billion (18,02% of the total budget of R173,659 billion). These calculations do not include the cost of injury or loss of life nor the associated trauma suffered by friends and families. The cost of crime to business alone in 1995 was estimated by the The Nedcor Project (1996:73) at R15,8 billion, whilst those against households at R1,7 billion. There is little doubt that the current level of crime and violence in South Africa is draining resources from families, households, business and government, which may have an inhibiting effect on future development initiatives. The high rates of crime also impact negatively on the way in which foreign investors perceive the country as a market for long term investment.

According to a national public attitude survey, administered by the HSRC, the maintenance of law and order was rated, after job creation, the most important problem to be solved in South Africa. Comparable surveys done by the HSRC over several years have shown that only 44 per cent of respondents in 2000 indicated that they felt safe or very safe, compared to more than 70 percent in 1994 (Schönteich, 2001:6). Deteriorating public confidence in the government's ability to solve the crime problem may lead to an upsurge in vigilante action, as demonstrated by People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) in the Western Cape. Adverse perceptions of deteriorating crime may also be a reason why South Africans are leaving the country.

1.2.3 Factors contributing to crime in South Africa

Crime is an extremely complex social and economic problem in any society. It is probably more true for South Africa than elsewhere as a result of its unique political history and previous system of Apartheid. South Africa has surmounted the particular risks of instability during the initial stages of radical political transformation exceptionally well. The unfolding of the transformation process with regard to economic and social dimensions is not only complex and multi-dimensional, it is also a prolonged time-consuming process that must be strategically planned and well managed. Crime levels are influenced by a whole range of variables such as the economy, political and social stability and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole. The extent of poverty and inequality for example is of such a nature that it cannot be rectified overnight. More than 53 per cent of the South African population are considered as living in poverty (Business Futures, 1996:6-54).

According to the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) (South Africa, 1996:13-22) the following factors contribute to crime in South Africa:

- The rapid political transition in South Africa had the unintended consequences of breaking down the existing mechanisms of social control - without immediately replacing them with legitimate and credible alternatives. This weakness has been exacerbated by the historical breakdown of other institutions, such as schools, the family and traditional communities.
- The Government of National Unity inherited the public service, including a racially-based, disproportionate distribution of criminal justice resources, outdated systems and fragmented departments that contributed to a system unable to cope with the demands created by the need to provide services to all people of South Africa.
- The political transition also generated substantial material expectations - many of which were largely beyond the immediate delivery capacity of the new government. This resulted in frustrated expectations. The very high, and often unrealised, expectations associated with transition have contributed to the justification of crime.
- South Africa's history of Apartheid has contributed to a 'culture of violence', which exacerbates the high levels of violence associated with criminal activity in South Africa. Violence in South Africa has come to be regarded as an acceptable means of resolving social, political and even domestic conflicts.
- Historically shaped poverty and under-development provide key contextual factors in understanding increasing crime levels. Although poverty does not directly lead to higher crime levels, together with a range of other socio-political and cultural factors, it can contribute to conditions for an increase in crime and the growth of criminal syndicates and gangs.
- The historic marginalisation of the youth combined with the slow growth in the job market, could also contribute to the creation of a large pool of "at risk" young people.
- While economic growth and development are crucial in addressing the factors which lead to crime, poorly managed development can itself contribute to increased crime rates.
- The absence of services to victims of crime means that the negative impact of crime on an individual, family and community is largely ignored. Not only does this contribute to the incidence of repeated victimisation, but may lead to retributive violence, or the perpetration of other crimes displaced into the social or domestic arena.

- The number of and easy accessibility to fire-arms is a major contributor to violent crime. The fact that a large proportion of the citizens are armed, serves to escalate the levels of violence associated with robbery, rape and car theft.
- Gender inequality, both in terms of popular attitudes and the inadequate service offered by the criminal justice system to women, can contribute to the high levels of violence perpetrated against women.

The NCPS also correctly states that there is no single cause of crime in South Africa. The search for single causes will merely lead to simplistic and therefore ineffective solutions. At the same time, different types of crime have different root causes, and hence require different approaches to prevention.

1.2.4 Problems in the criminal justice system

Perceptions that crime is a fundamental and growing social problem are compounded by perceptions that the government is simply unable to control crime (HSRC, 1997). According to a national attitude survey administered by the HSRC (1997) to approximately 2 200 respondents, more than 60 per cent of the respondents disapproved of government's handling of crime.

Analysis of conviction figures by Shaw and Louw (1998:22) between 1991 and 1996 suggests that weaknesses in the ability of detectives to investigate crime and of the Department of Justice to prosecute offenders, led to a decline in the conviction rate. Burglary convictions, for example, declined from 37 334 in 1991/2 to 23 256 in 1995/6. The reasons for this decline were attributed to poor police investigations and also to severe staff and resource shortages in the Department of Justice.

Even the Department of Correctional Services finds it difficult to control the overcrowding in prisons that could ultimately contribute to an already existing crime problem. According to *The Star* (1998) the overcrowding, low warder morale, violent gangs, and the escape of dangerous detainees are hallmarks of a prison system which is unable to cope.

Against this background, the new Safety and Security Draft White Paper (*The Star*, 1998) on crime released in May 1998, invites civil society to play a role in resourcing, supporting and even conducting local social and crime prevention programmes. Crime prevention and control can no longer be regarded as the sole responsibility of the police or the criminal justice system as a whole, but should also be the responsibility of every citizen as a potential victim in society. This in effect implies a shift from an offender-orientated approach to a victim-orientated approach.

propagated in the NCPS, have a better chance to succeed if executed in close partnership with local communities and the private sector.

