

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

A criminal event is one element in the complex interface between humans and their physical environment.

- Smith and Patterson (1980:207)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To thoroughly understand the burglary process, three specific objectives were formulated for this study (see par. 1.6.1-1.6.3), namely, to provide a theoretical explanation of residential burglary, to build a conceptual framework explaining the burglary process and to formulate appropriate research expectations.

Chapter 2 provides such a theoretical framework within the paradigm of environmental criminology that can be used to describe and explain the occurrence of residential burglary. Special emphasis is placed on theories, models and other research findings relevant to this study. The latter part of the Chapter contains a critical review of environmental criminology, the construction of a conceptual framework, and the formulation of research expectations.

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMINOLOGY

According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1981:19), environmental criminologists tend to assume that some people are criminally motivated and, instead of focussing their research on the criminal, they begin their research with an analysis of the location of crimes - the when, where and how crimes occur. This is contrary to the 'traditional' approaches where most criminological research focussed on the origins of criminal motivation. In this regard Brantingham and Brantingham (1981:19) cited typical 'traditional' research questions that were asked by well-known criminologists: "Lombroso asked what biological problems motivated individuals to commit crime, while Bonger asked about the economic situations that drove people to crime. Sutherland asked how people learned criminal motivations, while Shaw and McKay asked about the neighbourhood conditions that lead to individual criminal motivation. Merton asked how defects in the social structure produced motivational adaptations that led to crime, while Lemert asked how social labelling changed people's motivations and made them more overtly and consistently criminal."

In practical terms 'environmental criminology' can be regarded as the equivalent of what Herbert (1982) typified as the 'geography of crime'. In this regard the work and research done by geographers and criminologists intertwines to form a multi-disciplinary terrain of shared interest and a common understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1981:18), the environmental approach emphasizes three shifts in criminological research, first, a shift from a disciplinary to a multi-disciplinary approach; second, a shift from concern with offender motives to concern with criminal events; and third, a shift from the sociological to the geographical imagination. By geographical imagination they meant the way in which the offender sees and relates to space and place that surrounded him. Brantingham and Brantingham (1981:21) argue that environmental criminologists "use geographic imagination in concert with the sociological imagination to describe, understand, and control criminal events. 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 from this shifted perspective."

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 socio-economic factors motivating offenders.

The shift of 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. According to Naudé (1988:10) this approach can also be typified as the 'mechanical and physical milieu' approach. This school of thought argues that the opportunities for crime should be prevented in the physical environment, since committing a crime can mainly be attributed to rational decisions rather than being the result of pathological, biophysical, psychological or social factors (Naudé, 1988:11).

The environmental approach to crime control requires measures directed to particular types of crime, taking into account the micro-environment in which they occur. The aim would therefore be to reduce the opportunities for crime as perceived by potential offenders, by introducing, for example, target hardening, target removal, reducing the payoff, and encouraging public surveillance (Smith, 1986:84).

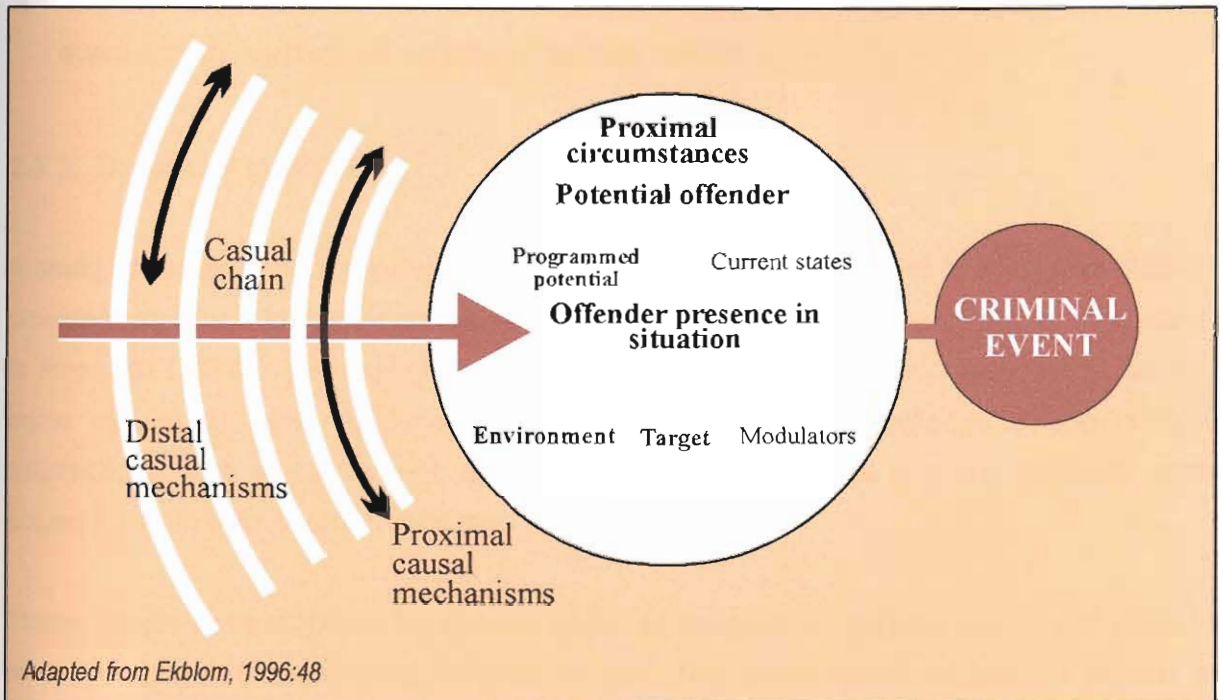
2.3 OVERVIEW ON THEORIES, MODELS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

The theories, models and approaches to be discussed in this section, although coming from different theories, have a common understanding of the importance of 'environmental' and 'situational' circumstances that create opportunities for criminal activity. In order to provide a coherent and meaningful explanation of residential burglary, the different theoretical perspectives were integrated and discussed under the following headings: the burglary process; burglars' motivation; target selection; territorial approach; and residents' activities and lifestyles.

2.3.1 The burglary process

The burglary process refers to the causal chain of events, within a specific time and space context, that lead to the commission of a burglary. The causal chain of a criminal event, in this case a residential burglary, can be explained by the causal chain model of Ekblom (1996:47-50), as presented in Figure 2.1. The execution of a burglary reflects the conjunction of: a ready, willing and able offender; a vulnerable, attractive or provocative target; a favourable environment; and the absence of willing, able and credible modulators.

FIGURE 2.1: CAUSAL CHAIN OF A CRIMINAL EVENT



The elements involved in the causal chain of a criminal event, as shown in Figure 2.1, can be explained as follows (Ekblom, 1996:48-50):

- The causes of a criminal event can be remote or 'distal', for example, abuse in childhood may produce a tendency to perpetrate violent assaults in adulthood. Other causes may be the result of structural changes, such as the introduction of electronic banking which create new opportunities for crime.
- The 'proximal' circumstances indicate the presence of a motivated offender in a suitable crime situation immediately before the occurrence of the event - when the diverse structural, social, ecological and psychological causes of the criminal event inevitably converge.
- The 'programmed potential' of the individual refers to past life circumstances which may impact on the likelihood of committing an offence.
- 'Current state' refers to the position of the potential offender at the time, such as being under the influence of alcohol.
- 'Modulators' encompass a range of distinctive factors, such as the possibility of intervention while the offence is being committed (discouraging factor), or circumstances such as leaving a car door unlocked which may make the offence easier to commit.
- The 'environment' describes all those factors relating to the physical context in which an event occurs, such as the visibility or the lack thereof.

2.3.2 Burglars' motivation

A study undertaken by Reppetto (1974) on residential burglary in the Boston area (USA), provided valuable information on the motivation of why burglars decide to burgle. According to Reppetto (1974:21) the satisfaction of a perceived need for money appeared to be the prime motive for most burglaries, although offenders did acknowledge that subsidiary satisfactions such as excitement, revenge, curiosity and feelings of group solidarity, also played a role in their decision to burgle.

These results were amplified by another study on burglary by Bennett and Wright (1984), who interviewed 128 convicted burglars on how they came to the decision to commit a burglary during their most recent period of offending. These offenders' responses could be divided into the following six main categories (Bennett & Wright, 1984:31-38):

- Offences were typically triggered by instrumental needs, almost invariably the need for money (46 per cent).

- The influence of other people (46 per cent).
- Opportunities or the incidental discovery of an attractive or vulnerable target (22 per cent). That implies the vast majority of offenders typically had a prior motivation to offend and sought opportunities to commit crime.
- Burglary was part of their lifestyle (20 per cent) - offences were committed frequently or on a regular basis.
- Expressive needs (14 per cent). The minority said that depression, boredom or the desire for excitement precipitated their offences.
- The use of alcohol as an important factor in the decision to commit a burglary (10 per cent).

