RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY IN SOUTH AFRICA: WHY INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLDS ADOPT REACTIVE STRATEGIES

GS van Zyl
National Intelligence

GDH Wilson
Department of Tourism Management
University of Pretoria

R Pretorius
Department of Criminology
University of Pretoria

INTRODUCTION

Residential burglary remains a serious problem in South African society and will probably continue to be a problem for as long as large sections of the population are experiencing unemployment, estimated at as high as 40 percent of the population, and the accompanying poverty and relative deprivation. At an average rate of more than 590 residential burglaries per 100 000 of the population per year for the period between 1994 and 1999, residential burglary can be regarded as the most common crime in South Africa. People from all spheres of life, the "poor" as well as the "rich", are exposed to the risk of becoming a victim of residential burglary. A comparison of the crime ratios for the 15 most serious crime categories for the period between 1994 and 1999, is shown in Table1.

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 Of the cases that do eventually reach court, a large proportion is withdrawn during proceedings as a result of insufficient evidence.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

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

The current focus of the South African Police Service (SAPS) is more on law enforcement than on crime prevention or the protection of individual properties. With the limited personnel and resources to 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). 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.

TABLE 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	2198	2028	1667	1690	2096	2263
Attempted murder	707	672	707	683	698	667
Murder	695	675	639	596	590	553
SOCIAL FABRIC CRIMES						
Assault (serious)	5443	5598	5712	5689	5556	5951
Common assault	5016	5195	5090	4896	4731	5153
Rape	1098	1203	1251	1265	1170	1191
PROPERTY RELATED CRIMES						
Housebreaking - residential	**5903**	**6182**	**6109**	**6049**	**6333**	**6634**
Theft - out of/from vehicle	4727	4808	4467	4275	4473	4477
Theft - motor vehicle	2700	2560	2397	2441	2552	2404
Housebreaking - business	2305	2188	2178	2149	2234	2164
Other robbery	839	1036	1277	1278	1474	1668
Shoplifting	1736	1597	1542	1547	1495	1431
COMMERCIAL CRIME						
All fraud, forgery, malappropriations, embezzlements, etc.	1620	1546	1541	1543	1474	1551
VIOLENCE AIMED AT PROPERTY						
Malicious damage to property	3174	3252	3230	3081	3028	3087
Arson	294	247	249	238	. 240	230

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

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to facilitate burglary prevention initiatives at a local level, it seems appropriate to first develop a better understanding of the situational dynamics involved in the burglary process. The main problem the researchers were confronted with in the study therefore was to find answers to the question: Why does residential burglary occur in a particular place at a particular time? More specifically, the following research questions were formulated to guide the research process:

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

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to Taylor *et al* (1990:130), conceptual frameworks provide "intellectual maps" for social assessments, and help to identify the boundaries for social analysis, assist in the identification of key variables and provide direction to the whole process.

The conceptual framework, as illustrated in Figure 1, was developed in accordance with the research questions. It provides an integrated understanding of the theoretical perspectives, as well as insights of the researcher, which were gained through personal experiences, observations, and interaction with victims of burglary.

Theoretical basis

The conceptual framework was developed from the theoretical perspectives gained through the literature study of the subject field known as "environmental criminology", or the "geography of crime". According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1981a:19), environmental criminologists tend to assume that some people are criminally motivated or have a disposition towards criminality and, instead of focusing their research on the criminal, they begin their research with an analysis of the location of crimes - the when, where and how crimes occur. Locations of crime, the characteristics of those locations, the movement paths that bring offenders and victims together at those locations, and people's perceptions of crime locations all become substantively important objects for research. This is contrary to the "traditional" approaches where most criminological research focused on the origins of criminal motivation, for example, theories relating to biological problems, socioeconomic conditions, social labelling, or learned behaviour.

The emphasis on environmental criminology between the 1960s and 1980s took place mainly as a result of the writings of Jane Jacobs (1961), Newman (1973), Jeffery (1977), Clarke and Mayhew (1980), and Brantingham and Brantingham (1981), who maintained that crime could be prevented more effectively by exercising better control over the physical milieu where the crime was committed. This school of thought argues that the opportunities for crime should be prevented in the physical environment, since the commission of a crime can mainly be attributed to rational decisions rather than being the result of pathological, biophysical, psychological or social factors (Naudé 1988:11).

According to Smith (1986:82) the rationale underlying environmental criminology gained the support of the British Home Office in the middle 1980s, and

provided the main thrust of crime prevention policies in Britain. The reason provided by Smith (1986:82) is that it is easier to alter the distribution of environmental opportunities for crime than it is to influence the complex socioeconomic factors motivating offenders.