According to research done by Oppler (1998:18), property crimes, with the exception of shoplifting, are difficult to solve, with between 80 and 90 per cent of burglaries and theft out of motor vehicles going undetected. Of the cases which do eventually reach court, a large proportion are withdrawn during proceedings as a result of insufficient evidence. The lack of evidence relates to poor detection by investigating officers, confirming the notion that most detectives, during 1997, did not have specialised training, with only a quarter being previously on a detective course and a mere 3 per cent fully trained (The Star, 1997).

In a study by Coupe and Griffiths (1998), evaluating the effectiveness of police activities and operations in the UK, similar results were found in that few residential burglary cases were solved by primary investigations, and little of the property stolen was recovered. They found that in more than 66 per cent of the incidents, there was not enough evidence available to justify an investigation.

1.2.5 Crime prevention initiatives in South Africa

The following section provides a broad description of various initiatives undertaken since the mid 1990s to improve the crime prevention capabilities in South Africa. The increase in initiatives was a direct response to the rising levels of crime that the country experienced in recent years. Crime prevention approaches, strategies and methods, and how it relates to the South African situation and residential burglary in particular, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. A broad distinction can be drawn between the different levels of crime prevention, namely; government initiatives, initiatives of the business world, private security industry, community and individual initiatives, and the role of research institutions.

1.2.5.1 Government initiatives

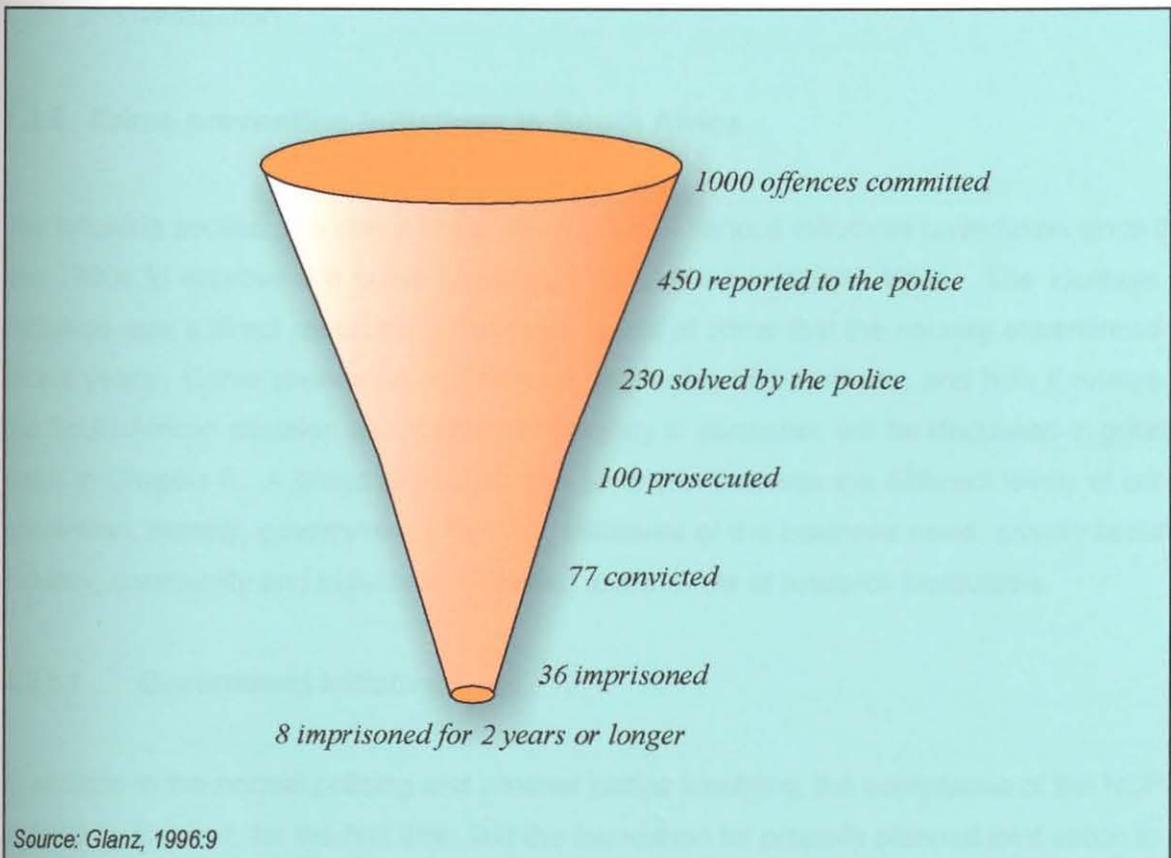
In addition to the normal policing and criminal justice functions, the acceptance of the NCPS in 1996 by Cabinet, for the first time, laid the foundation for properly planned joint action to address specific crimes. A summary of the main objectives are (South Africa, 1996:5):

- The establishment of a comprehensive policy framework which will enable government to address crime in a co-ordinated and focussed manner which draws on the resources of all government agencies, as well as civil society.
- The promotion of a shared understanding and common vision of how South Africans are

From a criminal justice perspective crime deterrence in South Africa is weak and lacks credibility. Analysing the country's poor conviction rate, Glanz (1996:14) warns that improved policing and other crime prevention efforts will be negligible if police and courts do not improve the sentencing rates. The 'funnel effect' as illustrated in Figure 1.1 depicts the poor conviction rate in South Africa.

The alarming situation is that the number of violent offences is steadily increasing while the number of offenders sentenced to imprisonment is decreasing. A crucial question is whether the SAPS and Department of Justice have the human resources and capacity to arrest, prosecute and convict the increasing number of offenders. Current crime prevention efforts at various levels – such as the National Business Initiative, the Nedcor Project or even the NCPS – will not show tangible results in the form of a reduced crime rate if more offenders are not arrested and convicted (Glanz, 1996:14).