The research findings of Bennett and Wright (1984) confirm the notion that most offenders are motivated to offend independently of the discovery of a physical opportunity to commit a crime. The original motivation to offend was most frequently stimulated by factors unrelated to the situation of the offence (Bennett & Wright, 1984:40). However, the final decision to offend might be dependent upon situational factors, in terms of finding a suitable target. To the contrary, Wright and Decker (1994) found in a study in St. Louis (USA) that many burglars had a potential target in mind prior to the actual decision to commit a burglary, and in many instances they had prior knowledge of the target, either through personal contact with the victims or information passed on by others.

2.3.3 Target selection

The processes by which criminals recognise potential crime sites, identify opportunities and penetrate a variety of symbolic and physical barriers in order to commit a crime, has attracted a great deal of attention from environmental criminologists. Brantingham and Brantingham (1981:28-29) proposed a model for crime site selection which they described by the following propositions:

- Individuals who are motivated to commit specific offences are present in any society. The sources of motivation are diverse, and different etiological models or theories may appropriately be invoked to explain the motivation of different individuals or groups.
- Given the motivation of an individual to commit an offense, the actual commission of an offence is the end result of a multi-staged decision process which seeks out and

identifies, within the general environment, a target or victim positioned in time and space.

- The environment emits many signals, or cues, about its physical, spatial, cultural, legal, and psychological characteristics. These cues can vary from generalised to detailed.
- An individual who is motivated to commit a crime uses cues, either learned through experience or through social transmission, from the environment to locate and identify targets or victims.
- As experiential knowledge grows, an individual who is motivated to commit a crime learns which individual cues, cluster of cues, and sequences of cues are associated with appropriate victims or targets. These cues, cue clusters, and cue sequences can be considered a template which is used in victim or target selection. Potential victims or targets are compared to the template and are either rejected or accepted depending on the congruence. These processes may be consciously conducted, or may occur in an unconscious, cybernetic fashion so that the individual cannot articulate how they are done.
- Once the template is established, it becomes relatively fixed and influences future search behaviour, thereby becoming self-reinforcing.
- Because of the multiplicity of targets and victims, many potential crime selection templates could be constructed. But because the spatial and temporal distribution of offenders, targets, and victims is not regular, but clustered or patterned, and because human environmental perception has some universal properties, individual templates have similarities which can be identified.

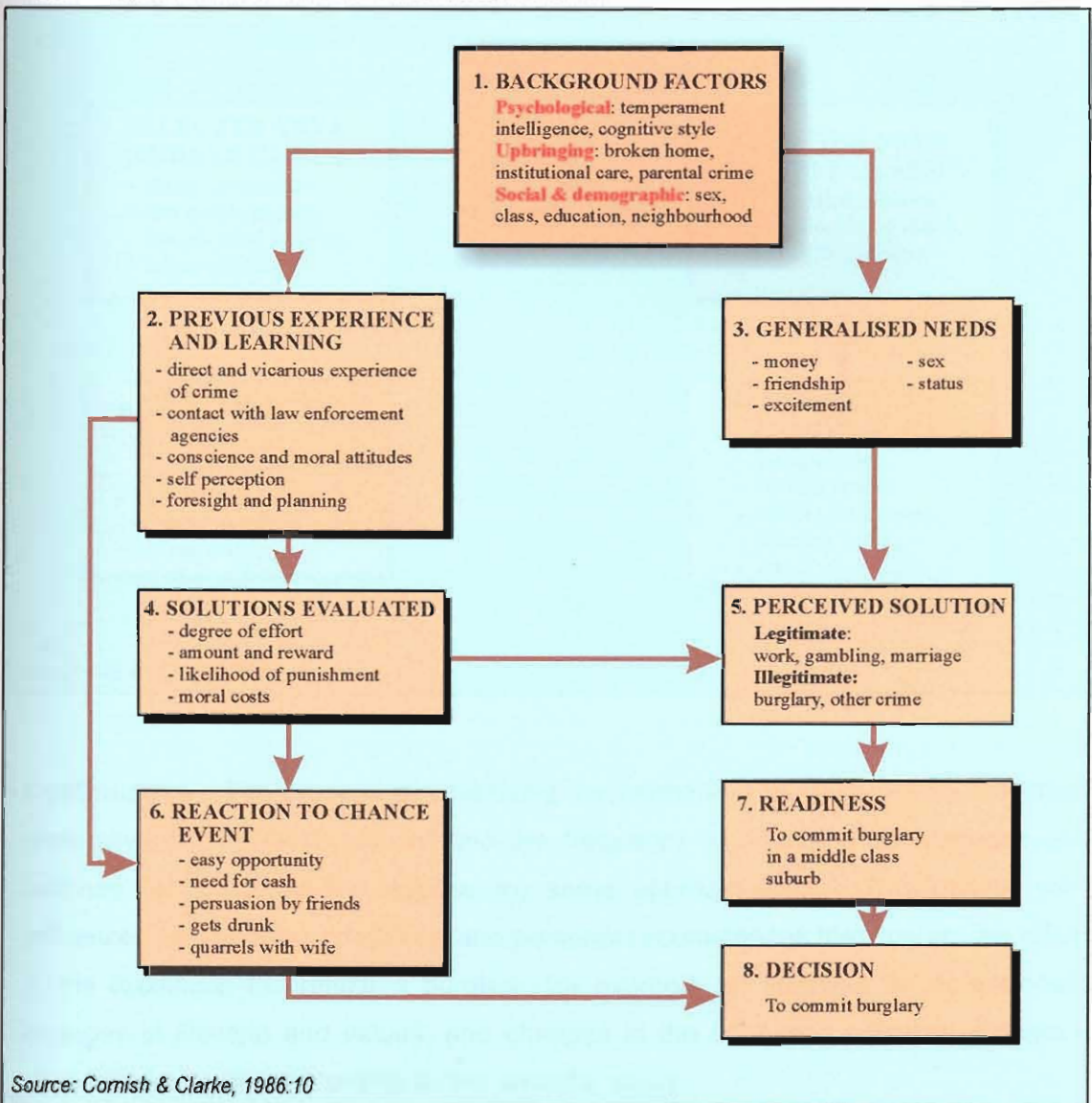
From these propositions it can be concluded that some individuals will have a disposition towards crime (for whatever reason) and will react in a rational way to environmental cues in their search and commission of a specific crime.

Cornish and Clarke (1986:9) made use of the concept 'rational choice theory' to describe and explain the processes involved in the commission of a specific crime. They distinguished between four different decision processes, namely: the offender's initial involvement in crime; the criminal event; the decision either to continue offending, or to desist. Subsequently the processes can be summarised as follows (Cornish & Clark, 1986:9-15):

- Initial involvement.** Cornish and Clarke (1986:10) were of the opinion that the burglar has to make two important decisions in this phase. The first is the individual's recognition of his 'readiness' to commit a burglary offence in order to satisfy certain needs for money, goods or excitement. In reaching this decision, the burglar will have evaluated other ways of satisfying his needs and the decision will naturally be influenced by previous learning experience - moral code, view of the kind of person he is, and the degree to which he can plan and exercise foresight. These variables are in turn related to various historical and contemporaneous background factors, such as psychological, familial and socio-demographic. The second decision, actually to commit a burglary, is precipitated by some chance event, such as an urgent need for cash or the burglar may perceive an easy opportunity for the offence during the course of his routine activities.

Figure 2.2 is a flow diagram that illustrates the decision-making processes during