Explanation of conceptual framework

The occurrence of residential burglary implies the convergence of various factors in time and space that could create a favourable environment for the burglary to occur. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the functioning of the burglary process and how the different components, elements and factors are interrelated.

Four components can be identified in the burglary process, namely: the **environment** (with reference to the macro-, meso-, and microenvironment) in which the burglary takes place, the **situational conditions** that exist prior to the commission of the burglary, the **burglary event**, and the **responses** of both the residents and the burglars involved in the burglary event. Within the context of the components, three main elements are involved in the burglary process, namely: the **burglar(s)** with the motivation to burgle, a suitable **target/residence**, and the **resident(s)** as the burglary victims. These components and elements are dynamic entities, with many differential attributes and possible manifestations, which interact in such a manner that the burglary event resulted from that. The many differential attributes and possible manifestations can be studied through the identification of factors or variables in the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework, as illustrated in Figure 1, can be summarised under the following headings: Location of target/residence in a specific environmental setting, burglars and their *modus operandi*, situational conditions, the burglary event,

responses from residents and burglars, and the implementation of burglary prevention initiatives.

Location of residence in a specific environmental setting

Any potential target can be described in terms of its specific location in the microenvironment (its address), within the broader meso- (neighbourhood or suburb) and macroenvironment (the metropolis and beyond). The vulnerability of a particular residential location and the probability that a burglar will target that specific neighbourhood can be explained in terms of the following factors:

• **The affluence of neighbourhoods**

Residences in more affluent neighbourhoods could be more vulnerable to residential burglary than residences in less-affluent neighbourhoods, because of the possibility of an abundance of goods available in the more affluent neighbourhoods. Walmsley and Lewis (1993:54), for example, produced research results that indicated a distinct association between middle to upper-income suburban neighbourhoods and property crimes such as burglary, larceny and car theft, whereas low- income neighbourhoods were associated with crimes of violence.

• **Accessibility of neighbourhoods**

A residence in a neighbourhood that has good access roads may be more vulnerable to residential burglary than a residence in a neighbourhood that has limited access roads. Good access roads provide the burglars with the opportunity to gain easy access to and exit from the target area. Residences next to or near open fields, green zones, rivers or parks may have added vulnerability, because the burglars can move more freely and unnoticed in these areas. These areas not only provide shelter to the burglars, but can also serve as places to hide the stolen goods.

FIGURE 1:   **ILLUSTRATION OF THE BURGLARY PROCESS**
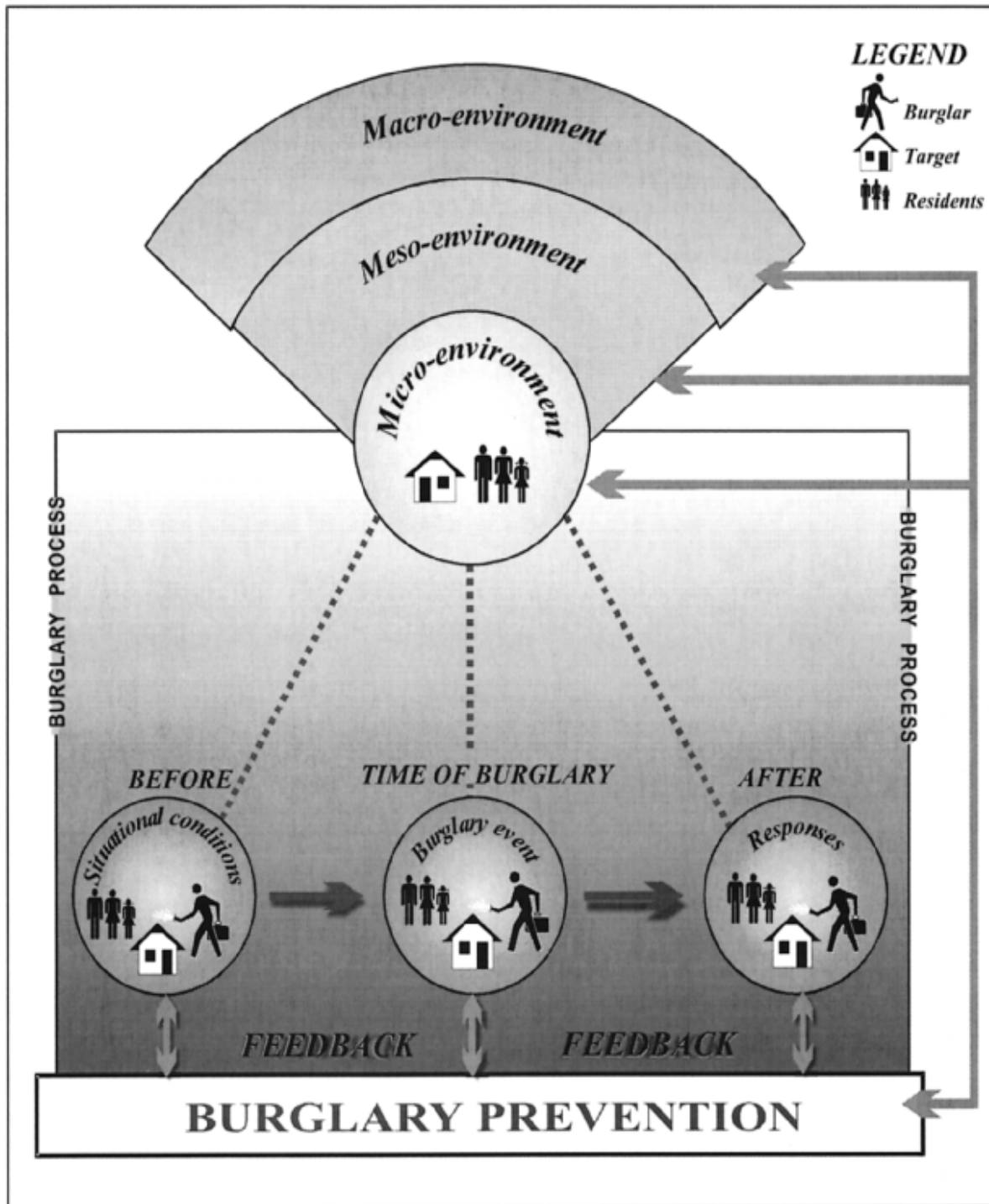
Residential areas that allow the free movement of people and vehicles on account of the right all people have to public spaces and roads, may be more vulnerable than so-called security villages or estates, where private home owners have the right to control access and the movement of people and vehicles. In this way potential burglars can be restricted from entering a controlled residential area.