FIGURE 1.1: THE FUNNEL EFFECT OF CRIME CONVICTION IN SOUTH AFRICA



The 'failure' of police action and the criminal justice system is not surprising since the efforts of the police, the courts and correctional services only have limited impact on the levels of crime as reflected in the crime rates. Glanz (1996:14) is of the opinion that crime prevention can only be achieved through a partnership approach between organs of the state and private initiatives. The facet of proper neighbourhood design and social networks, also

going to address crime. This vision should also inform and stimulate initiatives at provincial and local government level.

- The development of a set of national programmes that focus on various government departments to deliver quality services aimed at solving the problems leading to high crime levels.
- The maximisation of civil society's participation in mobilising and sustaining crime prevention initiatives.
- Creation of a dedicated and integrated crime prevention capacity which can conduct ongoing research and evaluation of departmental and public campaigns as well as facilitating effective crime prevention programmes at provincial and local level.

Since the adoption of the NCPS, one of the main priorities was to re-engineer the criminal justice system to make it an effective deterrent to crime. Whether the NCPS will succeed in its objectives, will depend on how budgetary and managerial constraints, as well as the perception that the criminal justice system itself is near collapse, will be overcome.

The establishment of Community Police Forums (CPFs) is a direct consequence of the community policing approach, which implies a partnership between communities, private organisations and the police to solve safety and security problems at a local level. Government has the objective that every police station should have a CPF. Through the CPFs communities can participate in setting priorities, offering advice on local policing problems and help to ensure police accountability, transparency and effectiveness in the community (South Africa, 1998:3).

1.2.5.2 Initiatives of the corporate/business world

Business Against Crime (BAC) grew out of a business conference convened by Business South Africa (BSA) and the Council of SA Banks (COSAB) at the World Trade Centre in Johannesburg, in August 1995. The aim of BAC is to empower state agents and to strengthen existing initiatives. In the process the business community could make a valuable contribution towards the combatting and prevention of crime in South Africa, following a partnership approach with government (Fourie & Mhangwana, 1996:6).

BAC in Gauteng, for example, has established task groups dealing with specific areas of need, such as local crime prevention, communication, education, security, crime, criminal justice courts, community opportunity, performance measurement and fundraising (The Star,

1998). Another initiative is to financially support police stations, which offers a formal intervention at a community level, in partnership with the CPFs.

Such an example was a pilot project in Sunnyside, Pretoria, where the crime rate had dropped by 25 per cent after the installation of 10 closed circuit television (CCTV) sets in December 2000. These were erected with the financial assistance of the business community in the area (Beeld, 2001). A further 76 CCTV surveillance cameras were planned for the Pretoria CBD and five other suburban areas by the end of March 2002 (Pretoria News, 2002).

1.2.5.3 Private security industry

In the prevailing climate of rising insecurity, an upsurge of the private security industry is taking place. The industry is a fast-growing reality - expanding at about 30 per cent a year and now far outnumbering the public police force in numbers (Shaw, 1995:219). According to the Security Officers' Interim Board, the controlling and regulatory body of the private security industry, there were 166 000 registered security officers in March 2000, with 80 000 vehicles at their disposal, compared to the SAPS who has approximately 90 000 uniformed police officers, with 28 000 vehicles at their disposal (Schönteich, 2000:16). The private security industry has a annual turnover worth R11 billion (in 1999) and represents services such as security guards for buildings, guard services for domestic property and reaction guard forces for cash-in-transit protection, as well as vehicle security devices, in-house security and access control measures.

The private security industry is profit driven and exclusively targeted at the middle to higher-income citizenry, excluding the poor and lower income groups in society. Furthermore, the same accountability and transparency is not demanded of private security companies as of government institutions. However, during the course of 2002, the Security Officers' Interim Board will be replaced by the Security Regulatory Authority, established under the new Private Industry Regulation Act to regulate the private security industry (Business Day, 2002).

1.2.5.4 Community and individual initiatives

In reaction to increased levels of crime and feelings of unsafety, and bearing in mind the limited capacity of the SAPS to prevent crime, communities and individual households have started making their own arrangements to improve their security and to create a safer environment. The concept of new security villages and enclosed well-established neighbourhoods has gained in popularity. At an individual level there was a significant

growth in the installation of alarm systems connected to armed reaction units (Mail & Guardian, 2001).

1.2.5.5 Role of research institutions

In addition to the crime research capacity situated within state departments such as the SAPS, Justice, and the National Intelligence Agency, numerous academic, private, semi-state institutions, like the HSRC and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), are active in crime research and the publication of crime related journals or reports. These institutions play an invaluable role in the generation of new information, insight and understanding of the crime problem, although they have no executive powers.

The Nedcor Project on Crime, Violence and Investment (1996) was a response to the seriousness of the crime situation in South Africa and in accordance with universally found evidence that governments cannot succeed in crime prevention and control without active co-operation with other agencies (including business) and the community as a whole. The Nedcor Project was based on a combination of extensive research and consultation in the private and state sectors.

Another example is the Criminal Justice Information Centre (CJIC), a joint venture of the ISS and Nedcor, that publishes the Nedcor/ISS Crime Index as a reference source relating to crime issues.

1.3 GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CRIME STUDIES

Crime is an inherently geographic phenomenon, referring to the scene of the crime as a particular point in space (Shelley, & Clarke, 1994:390). Traditionally, geographers' interest in crime studies focussed primarily on the mapping of crime rates and developing of explanations for observed crime patterns. There was also a focus on ecological relationships and to identify highly criminalized 'hot spots' where police activity could be concentrated (Barr & Pease, 1992:200).

