CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Geographers are presented with many opportunities in the study of crime, both in its own right and as a facet of the more general social geography of the city. There is scope to develop the methodology of human geography, to illuminate spatial qualities, and to forge links with criminological theory and ongoing research in other disciplines.

- Herbert (1982:112)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this study (see par. 1.6) centred primarily around the construction of a conceptual framework (see par. 2.6), based on a theoretical explanation (see par. 2.3) of residential burglary, and to apply the conceptual framework in two case study areas in the Greater Pretoria metropolitan area to determine its usefulness as a research model and to formulate principles or guidelines for burglary prevention. The research design and methodology was based on qualitative research techniques and the case-study approach.

The aim of Chapter 7 is to evaluate the research process and, based on the findings of this study, to present the conceptual framework as an integrated burglary model that can be applied in future studies to investigate residential burglary. Attention will also be given to the contribution of the study to the subject field of geography, the limitations of this study, and to conclude with a synthesis on the value of qualitative research in the search for solutions to the crime problem in South Africa.

7.2 INTEGRATED BURGLARY MODEL

The conceptual framework (see par. 2.6) was developed to provide a theoretical and integrated understanding of the burglary process and to guide the research process. For this reason, the factors and variables, as identified in the conceptual framework, were postulated as research expectations around which the research and fieldwork could be undertaken. The integrated burglary model can be regarded as an extension of the conceptual framework, based on the same theoretical premises, and strengthened through

the incorporation of the research findings of this study. In this section the primary focus was on the validation of the conceptual framework through the inclusion of the research findings and to present it as an integrated model to describe residential burglary.

In the explanation of the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2), mention was made of four components of the burglary process, namely: the environment (with reference to the macro-, meso- and micro-environment) in which the burglary took place, the situational conditions that existed prior to the commission of the burglary, the burglary event itself, and the responses of the burglary victims, as well as the burglars to the burglary event. Within the context of these components, it was argued that the following elements would always be present in the burglary process, namely: the burglar(s) with the motivation to burgle, a suitable target/residence, and the resident(s) as the victims of the burglary. These components and elements are dynamic entities, with differential attributes and possible manifestations, which interact in such a manner to lead to the burglary event. Figure 7.1 provides an illustration of the functioning of the integrated burglary model as a means of understanding the burglary process, inclusive of the implementation of interventions to prevent residential burglary.