Residential areas that are characterised by a diversity of enterprises or activities, as a result of for example, its proximity to public places, and shopping centres, and the presence of small businesses and new building projects, may be more exposed to the movement or gathering of relatively high volumes of strangers (non-resident in the neighbourhood), than residential areas that have a more homogeneous character. It is expected that the movement of strangers will provide an excuse for burglars to move freely and unnoticed in the neighbourhood in search of suitable targets.

Burglars and their modus operandi

•   **Motivation of burglars**

Burglars are motivated by the need for money, more than anything else, whether the need is real or perceived, or by greed (Reppetto 1974:21; Bennett & Wright 1984:31; Wright & Decker 1994:40). Burglars are often involved in alcohol abuse and/or the use of drugs, which increases the need for money.

•   **Selection of suitable targets**

A motivated burglar would tend to search for a suitable target in those neighbourhoods he knows best. If he has specific knowledge of a particular target and its occupants, or has gained inside information through a tipster, that target will be more vulnerable than other potential targets of which he has no knowledge. According to the rational choice theory (Cornish &

Clark 1986:9; Brantingham & Brantingham 1981:28; Brown & Altman 1981:58), the process of burglary involves a series of sequential decision-making judgements by the burglar. The initial decision to burgle may be motivated by personal needs, whilst the selection of a suitable target is taken upon a well-established crime template, based on experiential knowledge and environmental cues associated with "good" targets. Once the "template" is established, it becomes relatively fixed and can influence future search behaviour, thereby becoming self-reinforcing.

Beirne and Messerschmidt (1995:153) also made a distinction between amateur and professional burglars. According to these authors, amateur burglars act in a rather unsophisticated manner, with little planning involved, and tend to steal a variety of merchandise as the opportunity arises. On the contrary, professional burglars tend to be older, are specialists who employ considerable skill and planning in executing a burglary and select targets of substantial value, for example the stealing of jewellery.

Situational conditions

When a motivated burglar finds a suitable target, the immediate situational conditions will influence his final decision whether to proceed with the burglary or not. The situational conditions refer to the local conditions prevailing in the microenvironment prior to the commission of the burglary. The more favourable the burglar perceives these conditions, the greater the chance that he will proceed with the burglary.

The situational conditions that may have a significant effect on the vulnerability of the residences, include the following categories of factors: residents' activities and characteristics; surveillance and visibility; the design features of a residence; and

security protection.