The first models of the 'geography of crime' date back to the early twentieth century when researchers, who developed the concentric-zone model of urban structure, noticed that crime rates also tended to fit concentric patterns. Crime rates tended to be highest in those areas of the city that were associated with physical deterioration and land-use change from residential to commercial (Shelley & Clarke, 1994:390).

According to Clark (1982:15), geographers in the 1970s were extremely active in measuring

and mapping poverty, homelessness, deviance and unemployment, but although spatial analysis could identify some basic ecological relationships, it proved unable to account for urban deprivation and to suggest appropriate remedies. Geographers' involvement in social area analysis and factorial ecology are extensions of the basic ecological approach which dates back to the work of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, between 1916 and 1940, which interpreted intra-urban structures in terms of general theories of social and economic change.

A geographical perspective on crime would best be described within the paradigm of social geography that developed as a distinct division in geography, alongside other divisions such as physical and economic geography. According to Otok (1988:7) it is generally accepted that social geography deals with social phenomena taking place in space. Johnston (1986:4) also reasoned that human geography is a social science, therefore, one that studies particular aspects of society relating to space and place, including the physical environment. Herbert (1988:19) distinguishes three roles of social geography, namely: "descriptive, in the sense that they seek to depict accurately the spatial expressions of urban conditions; explanatory, in that they need to investigate cause and effect relationships, and evaluative, in that they need to recognise the inequities arising from the spatial allocation of scarce resources and to identify those alternative states which might more closely satisfy the criteria of efficiency and/or social justice."

Herbert (1983:85) argues that most empirical work in human geography continues to focus upon pattern, process and response in the local environment as the spatial outcomes of a societal system. Further, that the act of burglary can be regarded as a people-environment interaction when burglars, through the process of cognitive mapping, acquire information about their spatial environment that can assist them in the selection of a suitable target. According to Walmsley and Lewis (1993:18), it is only recently, as part of a growing desire to understand behaviour at the micro-level, that studies of the link between place and behaviour have acquired a more central position within geography. These authors further argue that the renewed interest geographers have in the study of place and behaviour can be attributed to the growing realisation among planners and designers that the creation of the built environment is inextricably tied to behavioural and social processes. Micro-level research is therefore in growing demand among practitioners in the field of planning.

From the long-established literature of criminology, psychology and sociology, it has been possible for geographers to identify and advance a set of approaches in crime studies which basically reflect a multi-disciplinary character. In this regard Herbert (1982:29) argues that the 'geography of crime' can have no separate existence either from criminology or from human geography, relating to the former for evolving theoretical bases and conceptual

positions and for much of its crime-specific research literature, and the latter for basic methodologies to which geography can relate, for example spatial ecology. Studies within the spatial ecology tradition strongly focussed on the identification of high crime and delinquency areas (concentrations of delinquent's residence), which were then attributed to physical, social, economic and demographic features of an area. Delinquency areas were viewed as products of social disorganisation, lack of social cohesion, and differences in social values, norms and attitudes (Dunn, 1980:7).

According to Bartnicki (1988:159), the 'geography of crime', in view of the historical development of spatial crime studies, can be divided into three groups:

- The first period is called the cartographic school in criminology - merely representing spatial crime rate distributions on maps, and lasted from about the 1830s to the 1920s.
- The second period can be divided into two stages. The first dates back to studies of the Chicago School of social ecology of the 1920s and the 1930s, which represents the work of Burgess' ecological model of urban population and its application in the crime studies of Shaw and McKay (1942). The second stage represented the period from the 1950s onward when scientific techniques were used in urban crime spatial differentiation studies. During the period from 1950 to 1960 research in human geography was mainly of a positivist nature and most often linked with model-building and quantitative methods, as was the case in numerous spatial analysis studies (Herbert, 1982:25).
- The third period which commenced in the early 1970s introduced a new, substantially different research trend to spatial crime studies, called environmental criminology. During the 1970s there was a shift away from the positivist approach towards a more 'humanistic' geography that was more focussed on qualitative and subjective facets of human behaviour, for example the interest in cognitive mapping, environmental perception, and values and meanings attached to places (Herbert, 1982:25). It was also during this period that environmental criminology gained prominence, which attracted the interest of social geographers.

The scope of this study falls within the third category, which is closely associated with the 'geography of crime' as conceptualised by Herbert (1982) and 'environmental criminology' as conceptualised by environmental criminologists such as Brantingham and Brantingham (1981). Environmental criminology offers an approach to the study of crime which is less concerned with theories of causation and more focussed on criminal events and places where they occur, the focus is the offence rather than the offender (Herbert, 1987:146).

In the study of burglary the residence of the burglar is not an all-pervasive variable, instead the criminal's search behaviour to locate a suitable target is of greater importance. In this regard Rengert (1980:50) argues that the criminals, in searching for locations for criminal acts, are rationally attempting to approximate a set of criteria which they have established in the planning process. According to Bartnicki (1988:168), the site of burglary should not be treated as a point or an area, but rather as a 'milieu' full of symbols, values and inherent senses, which contain certain cues of features prompting the criminal to consider a given site convenient or inconvenient for an unlawful act.