FIGURE 2.2: INITIAL INVOLVEMENT MODEL

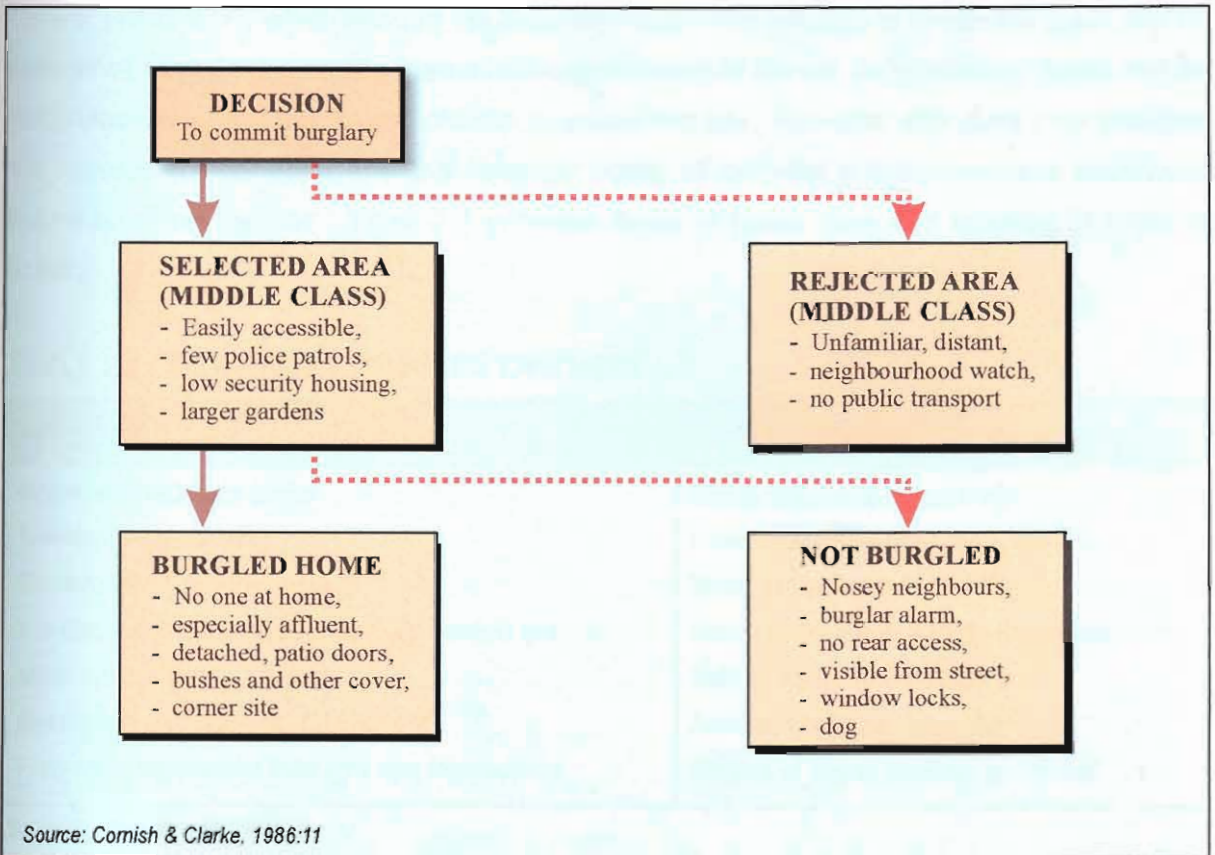


the initial stages of a burglary, using the example of residential burglary in a middle class suburb.

- The criminal event.** A further sequence of decision-making follows which leads the burglar to select a particular house, to make an estimate of the likely haul, to make a judgement about whether anyone is likely to be at home, and to assess how easy it would be to effect entry and exit without being seen by neighbours or passers-by.

The final decision to act is shown by the flow diagram (Fig. 2.3), taken from by Cornish and Clarke (1986:11) to illustrate the different decision options the burglar has to consider before the actual commissioning of a burglary.

FIGURE 2.3: EVENT MODEL



- Continuance.** The process of continuing involvement in burglary will be the result of generally positive reinforcement and the frequency of offending will increase until it reaches (or subsequently reduces to) some optimum level. This pattern will be influenced by changing conditions and personal circumstances that confirm the offender in his readiness to commit a burglary, for example an increase in professionalism; changes in lifestyle and values, and changes in the offender's network of peers and associates and his relationship to the 'straight' world.

- Desistance.** As a result of aversive experiences during the course of offending, such as being disturbed by a returning householder, being pursued by neighbours and changes in the burglar's personal circumstances (such as age, marital status, financial needs) and the neighbourhood and community context in which he operates (such as changes in policing; depletion of potential targets), the burglar may decide to abandon burglary in favour of some alternative solution, either legitimate or criminal.

According to Cornish and Clarke (1986:15) rational choice theory is capable of providing answers to many questions lying outside the scope of conventional criminology, concerning such matters as temporal and geographical patterns of crime, the isolated offending of otherwise law-abiding people, and changes of course in criminal careers.

Closely related to the rational choice perspective is the reward-risk perspective proposed by Conklin (1995:271), which favours the argument that if the rewards of crime are great and its risks small, and if the rewards from a non-criminal way of life are comparatively small and its risks relatively great, people will choose to violate the law. Potential offenders thus consider the rewards (or benefits) and the risks (or costs) of criminal and non-criminal behaviour before breaking the law. Table 2.1 provides some of these risks and rewards of criminal activity.

TABLE 2.1: REWARDS AND RISKS OF THEFT

REWARDS (OR BENEFITS)	RISKS (OR COSTS)
Money earned from crime	Being caught and punished
Freedom from taxation	Loss of benefits from legal work
Excitement of criminal activity	Time to learn criminal skills
Satisfaction in a crime successfully carried out	Costs of equipment to do the crime
Much leisure time	Risk of injury while stealing
Reputation as a successful criminal	Anxiety about punishment
Free room and board if caught and imprisoned	Stigma of being labelled a criminal

Source: Conklin, 1995:272

Repetitive property criminals (Conklin, 1995:275) report that they are motivated to steal by rewards in addition to money, but say that their desire for 'quick, easy money' is the primary reason why they commit crime. Rewards such as excitement, sense of accomplishment, peer respect, vengeance, and control over victims are usually latent by-products of their crimes rather than primary motivational factors. Continued criminal activity may make offenders more expert, thus minimising their chance of being arrested, but with continued success many offenders become overconfident and consequently most criminal careers will eventually be interrupted by arrest (Conklin, 1995:276).

The situational cues mentioned by offenders in a burglary study by Bennett and Wright (1984:153-154) indicated that targets could be grouped into three broad categories, namely: whether they could get away with it ("risk"), whether they could make profit out of it ("reward"), and whether they could do it ("ease"). Over 90 per cent of the statements listed for each offender related to one of these three categories (Bennett & Wright, 1984:62). The following situational cues were mentioned by the offenders:

- Risk factors - cover, presence or proximity of neighbours, occupancy, whether overlooked, passers-by, police patrols, burglar alarms, presence of dogs, distance from the road, escape-routes, and rear access.
- Reward factors - perceived affluence, condition of the property, and whether owned by the council or privately.
- Ease factors - locks, the size of the windows, and design of potential entry-points.

A study by Reppetto (1974:15), who interviewed 97 convicted burglars in the Boston area (USA), showed the following results on target selection:

- Single-family houses were selected most often by burglars over 25 years of age.
- The younger burglars, on the other hand, generally selected housing projects and multi-family homes, and indicated that their choices were dictated much more by the accessibility of the structure than by the probability of substantial gain.
- An overall assessment of the reasons cited by burglars for their selection of particular targets included (Reppetto, 1974):
 - ease of access (chosen by 44 per cent of all burglars),
 - the appearance of affluence (41 per cent),
 - the setting of the target as a guarantee of inconspicuousness (21 per cent),
 - the isolation of the neighbourhood (19 per cent),
 - the absence of police patrols (19 per cent), and
 - the lack of surveillance by other neighbours (12 per cent).

2.3.4 Territorial approach

The conceptual framework of Brown and Altman (1981) was constructed around the concept of territorial behaviour. Altman (Brown & Altman, 1981:58-59) provided a generic definition of territorial behaviour, and stated: "Territorial behaviour is a self boundary-regulation mechanism that involves personalisation of or marking of a place or object and

communication that it is 'owned' by a person or group. Personalisation and ownership are designed to regulate social interaction and to help satisfy various social and physical motives. Defence responses may sometimes occur when territorial boundaries are violated."

Territories are geographical areas that are often marked and personalised, and serve as boundaries that allow selective control over who may see, hear, or participate in an activity (Brown & Altman, 1981:58). Residents for example will try to prevent invaders from crossing territorial lines which they regard as private property. Brown and Altman (1981:59) continue to distinguish three types of territories, namely: primary, secondary and public territories. Primary territories are occupied for long periods and are central to the lives of their owners, for example their homes. Secondary territories are more accessible to a greater range of users, for example the members of a country club, and the limits of occupancy are not solely determined by the users, but by collective owners of secondary territories. Public territories are usually occupied for short times and are typically not very central to the lives of their occupants, for instance, seats on a bus, or tables in a restaurant.

Territories are often personalised, marked, or decorated for the purpose of self-expression. Signs, fences, locks on doors, and other manifest boundary markings are often used in primary territories, along with indicators of personal expressions (Brown & Altman, 1981:61). Usually there is a greater degree of control over accessibility to primary territories, and residents tend to expect respect for their markers, whether it represents actual or symbolic barriers. The owner is free to erect physical barriers, for example walls, or symbolic barriers such as signs, hedges and decorations of various kinds. The invasion or intrusion of territory, especially primary territory, can be regarded as a serious matter for economic, physical, as well as psychological reasons. Therefore, owners of primary territories may assume that any intrusion is more or less intentional, and it is quite legitimate to counter intrusion of primary territories by rather vigorous means, including physical retaliation (Brown & Altman, 1981:62-63).

The conceptual framework of Brown and Altman (1981), explaining the residential burglary process, is built around homes, sites, and blocks of residential communities in relation to the preceding characteristics of territories. Their basic thesis is that neighbourhoods, streets, sites, and houses may communicate different degrees of territoriality. The model emphasises the following elements (Brown & Altman, 1981:64-66):

- The process of residential burglary involves a series of sequential decision-making judgements by the burglar about the probable success he may encounter in crossing a series of boundaries surrounding any residence. At any point in the sequence, a

judgement of potential success will increase the probability of consummating the burglary, and a 'no success' judgement at any point increases the probability of aborting the burglary.