• **Residents' activities and characteristics**

Residents, through their daily routines and lifestyles, sometimes engage in behaviour that expose them to the possibility of being at risk. Residents who are away from home at regular intervals, either for work, recreational or other purposes increase the risk of being burgled during their absence. The traditional viewpoint of burglars is that they prefer not to be seen or to make physical contact with the residents during the burglary. If contact is made, it will be accidental rather than planned. It is for this reason that burglary is classified as a separate type of crime from robbery, where contact with the victim is intentional.

A wealthy lifestyle is also associated with valuable goods and articles in the residence that may attract potential burglars who are seeking suitable targets. Residents may also act in a careless and ignorant manner with regard to safety precautions, especially if they have a false sense of safety and have not been victims before. Certain categories of residents may also pose a greater risk of being victimised, because they are easier targets.

"Surveillance and visibility"

Burglars would tend to avoid residences that are under surveillance or that have good visibility out of fear of being observed and because of the possibility of being arrested. Improving the surveillance of a residential area through formal and informal (natural) techniques, will contribute to the safety and security of that particular residential area. Formal surveillance is a purposeful activity in the neighbourhood, for example, through neighbourhood watch, citizen or police patrols and the presence of security firms, whilst informal or natural surveillance refers to crime awareness by neighbours, motorists and pedestrians, as well as good neighbourliness.

The lifestyle and routine activities of the residents and their neighbours could also influence the level of surveillance in a particular residential area. Routine activities that often leave the residence unattended, together with low levels of surveillance, could increase the vulnerability of such residence.

• **Design features**

The attractiveness of a potential target would depend on the environmental cues and the immediate characteristics of the target as perceived by the burglar. The burglar will look for design features that fit his description of a "good" target. This may include design features of the building that could allow easy access to and escape from the building, for example, concealed entrances, and easily removable windows. For the burglar, an attractive target will be one where the perceived rewards outweigh the risks of being caught.

• **Security protection**

In the absence of visible security measures a residence might be perceived as a relatively easy target and therefore more vulnerable to burglary than residences well protected through a range of security measures. Security measures include all the means that could be used to protect the residence and its people, for example: Access control, fences with spikes, electrified fences, entry phones, burglar alarms, burglar-proofing at windows and doors, locks, security guards, armed response, security lights and dogs.

Burglary event

If the situational conditions are perceived to be favourable, there is a high probability that the burglar will decide to commence with the burglary. The following factors may have a bearing on the extent of the burglary:

• **Financial loss**

How seriously residents might take the effect of a burglary on their lives will *inter alia* depend on factors such as the extent of financial loss, the degree of trauma experienced by residents and to what extent their fear of crime and feeling of safety had changed. In cases where residents had no household insurance, or had lost goods of irreplaceable or of sentimental value, the impact of the burglary might be felt more severely.

• **Market for stolen goods**

Burglars normally do not want to keep the stolen goods, and would therefore try to sell or dispose of them as soon as possible. The main objective of burglars, as confirmed in this study, is to "earn" money to provide for their basic and social needs, and in many instances to support family members. In this context, Barkan (1997:324) mentioned that burglars need the assistance of "fences" to help them dispose of their illegal goods in return for money.

Residents' responses after the burglaries

• **Residents' feelings of safety**

The impact of burglary on the residents' feelings of safety will vary from person to person, depending on how seriously they were affected by the burglary. According to Barkan (1997: 328), female burglary victims are more likely than male victims to be afraid and upset, while male victims are more apt to be angry or annoyed after experiencing a burglary.

• **Implementation of security measures**

Residents would tend to improve their security after the occurrence of a burglary with the aim to protect them against future burglaries, and to feel safe in the immediate environment. The degree and type of

protection residents decided upon would be influenced by factors such as:
• fear of crime;
• crime risk of an area (is it a high- or low-crime area?);
• cost-effectiveness of security measures; and
• life style and aesthetics - security measures must fit in with the life style and activities of those involved (Naudé 1988:23).

Burglars' responses after the burglaries

• **Burglars' feelings of guilt**

Clarke and Homel (cited in Lab 1997:158) presented a classification of situational techniques to prevent crime, which included "guilt, shame, and embarrassment" as one of the categories. They argue that these conditions could impact on the psyche of criminals to deter them from offending in the future. However, if criminals do not experience these feelings, they may continue with their criminal activity as long as conditions are favourable and they have reason to justify their actions.

• **Crime displacement**

The burglar's mental image of the environment and the target would be affected by the actual commission of a burglary, because the outcome was either as expected, which would confirm his feelings and add to his learning, or the outcome was unexpected, which would also contribute to his learning about the area (Carter & Hill 1980:196). If the feedback confirms the expectations of the burglar, there is a likelihood that the burglar will return to that area in future. However, changes in the residents' routine activities and improved security measures may also act as a deterrent and the burglar would not return to the same residence. The burglar might either decide to change his *modus operandi,* or engage in another type of crime, or abandon burglary in favour of becoming a

law-abiding citizen.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted within the paradigm of quality research methodology, although elementary statistical calculations were used.