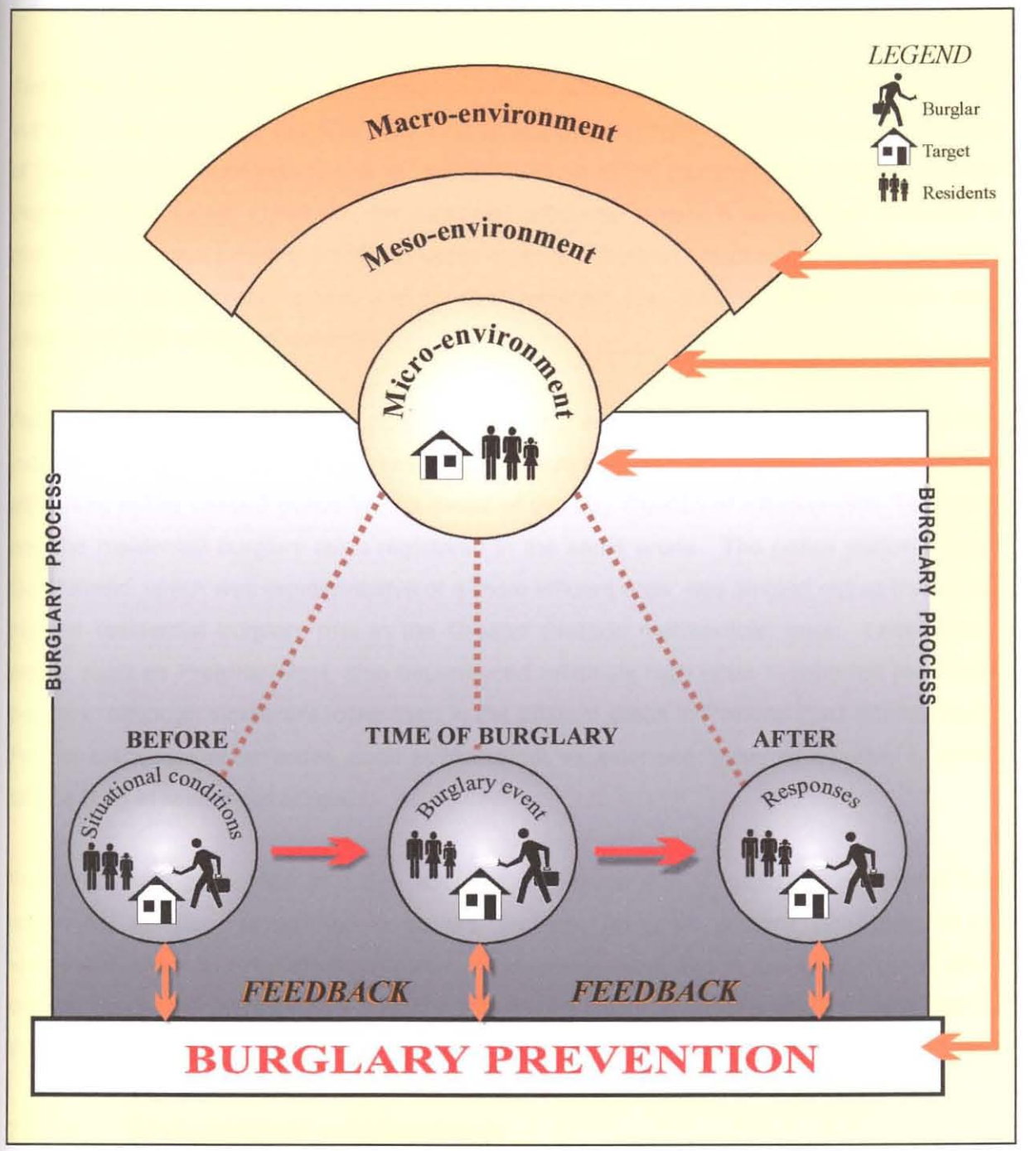
The integrated burglary model, as illustrated in Figure 7.1, can be explained under the following headings: location of target/residence in a specific environmental setting, burglars and their *modus operandi*, situational conditions, the burglary event, responses from residents and burglars and the implementation of burglary prevention initiatives. The following approach was adopted in presenting the model:

First, a summary of the theoretical perspectives or rationale that highlighted the relevance of a specific factor in the burglary process as originally explained in the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6) in Chapter 2.

Second, a summary of the findings recorded in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 that resulted from the application of the conceptual framework, and which were guided by the research expectations (see par. 2.7).

It is important to note that the presentation of the integrated model only contains an abstract or summary of the most important findings, with references to the paragraphs that contain more detailed descriptions.

FIGURE 7.1: INTEGRATED BURGLARY MODEL



7.2.1 Location of residence in a specific environmental setting

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 vulnerability of a particular residential location and the probability that a burglar will target that specific neighbourhood can be explained in terms of, first, the affluence of the neighbourhoods and second, their accessibility.

7.2.1.1 The affluence of neighbourhoods

Theoretical perspectives: 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.

Research findings (see par. 4.3.3): Confirming evidence was found in this study 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 (see Table 4.4) 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 in violent crimes than in residential burglary.

From the data presented in Table 4.4 and as Figure 4.3, it could be concluded that residential burglary constituted a severe problem for both affluent and less-affluent residential areas in the Greater Pretoria metropolitan area, but in comparison with other crimes, residential burglary had a higher occurrence rate in the more affluent areas than in the less affluent areas.

7.2.1.2 Accessibility of neighbourhoods

Theoretical perspectives: 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 also add to the vulnerability of residences, 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.