- The decision sequence involves successive judgements about a particular street, a particular house site or lot, or a residence itself. The model assumes, in the ideal case, that a potential intruder makes three decisions about the probable success of boundary crossings. First, the burglar makes a decision about successfully traversing the boundary represented by a street, then judges the likely success of traversing the boundary represented by a home site or lot, and finally determines the likelihood of successfully crossing the boundary of the home itself.
- The model does not necessarily assume that a burglar makes a judgement about the potential success of crossing boundaries one at a time. It is quite likely that assessing a house, involves simultaneous assessments about the neighbourhood, street and site. In addition, it is likely that the process of exiting from a house, across a site or lot, out of a block or neighbourhood is also included as part of the total process.
- The model also assumes that the judgement made by a potential burglar relates to the openness/closeness or degree of accessibility of the street, site, and home.

According to Vito and Holmes (1994:151) the permeability of a neighbourhood, referring to the number of access streets from main traffic arteries into a neighbourhood, will also have an influence on burglary rates. They argued that permeable neighbourhoods are more attractive to burglars, *inter alia* because they provide a better opportunity for escape.

Brown and Altman (1981:67-71) provided a classification of environmental cues (see Table 2.2) that are associated with different boundaries, and which are employed by potential burglars to assess the openness or accessibility of various boundaries before taking the decision to commit the offence.

Based on this taxonomy (Table 2.2), Brown and Altman (1981) provided the following explanations of the five clusters of environmental cues:

- **Actual barriers**, which include physical qualities that impede access to and exit from a site, for example locks, gates, fences, walls, electronic security and other environmental barriers designed to keep intruders physically out of an area.
- **Symbolic barriers**, which are physical variables that do not restrain access directly, but serve to communicate territoriality, ownership and occupancy, for example

decorative mailboxes or doors, which portray a specific character of design.

- Detectability**, deals with the degree to which residents of an area can detect or sense invaders and how well potential intruders can detect territorial users and related neighbours. These include *inter alia* physical design variables such as the positioning of house doors and windows relative to other houses and relative to the position of potential intruders of the street.

TABLE 2.2: ENVIRONMENTAL CUES ASSOCIATED WITH STREETS, SITES, AND HOUSES

	BOUNDARIES		
CLUSTERS	STREET	SITE	HOUSE
Actual barriers	Locked gates, fences, guards	Locked gates, fences, guards	Locks, gates Alarm system
Symbolic barriers	Welcome signs, Distinctive cultivation for streets	Distinctive personalising items in yard - signs Marking of entry-way from the public street - paths	Signs of neighbourhood watch Material of house
Detectability	Distance: street to house Window/door positions relative to street Lighting Weather	Shrubs, trees, walls, fences Blinds or curtains Squeaky gate, dogs barking	Window placement: - to see returning occupants - visibility by neighbours
Traces	Cars parked on street Mail/newspapers in box/on street	Lawn mower, rake, children's toys Working sprinklers Appropriateness of lighting Uncollected deliveries Ringing telephone	Hearing TVs, radios, voices, telephones Lights Cooking odours
Social climate	Reaction by people: staring, questioning, ignoring, looking	Reaction by people: staring, questioning, ignoring, looking	Reaction by people: staring, questioning, ignoring, looking

Source: Brown & Altman, 1981:69

- Traces**, refer to actual or implied presence of occupants, which is communicated by clues such as the presence of parked cars, mail that has not been pick up, or the accumulation of newspapers.

- **Social climate**, refers to the extent to which people exhibit shared concern for an area and what type of behaviour is permitted by strangers. A positive, shared social climate for example, includes visible interaction between residents, as well as active defence responses to strangers on the street or in the vicinity of a home.

Brown and Altman (1981:74) are of the opinion that their model would apply more accurately to experienced, professionally motivated burglars interested in profit rather than to a variety of secondary motives, such as a desire for excitement, peer group approval, or status needs. They argue that the higher the potential payoff value (the profit motive), the greater the likelihood that a burglar will proceed through the total decision-making sequence.

2.3.5 Residents' activities and lifestyles

The lifestyle approach and the routine activities approach were developed distinctly in the 1970s - the former by the criminologists Hindelang, Gottfredson and Garofalo, and the latter by Cohen and Felson (Sheley, 1995:176-177). Although these two approaches were developed separately, they are virtually the same, and have been merged in the work of most researchers and theorists. For both, the explanation for increased crime rates in the USA, since World War II, were to be found in the nature of everyday life and the changes that had occurred in the lifestyles of citizens. Both lifestyle and routine activity theories suggest that the occurrence of crime is a consequence of the fact that people, sometimes willingly and sometimes unwillingly and unknowingly, engage in risky behaviour that exposes them to the potential of being victimised.

The lifestyle theory postulates that certain lifestyles either require or tend to lead to increased movement of people and associated goods across time and space, thereby exposing individuals to more human contact in general and to more contact with potential offenders in particular. According to Sheley (1995:176), certain changes in the daily life and routine activities of people create favourable conditions for increased crime opportunity, for example:

- more couples work outside the home;
- more people are living by themselves in independent households;
- the proliferation of outside-the-home recreational activities; and
- the extension of shopping hours into the night.

A study conducted by Rengert and Wasilchik (1985:45) of burglars' activities in Philadelphia (USA) had found that burglars were most likely to be active when suburban homes were unoccupied. The burglars would watch their victims' movements to determine what periods

the homes were unoccupied.

According to the lifestyle and routine activities approaches, the likelihood of a crime occurring will depend on the interplay between the following three variables (Brown *et al.*, 1996:273):

- motivated offenders;
- suitable targets; and
- the absence of capable guardians.

The absence of one of these variables would reduce the probability of victimization. Guardianship refers to how well the potential target is protected, for example neighbours looking after the home when residents are not there, the use of locks and other security devices, or merely the presence of someone in the household. Another aspect of importance is proximity, implying the physical distance between areas where potential targets of crime reside and areas where relatively large populations of potential offenders are found (Sheley, 1995:196).

2.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME PREVENTION

The interest in environmental crime prevention in this section is primarily to identify the principles or premises on which these approaches are founded. The elements of importance can be best described by the definition of situational crime prevention, as being “the protection of the potential crime target, the reduction of vulnerability, the placing of obstacles in the path of potential offenders and the influencing of behaviour patterns so as to prevent the development of criminogenic situations” (Naudé, 1988:12). Consequently, special attention will be given to the three approaches known as, first, Defensible Space, second, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and third, Situational Crime Prevention.

2.4.1 Defensible space

Oscar Newman's (1973) theory of Defensible Space proposes four elements of physical design which act individually or in combination to contribute to the creation of secure environments, namely: territoriality, natural surveillance, image and milieu. The following comments clarify these terms:

- **Territoriality** refers to the tendency that people perceive certain areas as their own space, which can and should be defended. Proper design can establish real and

symbolic barriers and demarcation lines that foster this sense of territoriality (Murray, 1995:351).

- **Natural surveillance** implies the designing and the use of space to increase the probability that an offender will be seen, thereby aiding law enforcement and deterring criminals (Murray, 1995:351).
- **Image and milieu** refer to the use of building forms (architecture) and idioms to avoid the stigma of public housing associated with criminal elements, and the location of residential projects in areas of the city considered to be safe (Poyner, 1983:8).

2.4.2 Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

CPTED can be defined as the implementation of measures to reduce the causes of, and the opportunities for, criminal events, and to address the fear of crime through the application of sound design and management principles to built environments (Napier *et al.*, 1998:40). An important aspect of CPTED is that it addresses not only the opportunity for crime but also perceptions of fear on the part of those who may become victims of crime.

Newman's ideas had a significant influence on crime prevention programmes and research supported by the United States Government through the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice in the late 1970s (Poyner, 1983:10). The strategies and tactics that were used in these CPTED - projects can be summarised under the following headings (Poyner, 1983:10-11):

- **Surveillance.** Suggested tactics include improved lighting, the removal of blind spots in movement areas, the use of windows or electronic surveillance devices, locating vulnerable areas near busy places and introducing supervisory personnel, police or security guards or a blockwatch.
- **Movement control.** Specific tactics include reducing the number of entrances, allowing keyed access to zones within a building, street closure, controlled access to neighbourhoods, and management of facilities to reduce congestion.
- **Activity support.** Methods to increase human use of areas include creating activity areas, providing information kiosks, display areas, portable theatres for street activity, clustering commercial establishments with similar operating hours, and diversifying land use.
- **Motivational reinforcement.** This implies the desire of people to engage in crime prevention activity. The tactics suggested include the encouragement of personalised

environments, better maintained public areas, co-operation between businesses, community development programmes, improved police/community relations, and the involvement of citizens in setting police priorities.

In the South Africa context, the NCPS attached special significance to environmental design as an important pillar of crime prevention that should receive attention, although limited information was provided on what it actually entails. Despite the central position given to this concept in the NCPS, the debate around this phenomenon in South Africa has only started in recent years through joint research initiatives of the CSIR and the Institute for ISS (Napier *et al.*, 1998).

In a comparative study on the history of crime prevention through environmental design, Meyer and Qhobela (1998) provided a literature overview on the development of CPTED in various countries, for example, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Netherlands. In all of these countries CPTED is accepted as an inherent part of their crime prevention strategies. The Delft University of Technology (Netherlands) for example, in the early 90s compiled a checklist consisting of criteria (the 'Delft Checklist' - see Table 2.3) which could be applied in the development and assessment of designs in the Netherlands (Meyer & Qhobela, 1998:10).