From a philosophical perspective, the study could be explained within the paradigm of the realism and specifically the "domain of the actual", which refers to describing and explaining the actual manifestation of a burglary event, taking into account how the event is perceived by different people, as well as the underlying structures that could have caused the event (Johnston 1987:224). With the emphasis on the actual burglary event in the microenvironment, it was decided not to use a survey methodology, but rather a case-study approach. The case-study approach enables 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 which includes the following facets:

- 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.

A multiple-case design was used in this study because of the abundance of available cases of residential burglary. The multiple-case study should not be considered to be similar to the respondents in a survey study. Instead of a "sampling" logic in a survey study,

the multiple-case study follows a "replication" logic, that is to determine the degree of "replication" of results between the different cases (Yin 1994:47). Each individual case represents a complete study, which culminates in cross-case conclusions, theory modification, policy implications, and the final report.

As far as residential burglary was studied in the microenvironment, 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 existing information sources, such as crime statistics from the SAPS, and survey data from other research institutions.

In the field research, the individual case was defined as the burglary event that occurred in the case study areas, which include the two police station areas of Pretoria West and Garsfontein. The Garsfontein area was selected as a more affluent residential area, and Pretoria West as a less-affluent residential area. The individual cases also served as the units of analysis. The year, 1998, represented the period of data collection and analysis, as it was the year in which the fieldwork was undertaken and secondary data collected.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary method of acquiring information from the people selected for interviewing. Three sets of interview schedules were developed, aimed at three different target groups, namely 24 burglary victims in the two case study areas, eight convicted burglars, and eight people with expert knowledge on residential burglary. A pilot study was undertaken prior to the data collection phase in order to refine the contents of the interview schedules and to determine the best practices and procedures to be followed during interviewing sessions, as well as to evaluate the appropriateness of the research design.

A sample of 24 burglary cases was selected, 12 from

each of the two case study areas of Pretoria West and Pretoria East. The rationale for the relative small sample was based on the qualitative nature of the study and the fact that no need existed to generalise the findings beyond the specific sample studied. Interviews were also conducted with eight convicted burglars in the Atteridgeville Prison, and eight experts with specialised knowledge on burglary, which include staff of the police, security companies, insurance companies, and Community Police Forums.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section a summary is given of the research findings and how it relates to the theoretical perspectives as explained in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

Location of residence

The affluence of neighbourhoods. Confirming evidence was found that indicated a positive relationship between the average site values (as an indication of affluence) in the various police station areas of the City Council of Pretoria and the residential burglary rates registered in the same areas. The police station area of Garsfontein, which was representative of a more affluent area, was singled out as having the highest residential burglary rate in the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area. Less-affluent areas, such as Pretoria West, also experienced relatively high rates in reported residential burglary, although significant lower than in the affluent areas in Pretoria East (Garsfontein). Former black residential areas, such as Mamelodi, experienced higher crime rates with regard to violent crimes than in respect of residential burglary.

Accessibility of neighbourhoods. In both case study areas potential burglars could easily gain access to the area, they could move around freely, and the presence of strangers was a common feature in both these areas.

No restrictions were placed on the movement of people and vehicles in public places and on public roads. Furthermore, the presence of open spaces, parks and open zones along streams and main roads were a common feature in the case study areas.

At the time of the research in 1998, the restriction of movement through the presence of "security villages" or "security enclosed neighbourhoods" in Garsfontein and Pretoria West was non-existent, although some neighbourhoods were in the planning stages of closing off their neighbourhoods. However, in the Garsfontein area, residential complexes with security fences and access control were more common than in the Pretoria West area. Taking the total case study area into account their impact on the free movement of people could, however, be regarded as limited.

Feedback from the interviewees indicated that the presence of strangers, non-resident in the areas, was a common feature in both the case study areas. This could be attributed to factors such as the easy access to these areas, as well as activities associated with job-seeking, begging, charity work and the selling of goods by street vendors. Strangers also tended to gather at shopping centres in the residential areas, of which at least 17 could be identified in the Garsfontein case study area, against the three in the Pretoria West area. New building activities also attracted strangers to the case study areas. It was also mentioned by the SAPS in Pretoria West that many strangers in the area were illegal immigrants from other countries in Africa.