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 (see par. 6.7.2.2.1 on 'enclosed neighbourhoods').

Residential areas that are characterised by a diversity of enterprises or activities, for example, proximity to public places, near shopping centres, small businesses and new building projects, may be more exposed to the movement or gathering of relative 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.

Research findings (see par. 4.5): Through personal observation by studying the street maps of the case study areas and analysing the responses from the interviewees, the researcher came to the conclusion (as summarised in Table 4.5) that in both the case study areas of Pretoria West and Garsfontein potential burglars could easily gain access to the area, that 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 the public roads.

Both case study areas allowed easy access to the neighbourhoods through well developed road networks, which included access roads, main roads and freeways. Furthermore, the presence of open spaces, parks and open zones along streams and the main roads were a common feature in the case study areas (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4).

At the time of the research in 1998, the restriction of movement through the presence of "security villages" or "security enclosed neighbourhoods" 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 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 the 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.

7.2.2 Burglars and their modus operandi

7.2.2.1 Motivation of burglars

Theoretical perspectives: Burglars are 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, 1994:40). Burglars are often involved in alcohol abuse and/or the use of drugs, which increases the need for money.

Research findings (see par. 5.2.1): The convicted burglars who were interviewed in this study, confirmed the expectation that money was the prime motivation for their behaviour. More than 80 per cent of the burglars mentioned that they were unemployed and in need of money. Fifty per cent of the burglars also referred to the influence of friends as a reason for their involvement in burglary activity, and 38 per cent indicated that they regarded burglary as a profession ("a work") that pays well.

7.2.2.2 Selection of suitable targets

Theoretical perspectives: A motivated burglar would 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 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).

Research findings (see par. 5.2.2): When the convicted burglars were asked to explain the *modus operandi* they followed in the search for a suitable target, two basic approaches came to the fore. Seventy per cent of the burglars in this study indicated that they followed a more planned routine to gather information and to identify potential targets. Thirty per cent of the burglars indicated that they acted in a more opportunistic manner to identify a suitable target.

Furthermore it was found that the burglars who followed a planned routine could explain their *modus operandi* in the selection of a suitable target better than those who did not plan the burglary. Although the burglars who were inclined to operate more opportunistically could also describe their *modus operandi,* it was in less specific terms. The fact that both categories of burglars were able to describe their *modus operandi* in identifying of suitable targets, confirmed the expectation that burglars would tend to follow a patterned routine in the selection of a suitable target.

In the present study it was found that some of the burglars who regarded themselves as professionals, sometimes decided to operate alone and in a more opportunistic manner. Two of the burglars who were interviewed, for example, indicated that they sometimes form part of a planned burglary, and at other times they may decide to act alone and in a more opportunistic way. It was therefore decided that it would be more appropriate to distinguish between planned burglaries and opportunistic burglaries, and not professional and amateur burglars, as proposed in the research expectations (see par. 2.7.2.3 and 2.7.2.4).

7.2.3 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 micro-environment 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.

One of the objectives of this study was to identify and investigate the situational factors that existed just before the burglaries took place, and to determine in what way they contributed to the vulnerability of a particular residence. Although a number of situational risk factors could be identified in the research process, it was impossible to determine how many of them actually played an active role in the decision-making process of the burglars. That

would only be possible if the burglar that committed the burglary in a specific case was known and could be interviewed, which was not the case in this study.

The findings of this study, relating to situational conditions, showed that the residences in the case studies were all exposed to some degree of vulnerability that made them suitable targets at the time of the burglaries. The situational conditions that had a significant effect on the vulnerability of the residences, included the following categories of factors: residents' activities and characteristics, surveillance and visibility, design features of the residence, and security protection.

7.2.3.1 Residents' activities and characteristics

Theoretical perspectives: Residents, through their daily routines and lifestyles, sometimes engage in behaviour that expose them to the possibility of being at risk. Residents that 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 would 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.