2.4.3 Situational crime prevention

According to Bennett (1986:41) the situational approach is based on the following general key assumptions:

- Offenders freely and actively choose to commit crimes. The approach rejects the positivist view that offenders are in some way predisposed to commit crimes as a result of genetic, social or psychological factors operating in their past. Possible influence of a person's past history on the decision to offend, is not totally ruled out, but its causal significance is seen as conditional upon immediate situational variables and present life circumstances.
- The decision to offend is made in response to the immediate circumstances and the immediate situation in which an offence is contemplated.
- The motivation to offend is not constant nor beyond control. The motivation to offend is seen as dependent on the calculation of costs and rewards rather than the result of
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inheriting or acquiring a disposition to offend. If the motivation to offend was uncontrollable, then crimes prevented would merely be displaced.

TABLE 2.3: CRITERIA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF DESIGNS IN THE NETHERLANDS

CRITERIA	INDICATORS - Negative impact + Positive impact
Presence of potential offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentration of problem groups in vulnerable places - Presence of undesirable elements, such as drug addicts and vagrants - Concentration of households with youngsters up to 25 years
Presence of protective eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Actual presence of people, depending on the distance of houses and facilities, the degree of functional heterogeneity and the type of routes + Tangible presence of people, depending on the extent of visual contact between buildings and public space, as well as the vacancy rate + Formal supervision (police patrol) + Semi-formal supervision (supervisors, concierges)
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Sufficient lighting both in daytime and at night + Uninterrupted lines of sight from buildings to extensively used spaces, and vice versa
Involvement and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Acquaintance with fellow residents, depending on the scale of the buildings + Private area + Sense of belonging + Clarity on responsibilities + User participation in planning, design and management - High frequency of house removals
Attractiveness of environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Congruency between user preferences and characteristics of the built environment + Human scale + Lively atmosphere + Attractive colors and materials + Adequate lighting - Deterioration filthiness - Nuisance (smell, noise)
Accessibility and escape routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Clear distinction between public and private spaces + Closing-off of private and semi-public spaces such as entrance halls and walkways + Security devices such as quality locks or alarms + Escape routes for potential victims - Large number of easily accessible entrances - Escape routes for trespassers
Attractiveness of a potential target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of money and/or valuables in homes, shops, offices - Concentration of targets
Physical vulnerability of a potential target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Awareness/defensive attitude of a potential target (target hardening) + Physical protection of a target against theft/burglary by means of a safe-deposit (money), solid locks, or warning devices - Places frequented by women or elderly people passing alone

Source: cited in Meyer & Qhobela, 1998:11

These assumptions show that the situational approach is interwoven with perspectives of theories relating to rational choice, routine activities and lifestyle.

According to Lab (1997:153) situational crime prevention can be characterised as comprising measures directed at highly specific forms of crime. The management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment, is set to reduce the opportunities for crime and increase the risks as perceived by a wide range of offenders. These solutions may involve physical design changes, altering social behaviours, improving surveillance, and many other measures that can be applied to protect a potential target (Lab, 1997:22).

Another description of situational crime prevention is provided by Bennett and Wright (1984:19), referring to “any environmental, community or individual based method which aims to increase the risk, decrease the reward or increase the difficulty of committing crime.” This definition emphasises the importance of both physical and social changes or measures to reduce crime. Bennett and Wright (1984:21-29) draw a distinction between three levels of situational measures, namely:

- **Individual-based initiatives.** Measures that individual households can take to make their homes more secure include for example property-marking, fitting locks, fitting burglar alarms, strengthening doors, installing cameras and even employing armed guards to patrol the property.
- **Community-based initiatives.** Initiatives like ‘neighbourhood watch’ and ‘citizen patrol’ aim to increase citizens’ awareness of crime and to encourage surveillance and reporting of suspicious incidents and people to the police.
- **Environmental design.** Initiatives in this category aim to prevent crime by altering the physical environment in which it occurs, for example improving street lighting, controlling access to buildings, restricting pedestrian and traffic flow and dividing open spaces into identifiable areas.

In one of the earliest presentations on situational prevention, Clarke (1983), provided his initial typology on situational techniques, based on the principles of surveillance, target hardening and environmental management. This classification of situational techniques was expanded in 1992, which offered three very general orientations to prevention approaches associated with “increasing the effort”, “increasing the risk” and “reducing the rewards”. This typology was again expanded in 1997 by Clarke and Homel (cited in Lab, 1997:158) to include a fourth dimension of “guilt, shame and embarrassment”, which may arise as a result of participating in deviant activity (see Table 2.4). Table 2.4 provides the expanded list of 16

situational prevention techniques, ranging from target hardening to facilitating compliance. This expanded typology shifts situational prevention away from the original emphasis on physical changes towards a greater reliance on psychological and social factors (Lab, 1997:158). It also makes provision for both actual changes in the four dimensions or altering perceptions on the offender's side. It is possible, therefore, that a situational technique has little physical impact, but a major psychological impact, on the offender (Lab, 1997:160). Fences, for example, are a common form of potential access control, although most fences have little impact on the physical effort to commit an offence.

TABLE 2.4: TECHNIQUES OF SITUATIONAL PREVENTION

INCREASING PER-CEIVED EFFORT	INCREASING PER-CEIVED RISKS	REDUCING ANTI-CIPATED REWARDS	INDUCING GUILT OR SHAME
Target hardening: - Slug rejector device - Steering locks - Bandit screens	Entry/exit screening: - Automatic ticket gates - Baggage screening - Merchandise tags	Target removal: - Removable car radio - Women's refuges - Phone card	Rule setting: - Harassment codes - Customs declaration - Hotel registrations
Access control: - Parking lot barriers - Fenced yards - Entry phones	Formal surveillance: - Burglar alarms - Speed cameras - Security guards	Identifying property: - Property marking - Vehicle licensing - Cattle branding	Strengthening moral condemnation: - "Shoplifting is stealing" - Roadside speedometers - "Idiots drink and drive"
Deflecting offenders: - Bus stop placement - Tavern location - Street closures	Surveillance by employees: - Pay phone location - Parking attendants - CCTV systems	Reducing temptation: - Gender-neutral phone lists - Off-street parking	Controlling disinhibitors: - Drinking age laws - Ignition interlock - Server intervention
Controlling facilitators: - Credit card photo - Caller ID - Gun controls	Natural surveillance: - Defensible space - Street lighting - Cab driver ID	Denying benefits: - Ink merchandise tags - PIN for car radios - Graffiti cleaning	Facilitating compliance: - Improved library checkout - Public lavatories - Trash bins

Source: Clarke and Homel, cited in Lab, 1997:159

According to Lab (1997:160) one of the most beneficial aspects of Clarke and Homel's classification is that it places the great array of situational crime prevention activities, and programmes that have been, and are still being used, in a theoretical framework. Lab (1997:160) continues to reason that many specific interventions, such as the installation of

locks and lights, take place with little understanding of the underlying rationale for why they should work. While there are implicit theoretical arguments in many of the programmes, understanding why a programme does or does not work requires more explicit recognition of the mechanisms at work.

2.4.4 Research findings with regard to environmental crime prevention

On the question what would prevent them from burglarising a particular residence, the offenders in the Reppetto-study (1974) mentioned the following:

- full-time occupancy of residence (67 per cent),
- evidence of alarms (36 per cent),
- surveillance by neighbours (23 per cent),
- the presence of a dog (22 per cent),
- police and security patrols (14 per cent),
- good lighting in the area (9 per cent),
- steel doors and frames (5 per cent), and
- strong locks (5 per cent).

Reppetto (1974:49) mentioned that the effectiveness of lighting and police patrols on residential burglaries seemed doubtful from the fact that residential burglaries are, by definition, low-visibility crimes; they take place off the street and generally out of view of police or passers-by, and most often they occur in daytime, which renders the lighting issue irrelevant.

In the Bennett and Wright-study (1984:87), the offenders' reasons for refraining from offending were in most cases vague and in general terms, such as "the feeling was not right", rather than to mention specific cues. However, the following adverse situational factors were described by offenders as reasons for refraining from at least one offence during their last period of offending:

- signs of occupancy,
- presence of neighbours,
- people passing or watching,
- police presence and security guards,
- alarms, and
- dogs.

Vito and Holmes (1994:151) are also of the opinion that burglars will most likely be active

when suburban homes are unoccupied. They argue that offenders' choice of targets is guided by observations of their victims' movements to and from work and play.

According to Bennett (1986:52) a great deal of the accumulated research evidence supports the conclusion that the key situational cues used by burglars relate to surveillability and signs of occupancy. Bennett (1986:52) concluded that burglars rarely mentioned social cohesion, police response times, area access, citizen or police patrols, pedestrian movements or traffic flow as important factors in their decision-making. With regard to the differential distribution of residential burglary rates among residential areas, Reppetto (1974:52) considered the most critical factors as: "the location of the neighbourhood; the affluence of the residents, and the vulnerability of the dwelling (measured by its physical accessibility and protection, occupancy, visibility, and the social cohesion of the neighbourhood)." The proximity of a neighbourhood to a large low-income youth population area may also account for higher crime rates in that specific neighbourhood (Reppetto, 1974:53).