Burglars and their modus operandi

Motivation of burglars. The convicted burglars who were interviewed in this study, confirmed the expectation that money was the prime motivation for their behaviour. More than 80 percent of the burglars mentioned that they were unemployed and in need of money. Fifty percent of the burglars also referred to the influence of friends as a reason for their

involvement in burglary activity, and 38 percent indicated that they regarded burglary as a profession ("a work") that pays well.

Selection of suitable targets. Seventy percent of the burglars in this study indicated that they followed a more planned routine to gather information and to identify potential targets against thirty percent who indicated that they acted in a more opportunistic manner to identify a suitable target. Although the "planned" burglars could explain their *modus operandi* in greater detail, both categories of burglars were able to describe their *modus operandi* in identifying suitable targets, which confirmed the expectation that burglars would tend to follow a patterned routine in the selection of a suitable target.

Situational factors

Residents' activities. It was found in this study that in 66,6 percent of the burglary cases, the residents were absent from home during the burglary. For the Garsfontein area, this percentage was even higher at 83 percent of the burglary cases, whilst in the Pretoria West area, 50 percent of the residents were not at home during the incident. For the remaining 33,3 percent of the cases, the burglaries occurred during the night whilst the residents were at home and asleep. From these findings it was evident that residences were more at risk of being targeted for burglary during periods when the residents were away from home or during the night when the residents were asleep, confirming the research expectations with regard to residents being absent or asleep during burglaries.

With regard to possible carelessness on the part of the residents, it was found that in 25 percent of all the cases, there were indications of negligence. The observation was made that residents were not deliberately careless, but unintentionally created opportunities for burglary through their routine activities, or because of the inadequate precautionary

measures they implemented.

Surveillance and visibility. Two periods when residences were most at risk in the Garsfontein area could be identified, namely between midnight and 06:00 in the morning (42 percent of the cases), and between 06:00 in the morning and noon (33 percent of the cases). In the Pretoria West area the risk period only occurred between midnight and 06:00 in the morning, with 84 percent of the burglaries. These risk periods for burglary coincided with the time of night and day when most of the residents were either asleep or away at work, whilst the children (if any) were at school or at a day-care centre. During these periods informal surveillance in the neighbourhoods was at its lowest, due to the reduced outdoor activities or to less people moving about.

Design features. The findings of this study confirmed the expectation that residential areas that projected an image of greater wealth, as in the Garsfontein cases, were more frequently targeted than residential areas that projected an image of less wealth, as in the Pretoria West cases. Through their environmental knowledge, the burglars knew that the goods they were looking for were most likely to be found in the residences in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria. The most common method of gaining entrance was through sliding doors, followed by windows, preferably from the rear or the side of the residences.

Security. It was found that the residences in the Garsfontein area were slightly better protected in terms of security measures than those in the Pretoria West area. Alarm systems and connections with armed reaction units were only found in the Garsfontein area, although to a limited extent. It could be stated that on average most residences provided relatively easy access to burglars as a result of inadequate security measures.

None of the burglars who were interviewed, were particularly concerned about any of the security measures. They believed that most security measures could be bypassed or overcome if other factors, such as the absence of guardians, were favourable. The effectiveness of security measures should therefore be evaluated in combination, because the effectiveness could increase proportionately when a combination of measures is implemented. The more obstacles the burglar has to overcome, the greater the chance that he might decide to abort the burglary attempt. Other factors, such as the time of day, occupancy, and the quality of material used in security equipment played a role in the final outcome of the burglary.

Burglary event

Financial loss. It was found, as could be expected, that the average financial loss experienced in the Garsfontein police station cases was higher than that in the Pretoria West police station area. This could partly be attributed to the fact that more planned burglaries occurred in the Garsfontein than in the Pretoria West area, where burglaries were more of an opportunistic nature.

Market for stolen goods. In the case studies, the most popular items that were stolen included items such as electronic products for entertainment, clothing, electronic household equipment, jewellery, linen, food and chinaware. On average, higher volumes of goods were stolen from the residences in the Garsfontein cases than the Pretoria West cases, especially in terms of high value items such as TVs, video machines, clothing, jewellery and chinaware. From these results it was evident that the easy portable, and easy-to-dispose-of expensive items were the most popular ones. Most of these stolen goods found their way into the open market through the hands of fences (persons who deal in stolen goods) to whom the burglars delivered the stolen goods in exchange for money, sometimes far below the market price.