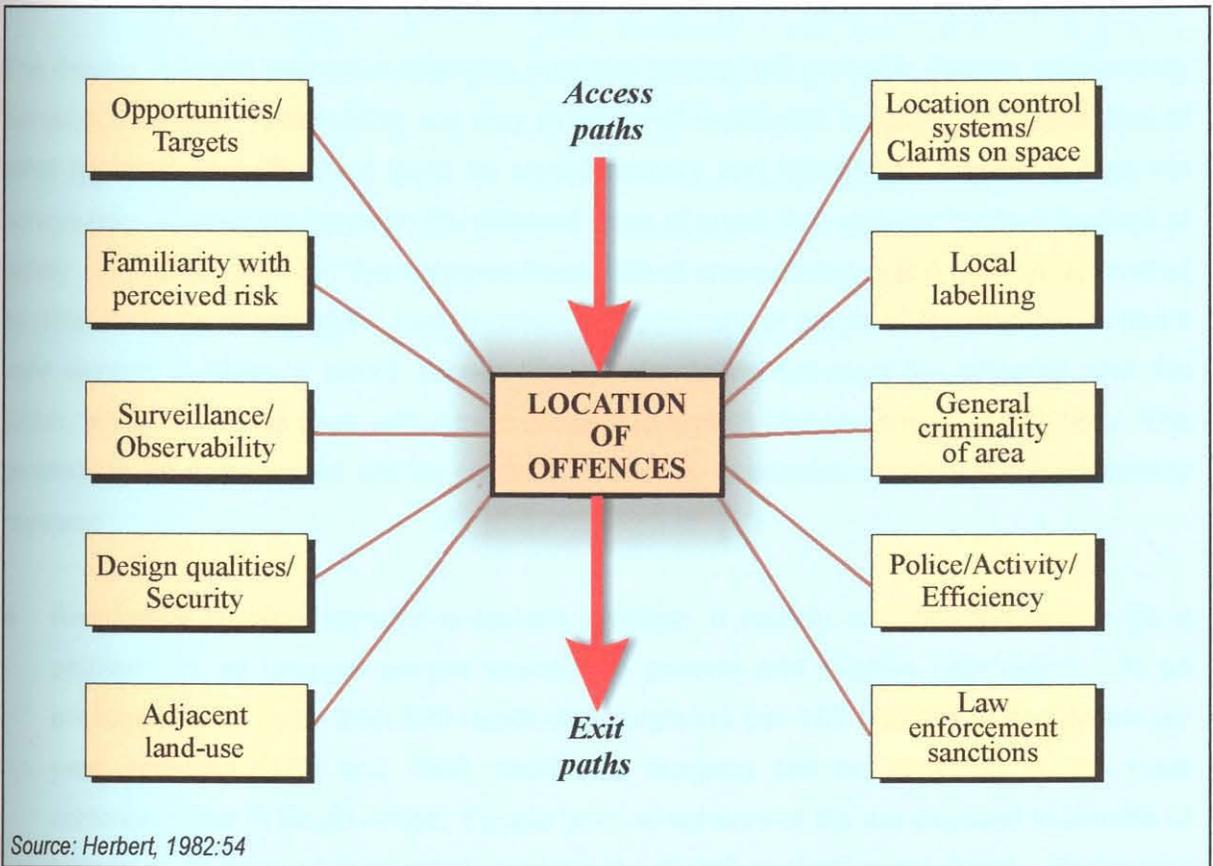
Herbert (1982:44) is also of the opinion that a concern with the incidence of offences rather than offenders and with crime prevention rather than crime causation, could have distinct advantages. First, broad contexts can still be recognised but active research may focus on narrower and more immediate factors related to criminal activity. Second, these factors involve analyses of the local environments within which offenders, police, and victims interact. Third, the fallibilities of official statistics are reduced to the extent that much more is known about offences than offenders. Fourth, the context of the local environment allows access to the roles of victims and their reactions to crime or fear of it. Lastly, such studies enable a much closer focus upon preventive strategies and on policies which may protect those who live in vulnerable areas.

Herbert (1982:53) formulated a few questions with regard to the 'geography of offences' which could serve as guidelines in future research efforts:

- Can urban environments of particular vulnerability be identified and classified?
- What key elements can contribute to the vulnerability of urban environments to different types of offences?
- What is the balance between physical and social factors in endowing space with levels of vulnerability and how are these related?
- Can the qualities of these areas be characterized in more subjective terms both by their occupants - the potential victims of crime for whom feelings of fear, safety, and security may be uppermost - and by the offenders, whose 'images' of these areas are critical to an understanding of their behaviour?

Figure 1.2 suggests a research framework provided by Herbert (1982:54) for geographers studying offence patterns.

FIGURE 1.2: VARIABLES IN THE OFFENCE ENVIRONMENT AT A MICRO-LEVEL



Since the 1970s the problem of crime and delinquency have become recognised elements for research and teaching in human geography as a social problem and theme, as reflected in the work of social geographers such as Herbert (1987), and Bartnicki (1986). In the South African context the 'geography of crime' still remains a relatively unknown field, although greater emphasis was placed on the need for research of environmental and societal problems in South Africa, since the 1990s. Problems that were mentioned by geographers such as McCarthy and Rogerson (1992:6) include droughts, air and water pollution, the negative environmental conditions endured by the country's shackland dwellers, the need to restructure a more relevant educational curriculum, and the looming threat of an AIDS epidemic.

Although this study adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the investigation of residential burglary, it could also make a unique contribution to the subject geography, especially in the development of an appropriate approach and methodology to investigate residential burglary in the micro-environment. The central focus of this study will be on the burglary event and the geographical or situational context in which it took place, with a secondary interest in the motivational and emotional aspects of the burglars and residents involved.