2.5 CRITICAL REVIEW ON ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH

Notwithstanding the merits of the environmental and situational approaches in reducing crime, a number of concerns with regard to these approaches could be found in the literature:

- The environmental approach provides no or little insight in the "root causes" of crime, such as poor education, unemployment, and discrimination (Lab, 1997:162). It therefore fails to explain the causation factors leading to criminality.
- Heal (1992:260) noted that environmental determinism (that is the influence of environmental opportunities on crime) may be a necessary condition for crime to occur but is not of itself a sufficient condition. He stated for example, the difference between those who see an open window as a passport to crime, and those who view the same window as an aid to ventilation.
- The focus on situational prevention also fails to explicitly address the issue of fear of crime, mainly focussing on the perceptions of potential offenders (Lab, 1997: 162).
- For some of the assumptions made in environmental criminology there is little or no research evidence to verify it. An example is Newman's assumption that physical design will engender a sense of community, social support and territoriality. This orientation towards physical design elements may isolate residents into individual

fortresses, causing increasing crime levels. Lab (1997:44) argues: "As the individual withdraws from the rest of the neighbourhood in an attempt to protect himself, the community enters an upward spiral of increased crime, fear, and loss of community."

- With regard to rational choice theory, Wright and Decker (1994) argue that burglars are not totally rational, they rather respond to various factors with little thought, and are faced with limited choices. According to Bohman (1992:225), rational choice theory remains an incomplete theory of social action and that it can remain vital only by incorporating other theories at different levels of explanation.
- According to Wright and Decker (1994) rational choice theory provides too little explanation to the subjective influences of emotions such as anger, desperation, or defiance, as contrasted to logical thinking on the offender's decision-making process. The moods experienced by criminals can also distort the criminal's thinking and make them unconcerned about risks (Brown *et al.*, 1996:444).
- Bennett and Wright (1984:17) are of the opinion that, despite the interest in the situational perspective during the 1980s, it remained largely undeveloped. Since then little additional understanding was added to the already existing literature on situational crime prevention. There is, for example, still ambiguity around the factors operating in the immediate situation that will influence the decision to offend. Trasler (1986:22) argues that a large proportion of crimes such as burglary and robbery are committed by a comparatively small group of persistent offenders who typically show a high rate of offending, a low risk of apprehension, and relatively little specialisation. He considers it a mistake to view situational crime prevention schemes as alternatives to dispositional, incapacitative methods (Trasler, 1986:23).
- Bennett (1986:48) makes a distinction between the initial decision and the final decision to offend. In the case of the initial decision, the motivation to offend, is seldom influenced by physical situational factors, although it is frequently influenced by social, cultural and economic factors. The final decision to commit an offence against a particular target, however, is likely to be influenced by physical situational factors. According to Bennett (1986:51) a major disadvantage of aiming to prevent crimes after the offender has decided to commit an offence is that the motivation might not be controlled and offences prevented might be displaced. Research done by Bennett (1986:49) indicates that about 40 per cent of the sample said that if they were put-off an offence, they would usually commit another offence during the same day and about another 40 per cent said that they would not attempt another offence that day. Possible crime displacement, instead of crime prevention, is a general critique against the

implementation of situational prevention initiatives. Crime displacement can take different forms as described by Lab (1997:75) in Table 2.5.

Most of the abovementioned criticism is aimed at environmental and situational crime prevention projects seen in isolation from other crime prevention strategies. Situational crime prevention is no longer regarded as the only way to address crime at the neighbourhood level, rather it constitutes an important part of an integrated approach which focuses on both the physical and the social environments (Meyer & Qhobela, 1998:20).

TABLE 2.5: FORMS OF CRIME DISPLACEMENT

DISPLACEMENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Territorial -	Movement of crime from one area to another.	A neighbourhood watch program is started and the burglars move to another neighbourhood.
Temporal -	A shift in offending from one time to a different time.	A citizen patrol is instituted at night, prompting burglars to work during the morning hours.
Tactical -	Changing the methods used in the commission of a crime.	The installation of deadbolt locks on doors result in burglars forcing open windows to gain entry.
Target -	Choosing a different victim within the same area.	A neighbourhood watch program is started but only one-half of the homes participate, thereby leading offenders to target non-participating homes.
Functional -	The offender stops committing one offence and shifts to another.	When burglary becomes more difficult due to target hardening devices, the offender decides to commit robbery instead.
Perpetrator -	One offender ceases activity only to be replaced by another offender.	While crime prevention actions cause an individual to desist from further offending, another individual sees opportunities and begins offending.

Source: Lab, 1997:75

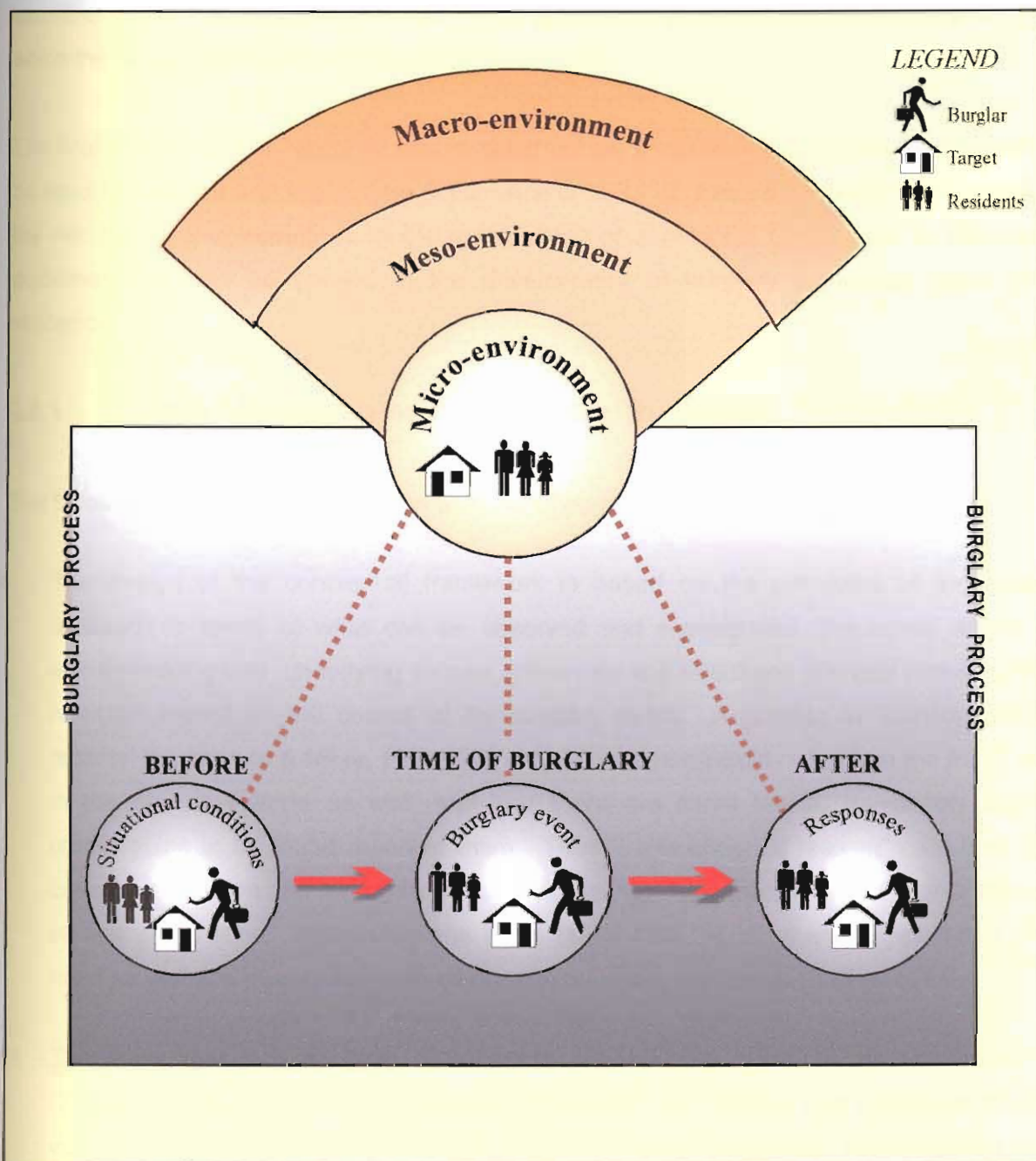
2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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 Fig. 2.4), was developed in accordance to the

research questions and objectives of this study (see par. 1.4 and 1.6). It provides an integrated understanding of the theoretical perspectives, as well as insights of the researcher, gained through personal experiences, observations, and interaction with victims of burglary.

FIGURE 2.4: ILLUSTRATION OF THE BURGLARY PROCESS



A distinction should be made between the conceptual framework and the objective to develop a more comprehensive and integrated burglary model through the course of the research process. The primary aim of the conceptual framework was thus: to provide a structured and systematic description of the components and elements involved in the

burglary process, and to formulate research expectations that could guide and direct the research process.