Responses of the residents after the burglaries

Residents' feelings of safety. It was found that time played an important role in the feelings people experienced directly after the burglary and after some time had elapsed. More than 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they initially experienced heightened feelings of being unsafe but that these feelings returned to "normal" after some time had passed. This category of people also indicated that they did not make any significant changes to their daily routine activities. However, evidence was also found that residents who had made contact with the burglars, single female residents, and the elderly experienced more intense feelings of unsafety. The fact that the burglary victims improved their security after the burglaries could also have contributed to the return of feelings of relative safety. One important change mentioned by more than 50 percent of the respondents, was the tendency to be more alert or watchful with regard to potential burglars or criminals in their immediate environment.

Implementation of security measures. More than 90 percent of the respondents indicated that they implemented new measures to improve their security. The nature of these measures, however, varied vastly between the two case study areas of Pretoria West and Garsfontein. In the Garsfontein area, where the residents were on average more affluent and had insurance coverage, there was a tendency to improve security through the installation of alarm systems and to subscribe to armed reaction units. In the less affluent area of Pretoria West, the tendency was to improve security through physical measures, which included upgrading of existing burglar bars at the windows, security gates at the front and back doors, installing of security lights, acquiring a dog, and to foster friendly relations with the neighbours.

Responses of the burglars after the burglaries

Burglars' feelings of guilt. The burglars who were interviewed in this study showed very little remorse or a sense of guilt for the inconvenience and trauma they had caused their victims. They rationalised that the crime was not aimed at the residents and that they needed to burgle in order to survive or to support their dependants. Furthermore, they felt that the "rich" could easily recover their losses through insurance claims.

Crime displacement. From the responses of the convicted burglars, as well as the experts who were interviewed in this study, it became apparent that burglars would continuously adapt to changing circumstances by improving their skills, by moving from one target area to another, should the one become to risky, and to change the time of offending, for example, from the night to the day. However, these types of crime displacement did not indicate whether the burglar had decided not to continue being a burglar, or to shift to another type of crime.

The burglars who were interviewed in this study were of the opinion that the majority of burglars (in general) would not abandon burglary for another type of crime, even with improved security protection. According to them there would always be enough opportunities to continue with burglary. On the other hand, the police officers who were interviewed, suggested to the researcher that the increase in residential robberies and car hijackings in recent years represented a shift from residential burglary to residential armed robbery and hijackings. Although there was an increase in residential robbery and hijackings between 1994 and 1999 according to the police statistics, it was not supported by a decrease in residential burglary. On the contrary, it also showed an increase.

INTEGRATED APPROACH TOWARDS BURGLARY PREVENTION

According to Lab (1997:19), crime prevention entails

any action designed to reduce the actual level of crime and/or the perceived fear of crime. He further emphasised that prevention activities should not be restricted to the efforts of the criminal justice system alone, but should also include the activities of both public and private organisations. In the White Paper on Safety and Security (South Africa, 1998:14), crime prevention is defined as:

> All activities which reduce, deter, or prevent the occurrence of specific crimes firstly, by altering the environment in which they occur, secondly by changing the conditions which are thought to cause them, and thirdly by providing a strong deterrent in the form of an effective Justice System.

In the context of this study, burglary prevention initiatives could be defined as any action, taken through public and/or private initiative that is aimed at preventing residential burglary from occurring, and if occurring, to limit the losses and to reduce the fear of possible victimisation. To implement burglary prevention initiatives at the local level implies that an assessment should be made of the vulnerabilities attached to a specific location.

Through the application of the conceptual framework and the research findings, it was possible to formulate an integrated framework of guidelines or principles for the prevention of residential burglary. By "integrated" is meant that the prevention initiatives should focus on the main elements of the burglary process, namely the burglar, the neighbourhood or environment, the residents and the situational conditions, and that the implementation of prevention initiatives at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels should complement each other. An integrated approach further implies a multi-agency approach

between the different agencies involved in crime prevention in order to have a coordinated effort in addressing the many diverse angles to crime prevention.

The integrated approach to burglary prevention can also be presented in a matrix format, where the horizontal axis represents the different approaches and methods relating to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, and the vertical axis, represents the different levels of interventions, namely micro, meso and macro.

An integrated approach towards burglary prevention can be explained by means of the following levels of prevention initiatives:

Macro-level crime prevention initiatives. At the macro-level, the primary focus of burglary prevention would be to correct criminogenic conditions in the broader society that are associated with the root causes for criminal behaviour, and to improve the criminal justice system. Success will therefore be largely dependent on the capacity and efficiency of the criminal justice system (including the police service) to arrest, prosecute and convict burglars, and to implement further measures that are aimed at rehabilitating convicted burglars. Prevention initiatives at this level are captured in the policies and strategies promulgated through the national, provincial, and local government legislative powers. In addition to the law enforcement element, the participation and involvement of other welfare departments and the private sector are essential for the successful implementation of social prevention programmes.