1.4 FORMULATION OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

The degree to which individual residents may feel unsafe, will probably depend on how they perceive their own vulnerability, not only in terms of residential burglary alone, but also of other types of property crime such as armed robbery and hijackings. Residents may not consciously distinguish between the different types of crime that account for their feelings of safety. In reality, however, these crimes have distinct characteristics and may be committed by different kinds of criminals. One common characteristic of burglary, for example, is that it very seldom involves a direct, face-to-face confrontation between the offender and the victim, which is not the case with armed robbery (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1995:150). The problem to be investigated will be confined to that of residential burglary for the following reasons:

- Residential burglary remains a serious problem in society and will continue to be a problem for as long as people experience poverty and relative deprivation. At an average rate of more than 590 residential burglaries per 100 000 of the population per year, between 1994 and 1999, residential burglary can be regarded as the most common crime in South Africa. People from all spheres of life are exposed to the risk of becoming a victim of residential burglary, the “poor” as well as the “rich”. Residential burglary is not only a violation of privacy, but can also be a factor contributing to heightened levels of fearfulness and anxiety amongst residents.
- The current focus of the SAPS is more on law enforcement than on crime prevention or the protection of individual properties. With limited personnel and resources at their disposal, the SAPS will find it difficult to satisfy the needs and expectations of communities to be protected against burglars and armed robbers. Against this background individual households have become more and more aware of the necessity of self-protection and the initiation of crime prevention actions in their immediate communities. However, these actions are not well planned or pro-active in nature, but rather resemble reactive strategies based on the ‘instinct’ of self-preservation and the building of a fortress society (HSRC 1997). According to Shaw (1995:219) there is evidence that residents of the ‘wealthier’ suburbs may react to crime by seeking to isolate themselves physically from the ‘poor’ who are seen as the perpetrators - this is reflected not only in the use of private security but in the changing architecture of the cities - increasingly characterised by high fenced suburban complexes.
- Most of the existing crime prevention strategies in South Africa are nationally planned and controlled, although the implementation responsibilities are delegated to lower authority levels. This top-down or macro approach is essential for the determination of

priorities and to create a favourable climate for the law enforcement agencies to operate effectively. However, without locally designed crime prevention strategies to supplement the national strategies, it remains doubtful whether they will ever have the desired results. It is in this area of locally designed crime prevention strategies at police station or neighbourhood level, where there is a need for expertise and resources to assist in crime prevention and control initiatives aimed at specific crimes. There is, however, little research available in South Africa to guide this development or to substantiate the theoretical basis on which such initiatives can be built.

- The problem confronted with in this study is to find answers to the question: Why does residential burglary occur in a particular place at a particular time? From the above-mentioned explanation it is evident that there is limited understanding of the situational dynamics and context in which a particular burglary event took place, and consequently a poor scientific basis on which to built appropriate preventative measures. The lack of knowledge and understanding in this regard justifies further research.

1.4.1 Research questions

Emanating from the research problem, the following research questions were formulated:

- What key elements and factors contribute to the vulnerability of a particular residence?
- What factors play a role in determining the degree/extent of damage that could be experienced during a particular burglary?
- What type of responses could be expected of the residents in reaction to the burglary?
- What type of responses might be expected of the offenders in reaction to the burglary?
- What can ordinary citizens and communities do to minimise the risk of being targeted for burglary?

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

With reference to the research problem and research questions, the aim of this study can be stated as follows:

The aim of the study is to investigate residential burglary in the micro-environment to be able to identify, describe and explain the key elements and factors that play a role in the burglary process, before, during and after the commission of a burglary, and to formulate principles or guidelines that can be applied in the development of burglary prevention measures/initiatives.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To give effect to the stated aim of the study, the following objectives are accepted for the study:

- To provide a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon of residential burglary (*Chapter 2*).
- To construct a conceptual framework (based on the theoretical explanation) with the purpose of conceptualising the residential burglary process (*Chapter 2*).
- To use the conceptual framework to develop appropriate research expectations and methodology to guide and direct the research process (*Chapters 2 and 3*).
- To apply the conceptual framework as a research model to investigate a number of burglary cases in the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area^b, but also with reference to the broader environment in which residential burglary took place (*Chapters 4 and 5*).
- To formulate principles or guidelines that can be applied in the development of residential burglary prevention measures/initiatives (*Chapter 6*).
- To revise and improve the conceptual framework as an integrated burglary model that can be applied in the study of residential burglary (*Chapter 7*).
- To interpret the value of the integrated burglary model for its ability to analyse and interpret the burglary process, and to give advice on prevention initiatives (*Chapter 7*).

1.7 THE SCALE OF THE STUDY

Herbert (1982:53) distinguished between three scales of analysis which he termed: regional, urban, and individual. Under *regional scale* he suggested a variety of observational units, including states, judicial districts, or police force areas. The urban scale is centrally focussed on variations of offence patterns within metropolitan areas and aggregate units of observation that include wards, census tracts, blocks and police patrol districts. At the individual scale, the precise target for an offender, be it a person, a residential dwelling or an alleyway, becomes the unit of observation. According to Herbert (1982:54), the methodology of spatial ecology remains dominant at the regional and urban scales, but that

^b After the 2000 local government elections, the Greater Pretoria metropolitan area changed to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. For the purpose of this study the term Greater Pretoria metropolitan area has been retained, because the research was undertaken prior to 2000 and has a specific bearing on the geographical boundaries of the former Greater Pretoria metropolitan area.

analysis at the individual scale necessitates new forms of investigation of the situational contexts in which offences occur.

The taxonomy that is preferred in this study is macro-, meso-, and micro-scale analysis, instead of Herbert's taxonomy of regional, urban, and individual scale of analysis. The study of residential burglary can be commissioned at either the macro-, meso-, or micro-level, or a combination thereof, depending on the specific aim and focus of the study. For the purposes of this study, the macro-environment includes, as units of observation, the country as a whole, the provinces and metropolitan/urban/police areas, whilst the meso-environment includes the suburban, neighbourhood, and police station areas, and the micro-environment, the individual plot, site or residence targeted for residential burglary.