The conceptual framework in itself does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the variables involved in the burglary process, this value-adding process would follow on the field research and analysis of search data. For this reason, the factors and variables identified in the conceptual framework, were postulated as research expectations around which the research and fieldwork could be undertaken.

The final product of this research was to construct an integrated burglary model that could be used to describe and explain the occurrence of a burglary event, to identify and analyse the risk factors that contribute to the vulnerability of a potential target, and to formulate guidelines that can be applied in the development of burglary prevention plans and strategies.

2.6.1 Terms of reference of the conceptual framework

The following principles were adhered to in the designing of the conceptual framework:

- The design of the conceptual framework is based on the principles of the realist approach in terms of what can be observed and experienced (the actual domain), acknowledging that underlying causes, influences and structures (the real domain) may have an impact on the course of the burglary event. According to “transcendental realists” (Huberman & Miles, 1994:429) social phenomena exist not only in the mind, but in the objective world as well, and that there are some lawful, reasonably stable relationships to be found amongst them. Thus “transcendental realism” calls both for causal explanation and for the evidence to show that each entity or event is an instance of that explanation. Huberman and Miles (1994:429) therefore also emphasised the need for giving a descriptive account of each particular configuration of an event.

The researcher took as point of departure the research questions as formulated in Chapter 1 (par. 1.4), namely: What key elements and factors can contribute to the vulnerability of a particular residence? What factors can play a role in determining the extent of financial loss that can be experienced during a particular burglary? What type of responses can be expected of the residents, as well as the offenders, in reaction to the burglary?

The burglary event should be understood and explained in its spatial context. The event is a culmination in time and space of the interaction between the burglar, the victim

(resident), and a suitable target (residence). The primary focus in the conceptual framework is to explain residential burglary in the micro-environment, with reference to the meso- and macro-environments.

- In the conceptual framework the burglary event is described and explained as a process. The actual commission of a burglary is only a short period in the burglary process which consists of a sequence of decisions and actions before, during and after the occurrence of the burglary event. A distinction is made between three time sequences, namely the situational conditions that persisted prior to the burglary event, the burglary event itself, and what responses resulted from the burglary event. The central focus is primarily on the residence, as potential target, with secondary emphasis on the roles of the burglar and the residents (the burglary victims).
- The principles of 'systems thinking' are applied to integrate the different components and interrelated factors into a unified, systematic and meaningful whole, in order to seek an optimal explanation of the burglary process. The burglary process as presented in the flow diagram (see Fig. 2.4), should be seen as an abstraction and limited version of reality, rather than reality itself. The intention was not to make a contribution towards the development of 'systems theory', but rather to use systems thinking terminology in the conceptualisation of an appropriate framework to describe and explain the burglary process.
- The conceptual framework is built on three forms of explanation, namely: causal, structural and interpretive explanation. According to Neuman (1997:49-55), causal explanation implies that there is a cause-effect relationship between factors, which occur in a patterned way or appear to act together. The relationships between the factors or variables and the outcome of the event can be positive or negative. In structural explanation the burglary event can be regarded as only a part or a link in a much larger pattern or system. The argument is that a behaviour will occur when certain patterns or interactions take place, when aspects of social relations overlap in time and space, or when relationships follow a developmental sequence. With interpretive explanation on the other hand, the purpose is to foster understanding, that is, to place an event in a specific social context.

The conceptual framework should serve as a broad theoretical framework against which specific research expectations could be formulated. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1981:40) the conceptual framework can be regarded as too imprecise to permit the systematic derivation of propositions, but deductions are possible. They argue that the conceptual framework stands above taxonomy because its 'propositions'

summarise and provide explanations and predictions for vast amounts of empirical observations. The assumptions that were made in terms of the conceptual framework, were based on theoretical perspectives, obtained through the literature study and research findings that originated from other studies.

2.6.2 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 take place. Figure 2.4 provides an illustration of the functioning of the burglary process and how the different components, elements and factors are interrelated.

Taking into account the preceding theoretical perspectives on the burglary process, the researcher is of the opinion that four components can be identified in the burglary process, namely: the **environment** (with reference to the macro-, meso-, and micro-environment) in which the burglary takes place, the **situational conditions** that exist prior the commission of the burglary, the **burglary event**, and the **responses** of the residents, as well as the burglars in reaction to the burglary event. Within the context of the components, three main elements are involved in the burglary process, namely: the **burglar(s)** with the intention 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 integrated conceptual framework can be explained under the following headings: environmental setting and location of potential target/residence, motivated burglars, the residents, situational conditions, burglary event and responses.

2.6.2.1 Environmental setting and location of potential target/residence

To understand the role of location in defining the vulnerability of a particular residence, it is necessary to distinguish between the different levels of environment and how the burglar may act according to his perceived environment. Any potential target can be described in terms of its specific location in the micro-environment (its address), within the broader meso- (neighbourhood or suburb) and macro-environment (the metropolis and beyond).

The macro-environment provides numerous opportunities for residential burglaries daily (as

confirmed by the crime statistics - see Table 1.1), given the large number of potential targets, and the presence of motivated burglars (although their numbers are unknown) searching for the right target. The knowledge that the burglar has of the environment is mediated by experience, beliefs, values, attitudes and personality, while interacting with the environment. The end product of his perception and cognition of the environment can be described as his mental map, environmental image, cognitive representation, or schemata of the environment (Walmsley & Lewis, 1993:96). These macro-scale schemata is used by the burglar to select a specific area within the city to search for a suitable target. Through such information the burglar becomes aware of differential environmental opportunities (Carter & Hill, 1980:194).

A study on environmental images by Lynch (1960, cited in Walmsley & Lewis, 1993:97) concluded that the images respondents have of the cities of Boston, Jersey City and Los Angeles (USA) were, to a great extent, organised in terms of the following elements: paths (for example roads), edges (for example rivers), districts (for example neighbourhoods), nodes (strategic points in a city), and landmarks (for example buildings or mountains). The image of a city based on these elements serves as a basis through which the parts of a city can be recognised and interpreted by an individual as belonging to a coherent pattern (Walmsley & Lewis, 1993:98).

According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1984:363) a burglar will pick a target in and around his or her awareness space, depending on whether the target is regarded as a "good" or a "bad" target. These authors argue that the attractiveness of a potential target will thus depend on the environmental cues and the immediate characteristics of the target as perceived by the burglar.

The vulnerability of a particular residence in terms of its location and the probability that a burglar will target that specific neighbourhood can be described by the following factors: affluence of neighbourhood, accessibility of neighbourhood, free movement of people and vehicles, and diversity of enterprises or activities in the neighbourhood.

■ ***Affluence of neighbourhood***

Residential burglary is a property crime and it can therefore be expected that residences in more affluent neighbourhoods will be more vulnerable to residential burglary than residences in less-affluent neighbourhoods. There is a high probability that the goods burglars are searching for could be found in affluent neighbourhoods.

Research evidence (Walmsley & Lewis, 1993:54) indicates a distinct association between low- income neighbourhoods and crimes of violence, whereas middle to upper-income

suburban neighbourhoods were associated with property crimes such as burglary, larceny and car theft. The higher frequency of burglary in one area as opposed to another may therefore be a reflection of greater opportunities, more reward and relative availability of targets.

■ **Accessibility of neighbourhood**

A residence in a neighbourhood that has good access roads and is situated near main roads and/or freeways 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 also be more vulnerable than residences surrounded by other buildings, because burglars can move more freely and unnoticed in these areas that provide them with shelter. It can also serve as a place to hide the stolen goods. Costanzo *et al.* (1986:77) are of the opinion that the wealthier, easily accessible areas adjacent to the central city are more vulnerable to property crimes than the central city itself.

■ **Free movement of people and vehicles**

Residential areas that allow for free movement of people and vehicles on account of the right all people have to public space and roads, may be more vulnerable than “private” residential areas, 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 are deterred from entering a controlled residential area.

■ **Presence of strangers**

Residential areas characterised by a diversity of enterprises or activities, for example, nearby public places, shopping centres, small businesses and new building projects, may be more exposed to the movement or gathering of relatively high volumes of strangers (non-resident in 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.

2.6.2.2 **Motivated burglar(s)**

Burglars are usually motivated by the need for money, more than anything else, whether the need is real or perceived, or out of greed (Reppetto, 1974:21; Bennett & Wright, 1984:31; Wright & Decker, 1994:25). Burglars are often involved in alcohol abuse and/or the use of drugs, which often increases the need for money. Burglars will often make use of fences (persons who trade in stolen goods) to dispose of their stolen goods in exchange for money

(Barkan, 1997:324-325).

According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1984:147) it is evident that motivated burglars will be found in societies characterised by, *inter alia*, unemployment and inadequate income on the one hand, and an abundance of goods and wealth on the other hand, together with social factors often associated with crime such as poor family structures and relations, peer-group relations, and poor education. In South African society where these circumstances are prevalent, it can be expected that a great number of motivated burglars will be present in the society.

A motivated burglar will tend to search for a suitable target in those neighbourhoods he knows best and if he has specific knowledge of a particular target and its occupants, or has inside information through a tipster, that target will be more vulnerable than other potential targets of whom he has no knowledge.