Initiatives at the macro-level should therefore create the policy framework that would empower the structures at the lower functional levels to effectively implement crime prevention initiatives. In the South African context, the National Crime Prevention Strategy of 1996, the White Paper on Safety and Security of 1998 and the strategic and operational plans of the South African Police Service at national, provincial and area levels, serve as examples of macro-level crime prevention policies and programmes.

Meso-level crime prevention initiatives. Whereas the macro-approach focuses on policies and strategies, the meso-level is the functional level where crime prevention agencies accept responsibility for the implementation of these policies and strategies. In this study the police station area and community initiatives constitute the meso-level of crime prevention. The SAPS area of Pretoria, for example, is divided into 28 police station areas and each of them encompasses a number of neighbourhoods or suburban areas.

At the meso-level meaningful partnerships can be forged between official structures, the private sector and the communities. Multi-agency planning at the municipal and local levels would be aimed at facilitating specific programmes or operations in the communities in order to address a specific crime problem. Visible community policing and community actions aimed at observing, monitoring, and controlling the movement of potential burglars may serve as a deterrent to potential burglars, and may also help to create a feeling of safety amongst residents. In the South African context, initiatives with regard to community policing, the establishment of Community Police Forums, Neighbourhood Watch, and projects of Business Against Crime can be regarded as meso-level initiatives. Another example is the increased tendency to close off neighbourhoods or the establishment of "security villages" (Landman 2000:20).

Micro-level crime prevention initiatives. At the micro-level, burglary prevention initiatives would be

focused on eliminating opportunities for burglary by the application of situational crime prevention measures. Through the implementation of such measures, the burglar might find it increasingly difficult to enter the premises and might be deterred from entering. The more security or safety measures are implemented, the greater the chance that residents will feel safer in their immediate environment, and the greater the chance that in case of a burglary, the damage will be less.

In the South African context, private security companies have become an important role player in the safeguarding of individual residences. Target hardening, improved personal security, good neighbourliness, and the introduction of Block Watch can all be regarded as micro-level prevention initiatives. At this level crime prevention is primarily based on private initiatives, which have cost implications for those involved.

In residential areas where individual efforts to improve security are linked with crime prevention initiatives of the local police and the community, there will be a greater chance of success than in those instances where crime prevention initiatives are implemented in isolation.

The distinction between macro-, meso- and micro-level crime prevention should not be regarded as watershed divisions but as an attempt to integrate the multitude of crime prevention methods and techniques that exist at different functional levels.

CONCLUSION

The value of the conceptual framework as a "research model" to understand and investigate the burglary process, was demonstrated in the application thereof in the research process. The evidence confirmed that the conceptual framework could be used to describe and explain the occurrence of a burglary event, to identify

and analyse the risk factors that contributed to the vulnerability of a potential target, and to formulate guidelines that could be applied in the development of burglary prevention plans and strategies.

Based on the findings of this study, it is argued that the effective prevention of residential burglary can only be realised through an integrated approach to crime prevention, which combines the efforts of individual households with that of local communities and the law enforcement agencies involved in crime prevention. At the macro-level, crime prevention programmes and initiatives should focus on the criminal in order to stop or discourage criminal behaviour through the implementation of deterrent measures and to change criminogenic conditions that may be contributory to criminal behaviour. At the meso- and micro-levels, the focus should primarily be on situational crime prevention, which includes community involvement and residents' participation, together with the local police and private security organisations and is aimed at minimising the opportunities for residential burglary in a specific area.

On the basis of the research findings, it seems appropriate to recommend that effective crime prevention centres or units should be established at the area and local police station levels, with the primary aim to implement and manage community-based and multi-agency crime prevention programmes and projects. The following principles could be applied to direct the functioning of these centres/units:

- the development of an intelligence capacity to analyse and interpret crime statistics, trends and other relevant information to guide the crime prevention initiatives;

- building of partnerships or multi-agency co-operation in the planning and implementation of crime prevention initiatives (the contribution of business, insurance and private security companies should not be

overlooked);

• programmes and projects should be aimed at specific crimes, e.g. residential burglary;

• to involve the local community, *inter alia,* through the Community Police Forums (CPFs), and to apply the principles of Community Policing as advocated in the White Paper on Safety and Security (1998);

• to apply situational crime prevention, including environmental design, as an approach to diminish opportunities for crime by modifying the situations in which offending occurs; and

• to effectively communicate with ordinary citizens, through the printed and electronic media, with the aim to educate and inform them on the latest developments on crime prevention, and what they can do to protect their property.

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