According to Bartnicki (1988:168), the 'site' of the crime should not be treated as a point or an area, but as a 'milieu', full of symbols, values and inherent senses, also containing certain cues, or features which may prompt the criminal to consider a given site convenient or inconvenient for an unlawful act. As stated in the aim of this study (par. 1.5), the primary focus is to investigate residential burglary in the micro-environment.

The field research was commissioned at the micro-level in two police station areas of the Greater Pretoria metropolitan area, namely: the Pretoria West, and Garsfontein police station areas. Further detail will be provided in Chapter 3 on the demarcation of the research area, the selection of cases, and the research methodology used in the study.

1.8 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The subject of residential burglary can be studied through a variety of approaches or a combination thereof, depending on the scale of the study and the specific objectives set out to be achieved. A macro-scale study which focuses on crime patterns and spatial analysis, is best suited to a positivistic and quantitative approach, whilst a micro-scale study with its focus on an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, will require a more qualitative approach. Social geographers, according to Herbert (1987:158), must be interested not only in the 'where' of social deviance but also in the 'why' it occurred in the first place. With less emphasis on 'spatial analysis' and the positivist-based scientific method, a number of other schools of thought start to emerge in the geographical literature since the mid-1960s and 1970s, which include behaviourist-, humanistic-, structuralist-, realist- and post-modernist approaches (Burt & Barber, 1996:10).

Bearing in mind the micro-scale of this study and the objective to gain in-depth understanding of the burglary process, it was felt that the realist approach would offer the

best philosophical framework to conduct this research. The epistemology^c of the realist school of thought centres around the position that knowledge is not limited to the content of the mind alone (Griggs, 1998:25). Theoretical abstraction can lead the researcher to approach a real world that exists outside the sense perceptions. The philosophy of realism implies that existence is multi-layered, which can be divided into three ontic^d classes, namely (Johnston, 1987:197):

- the domain of the empirical, which is concerned solely with experiences, with the world as it is perceived;
- the domain of the actual, which is concerned with events as well as experiences, accepting that an event may be interpreted in different ways by individuals; and
- the domain of the real, which is concerned with structures that are not directly apprehendable, but which contain the mechanisms that lead to the events and their empirical perception.

The main thrust of the ontic direction in this study will fall within the domain of the actual, that is to describe and explain the actual manifestation of a burglary event, taking into account how the event is perceived by different people involved, and the underlying structures that could have caused the event. According to Johnston (1987:224) the realist philosophy argues that “explanations for observed patterns cannot be discovered simply in the analysis of the patterns themselves, but by the development of theories of the underlying processes that generate the conditions within which human agents can create those patterns.”

Framing the aim of this study within a realist approach, is the desire to uncover the mechanisms that drive society and which provide explanations for how people act and how the empirical world is organised (Johnston, 1987:242).

Although other research philosophies and approaches could be relevant to the study of burglary, they were not regarded appropriate for this specific study, for the following reasons:

- The aim of a positivist approach would be to discover common properties, or regularities that would allow the researcher to determine general patterns in the population as a whole (or to draw law-like generalisations) (Burt & Barber, 1996:9). In most cases it

^cEpistemology is the theory of knowledge, it provides answers to fundamental questions such as “What can we know?” and “How can we know it?” (Johnston, 1986:5)

^dOntology is the theory of existence, or of what can be known (Johnston, 1986:5).

would require extensive research programmes of an empiricist or quantitative nature, e.g. a survey study on residential burglary. The scale of this study does not allow such generalisations. The “scientific method” associated with positivism is one of verifying factual statements or the testing of hypotheses. Gatrell (1983:5) is of the opinion that the positivist approach to spatial analysis neglects human's 'lived-world' of experience and the meaning of having an interactive relationship with the environment in which they live. Further critique on the positivist approach is that it is too mechanistic, not taking full account of all phenomena including human subjectivity, and too deterministic, suggesting human behaviour and activities are predictable (Griggs, 1998:9). In the social sciences such 'regularities' as postulated by the positivist approach, are very unlikely to occur.

- A behaviourist and humanistic approach toward residential burglary would place too much emphasis on people's (whether the offender or the victim) feelings, emotions, perceptions and rational decision-making. Whereas the behaviourists analyse quantitative data, as do positivists, to discover the general laws affecting behaviour and cognition, the humanists are interested in the 'lived world' of human experience, the particular or unique, and the connection between the subjective world and the spaces and places humans create (Griggs, 1998:13-14). Contrary to the positivist approach, the humanistic approach emphasises individuality and subjectivity rather than replicability and truth (Johnston, 1986:5). The central focus of this study is not so much on people's subjective feelings, as on the actual event of residential burglary.
- According to the structuralist approach, the explanation of residential burglary cannot be found in observed phenomena or spatial outcomes, it must be sought in the 'hidden structures' which influence and condition all human actions (Herbert, 1988:25). It is also assumed that the relationships between component parts are more significant than the individual parts themselves. Radicalism, Marxist theory, and realism are closely associated with structuralism. Although relevant to the study of residential burglary, it is difficult to verify theoretical assumptions with regard to 'hidden structures' which underpin the burglary event. The “domain of the real” is in accordance with what is known in structuralism as hidden layers of existence (the 'infrastructure' and the 'deep structure') that cannot be observed, although its existence can be theorised and compared with what is perceivable in the 'superstructure', the level of appearance (Johnston, 1987:195).
- For the post-modernists (Griggs, 1998:22) 'reality' and 'truth' are artificial constructs, they are slow to take position, and everything is acceptable (there is no given state of existence because all phenomena are in flux). Knowledge is constructed by the human

mind and institutionalised through inter-subjective agreement. Whatever is known is relative to the person who knows. Postmodernism rejects empiricist, positivist, and behaviouralist philosophies because no regular laws can predict human behaviour, and there is no such thing as a single reality to measure. As a result of its idealistic and relativist approach, as well as its inability to provide viable policy options, this approach was not regarded as appropriate to study residential burglary.