A distinction can also be made between burglars who operate as amateurs and those who operate as professionals. According to Beirne and Messerschmidt (1995:153) these two categories of burglars differ in important ways, summarised as follows:

- **Amateur burglars** are more interested in volume than in quality; their style of intrusion is unsophisticated, with little planning involved; they rarely specialise in theft of specific items, but rather steal a variety of merchandise as opportunities arise. Amateurs are part-time burglars who engage in burglary as only a small, episodic part of a life of crime in general. They tend to commit opportunistic burglaries when a suitable target arises, while involved in other routine activities (lawful or unlawful).
- **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). They usually learn their trade from other professional thieves and keep themselves informed on the latest "burglary tools", such as drills and saws. Professional burglars often make use of tipsters in the identification of possible burglary targets.

In the South African context, it can be assumed that professional burglars will have a more extended cognition of differential environmental opportunities than the amateur burglars, and be more able and willing to travel longer distances in the search of suitable targets. According to Costanzo *et al.* (1986:79) criminals are generally more prepared to travel further for property crimes than for crimes against persons.

2.6.2.3 The residents

Residents, through their daily routines and lifestyles, may engage in risky behaviour that exposes them to the potential of being burgled. Residents that are away from home for regular intervals, either for work, recreational or other purposes increase the risk of being burgled during their absence. A wealthy lifestyle is also associated with valuable goods and articles in the residence that may attract potential burglars who are on the lookout for suitable targets.

It is expected that wealthier residents will be in a better financial position to protect their residences through high security measures, such as alarm systems, security lights, surveillance cameras and armed response units. However, 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 victimised before.

Certain categories of residents may also pose a greater risk of being victimised, because they constitute easier targets, for example, elderly people and single households.

2.6.2.4 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 prevalent in the micro-environment prior to the commission of the burglary that may have an influence on the course of the event. The more favourable the burglar perceives the conditions, the greater the chance that he will proceed with the burglary. According to 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.

The situational conditions which presumably have a significant effect on the vulnerability of a residence, at a specific point in time, are *inter alia* the time of day, the physical design, the absence of guardians and surveillance and the lack of security.

■ **Appropriate time**

The traditional viewpoint of burglars is that they prefer not to make physical contact with the residents or to be seen by anyone during a burglary. The crime is not directed at the

residents, but rather the goods which are seen as a source of income. If contact is made, it will rather be accidental than planned. For this reason most burglars will prefer to commence a burglary at a time they believe the chances would be less to be seen or to make contact with the residents or other guardians. A potential target will thus be most vulnerable at times when the burglar can operate unnoticed.

■ **Physical design**

The attractiveness of a potential target will 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. For the burglar, an attractive target will be one where the perceived rewards outweigh the risks of being caught. The vulnerability of a residence in terms of its physical design will thus depend on features such as:

- The degree to which the building, garden, and vehicles project an image of wealth.
- The degree to which the design features of the building will allow easy access to and from the building, for example, concealed entrances, and easy removable windows.
- The degree to which the surroundings provide easy shelter to hide, for example, high walls, big trees and shrubs, as well as the absence of effective lighting.

■ **Absence of guardians and surveillance**

Guardians refer to the presence of residents and neighbours who through formal and informal (natural) surveillance contribute to the safety and security of a particular residential area. Formal surveillance is a purposeful activity in the neighbourhood, for example, 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 in the area.

The lifestyle and routine activities of the residents and their neighbours will determine the level and pattern of surveillance a particular residence enjoys, and what periods the residence will be unoccupied. A lifestyle as well as routine activities that often leave the residence unoccupied, together with low levels of surveillance, could probably increase the vulnerability of the residence.

■ **Lack of security**

Security measures include all the measures aimed at protecting 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 responses, security lights and dogs.

In the absence of visible security measures a residence could be more vulnerable than in those instances where a residence is protected by a number of measures which are openly observable.

2.6.2.5 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. How the burglary will progress and the extent of damage or financial loss experienced during the burglary can mainly depend on the following factors:

- The number of burglars involved in the burglary event.
- The ease of gaining entry and exit.
- Whether the burglary was opportunistic or well planned.
- The level of competence of the burglars. Were they making use of sophisticated tools, a vehicle, and a cellular phone?
- The period burglars are allowed to operate without any interference or hindrance from the residents, the neighbours, or an armed response unit.

2.6.2.6 Responses

■ *Impact of burglary*

The degree to which the residents may consider the burglary as serious, depend on:

- the extent of financial loss experienced as a result of the burglary, and
- the degree of trauma experienced by residents and to what extent their fear of crime and
- their feeling of safety would have changed.

In cases where residents did not have household insurance, or whose lost goods were irreplaceable or of high sentimental value, the impact of the burglary will even be intensified.

■ *Residents' responses*

Whether residents will respond and in what manner, will depend on how seriously they were affected by the burglary, the prerequisites imposed by the insurance company, and whether they are in a position, for example financially, to react in an appropriate way. Responses that can possibly be expected, include:

- a change in lifestyle and routine activities to make the absence of guardians less obvious, and

- to improve the security measures.

Whether individuals become involved in crime prevention activities will depend on the following factors (Naudé, 1988: 23):

- Fear of crime.
- Crime risk of area (is it a high- or low-crime area?).
- Cost-effectiveness of security measures.
- Life style and aesthetics - security measures must fit in with the life style and activities of those involved.

According to Taylor *et al.* (1986:176), the fear of crime primarily results from the perception that there are not enough neighbourhood resources available to fight the crime problem and the belief that it is not possible to do something about the crime levels in the community. These perceptions can have a greater impact on the levels of fear than the prevailing rate of victimisation.

■ **Burglars' responses**

The burglar's mental image of the environment and the target will be affected by the actual commission of a burglary, because the outcome is either as expected, which confirms his feelings and adds to his learning, or the outcome was unexpected, which also contributes 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 for the burglars not to return to the same residence.

Given that learning is a multistage process, Carter and Hill (1980:197) suggest that burglars will continually improve their knowledge in the selection of suitable targets. According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1981:29), the template, once it has been established, becomes relatively fixed and influences future search behaviour, thereby becoming self-reinforcing.

If caught in the act of burglary, successfully prosecuted and imprisoned, the burglar may either, decide to persist in being a burglar or to abandon burglary in favour of becoming a law-abiding citizen.

2.7 RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

As a result of the qualitative nature of the study and the research philosophy adopted, it was

decided not to formulate hypotheses, but to formulate research expectations that would guide the research process. Emanating from the explanations in the conceptual framework and the burglary process as illustrated in Figure 2.4, the following research expectations relating to the meso-environment, the burglar, the situational conditions, the burglary event, the residents' responses and the burglars' responses, were postulated:

2.7.1 Research expectations relating to risk factors in the **meso-environment** (the police station area):

- It is expected that the following factors in the meso-environment could increase the risk for burglary:
 - Neighbourhoods perceived as more affluent.
 - Neighbourhoods that have good escape routes.
 - Neighbourhoods where free (unrestricted) movement of people occurs.
 - Neighbourhoods that attract strangers, non-resident in the area.

2.7.2 Research expectations relating to the **burglar**:

- Burglars are primarily motivated by the need for money.
- Burglars will tend to follow a patterned routine in the selection of suitable targets.
- Subsequently professional burglars will operate in a well-planned manner.
- Amateur burglars to the contrary will operate in an opportunistic manner.

2.7.3 Research expectations relating to the **situational conditions** prior to the burglary:

- It is expected that the following situational conditions (factors) may increase the risk of being burgled:
 - When the residents are away from home.
 - When the residents are at home but asleep.
 - When the residents are single.
 - When the residents are elderly.
 - When the residents act carelessly.
 - During periods when the residence is vulnerable due to poor surveillance.
 - When there is poor visibility around the residence.
 - When there are visible signs of wealth.
 - When design features indicate easy entry to the building.
 - When the residence is poorly protected due to an absence of security measures.

2.7.4 Research expectations related to the **burglary event**:

- The extent of financial loss experienced during a burglary event may proportionately relate to:
 - whether the burglary was professionally executed,
 - the number of burglars involved,
 - the time burglars spend inside the residence, and
 - the level of competency of the burglars.
- It is expected that the financial loss as a result of residential burglary will on average be higher in the more affluent areas than in the less affluent areas.
- Burglars will tend to select those items that they know are marketable.

2.7.5 Research expectations related to **residents' responses**:

- Residents will feel less safe in their immediate environment as a result of the burglary.
- Residents will implement additional security measures after the occurrence of a burglary.

2.7.6 Research expectations related to the **burglars' responses**:

- Burglars will tend to rationalise not to feel guilty about their criminal behaviour.
- Burglars will adapt to changing circumstances that may arise from improved security initiatives to be able to continue their criminal activities.

2.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a variety of theoretical perspectives were presented under the central theme of environmental criminology, in order to describe and explain the occurrence of residential burglary. Despite its shortcomings, environmental criminology still provides an appropriate theoretical basis for the study of residential burglary and to conceptualise the burglary process. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the methodology that was used in applying the conceptual framework to the Greater Pretoria metropolitan area.