1.9 RESEARCH APPROACH

From a realist perspective, the main focus of the research is on the actual event of burglary, and to build a conceptual framework to analyse and interpret the various environmental and situational factors that were involved in the event. The focus on the micro-environment, and the need for in-depth analysis of the burglary process favours a qualitative approach to the study. For this reason a decision was taken not to use survey questionnaires, but rather a case-study approach.

It is believed that a case-study approach, within the mould of the realist paradigm, will provide a sound and scientific basis from which to conduct this study. It will also enable the researcher to personally observe the locations of burglary, to interview various role-players, and to study the particulars of every case. For Miles and Huberman (1994:18) the case study approach is more than a methodology of collecting data, it also provides the elements in designing a case study, with the understanding that the case study design is a continuous process throughout the study. In this regard the case study approach also provides the research strategy that was followed in this study. The strategy implies:

- building a conceptual framework;
- formulating research questions;
- defining the case: bounding the territory;
- sampling: bounding the collection of data; and
- instruments or methods for data collection and analysis.

The case study as approach and methodology are explained in Chapter 3 in greater detail.

In addition to the case study approach, the following research approaches and principles provided the parameters within which the research was conducted:

- The study was predominantly of a qualitative nature, especially in terms of the methods of data collection, which included personal observations and in-depth interviewing of selected cases and expertise. Although qualitative research is associated with non-

statistical methods of analysis of and reporting, elementary statistical calculations were used in this study. According to Dooley (1990:291), qualitative research is the preferred methodology of scientists who wish to describe everyday life from the point of view of the actors (the phenomenological perspective). The premise underlying this study, was to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of residential burglary and to develop an integrated burglary model in the process (exploratory research), contrary to the testing of prior hypotheses (confirmatory research).

Of relevance to this study was Neuman's (1997:420) viewpoint that "qualitative researchers create new concepts and theory by blending together empirical evidence and abstract concepts. Instead of testing a hypothesis, a qualitative analyst may illustrate or colour in evidence showing that a theory, generalisation, or interpretation is plausible." The data in qualitative research are in the form of words, which are relatively imprecise, diffuse, and context-based (Neuman, 1997:420).

- The researcher made use of both inductive (where general principles or conceptions are developed from specific observations) and deductive reasoning (the drawing of specific expectations from general principles) (Taylor *et al.*, 1990:106). The construction of the conceptual framework was primarily an inductive process, whereas the formulation of the research expectations were deductive. The research process in fact moved back and forth from principles to specific cases and from cases to principles, actually modifying the conceptual framework to take account of cases that did not 'fit' or support the prior principles.
- In accordance with the view of Bailey (1987:24) who distinguishes between basic and applied research, the aim of this study is primarily to make a contribution towards a better understanding of the phenomenon of residential burglary. However, it was anticipated that the study would ultimately contribute to the finding of solutions to the problem of residential burglary (applied research).
- As far as residential burglary was studied in the micro-environment, primary data and authentic information sources were used, whereas the study of macro- and meso-level burglary patterns were based on secondary data and analysis of already existed sources, such as crime statistics from the SAPS, and survey data from other research institutions.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design contains the "work plan" or "blueprint" of the study to be undertaken.

and provides a chronologic explanation of the steps or phases to be followed in the research process (Haring *et al.*, 1992). It also provides a framework that assisted the researcher to organise his time and resources.

The research design was developed in such a way that it complied with the aims of the study, namely to explore (to identify important variables and to generate hypotheses for further research), to explain (to identify plausible causal networks shaping the phenomenon), and to describe (to document the phenomenon of interest) (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:78).

For this reason the research design was divided into distinct phases that would provide specific goals to be completed in the progression of the study. Table 1.3 provides a

TABLE 1.3: RESEARCH DESIGN: RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY IN SOUTH AFRICA

PHASE	DESIGN GOALS	CHAPTER
Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduction to the research theme, residential burglary ■ Background to the crime problem ■ Geographical perspective on crime studies ■ Formulation of research problem ■ Aim of the study ■ Objectives of the study ■ Scale of study ■ Research philosophy and approach 	Chapter 1 General orientation of study
Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Literature study on residential burglary ■ Reflection on theories and models 	Chapter 2 Theoretical explanation of residential burglary
Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Construction of conceptual framework ■ Formulation of research expectations 	Chapter 2
Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The case study approach ■ Demarcation of research area ■ Sources of information ■ Pilot study ■ Compilation of interview guides 	Chapter 3 Research strategy and methodology
Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Selection of cases ■ Collection of data (interviews, observations, documents) ■ Processing of data ■ Criteria for trustworthiness 	Chapter 3
Phase 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Analysis, interpretation and documentation of residential burglary at the macro- and meso-level. 	Chapter 4 Residential burglary at the macro- and meso-level
Phase 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Analysis, interpretation and documentation of residential burglary at the micro-level: ■ Situational conditions ■ Burglary event ■ Responses 	Chapter 5 Cases of residential burglary in the micro-environment
Phase 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overview on crime prevention in South Africa ■ Guidelines for the prevention of residential burglary at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels 	Chapter 6 Guidelines for the prevention of residential burglary
Phase 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment of research objectives ■ Reflection on integrated burglary model ■ Synthesis, conclusion and recommendations 	Chapter 7 Conclusion

summary of the different phases and design goals, as well as an indication of how the contents will culminate in the different chapters.

In Chapter 2 a review of the relevant literature will be integrated to provide a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon residential burglary. It is believed that the research strategy and methodology, as explained in Chapter 3, will provide the researcher with the challenge to make an unique contribution to both disciplines, geography and criminology.