Research findings (see par. 5.3.1): It was found in this study that in 66,6 per cent of the burglary cases, the residents were absent from home during the burglary. For the Garsfontein area, this percentage was even higher at 83 per cent of the burglary cases, whilst in the Pretoria West area 50 per cent of the residents were not at home during the burglary incident (see Fig. 5.1).

It is significant to note that the remaining 33,3 per cent of the cases, the burglaries occurred during the night whilst the residents were at home and asleep. The values in this situation for the Garsfontein and Pretoria West areas respectively were 17 per cent and 50 per cent (see Fig. 5.1).

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.

Only 13 per cent of the burglary victims in this study could be classified as single residents, whilst 17 per cent of the victims were single mothers with children in the home. Only in one case could the burglary victim, a female in her late 60s, be described as elderly and single. As a result of the small sample of cases involved, it was not possible to make significant conclusions about the risks involved in being single, except that the interviewees, who were single, all expressed the awareness that they were probably more at risk of becoming a burglary victim than households with more people. Except for one case, they all had experienced at least one previous incident of burglary in the past three years. In the case of the elderly woman in Pretoria West three burglaries had occurred in her home in the three years between 1996 and 1998.

With regard to possible carelessness on the part of the residents, it was found that in 25 per cent of all the cases, there were indications of negligence. In two of the cases the burglars could gain entrance through open windows without burglar bars; in another two cases there were no security gates at the front and back doors; in one case the residents left a note at the front gate notifying their absence over the weekend; and in the last instance the residents left the house unattended for a weekend soon after they had moved in, leaving most of the goods still in crates. The observation was made that residents were not deliberately careless, but unintentionally created opportunities for burglary through their routine activities, or because of inadequate precautionary measures.

7.2.3.2 Surveillance and visibility

Theoretical perspectives: Burglars would tend to avoid residences that are under surveillance or that have good visibility out of fear of being observed and 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 surveillance, could increase the vulnerability of the residence.

Research findings (see par. 5.3.2): The information that was gathered through the case study interviews suggested two time periods when residences were most at risk in the Garsfontein area (see Fig. 5.2), namely between midnight and 06:00 in the morning (42 per cent of the cases), and between 06:00 in the morning and noon (33 per cent of the cases). In the Pretoria West area the risk period only occurred in the period from midnight until 06:00 in the morning, with 84 per cent of the burglaries.

The 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. These risk periods (as shown in Fig. 5.2) also coincided with time intervals when informal surveillance in the neighbourhoods was at its lowest, due to the reduced outdoor activities or less movement of people during these periods.

In the absence of formal surveillance techniques, such as police or civilian patrols, Neighbourhood Watch, security guards, or CCTV- cameras in the case study areas, it was not possible to determine what role formal surveillance played in deterring residential burglary. However, it was found that informal surveillance had a significant impact on the occurrence patterns of burglaries, especially in the case study area of Pretoria West. The better visibility of the residential sites in the Pretoria West case study area, and the presence of people in the neighbourhood, could also have attributed to the lower burglary rates during the day. In the case of Garsfontein, the better exterior lighting during the night could have attributed to the lower burglary rates at night.

7.2.3.3 Design features

Theoretical perspectives: 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 easy removable windows. For the burglar, an attractive target will be one where the perceived rewards outweigh the risks of being caught.

Research findings (see par. 5.3.3): 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 would most likely be found in the residences in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria.

With regard to the expectation that design features with easy entrance to the building would increase its vulnerability, it was found that burglars preferred to break in from the rear or the side ends of the residences (see Table 5.3). The reason for this was probably to reduce the chances of being observed. The most common method of gaining entrance was through sliding doors, followed by windows, preferably from the rear or the side of the residences.

7.2.3.4 Security protection

Theoretical perspectives: 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 included 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 responses, security lights and dogs.

Research findings (see par. 5.3.4): In this study it was found that the residences in the Garsfontein area were slightly better protected by 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 still to a limited extent. In conclusion 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 by-passed 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 are implemented simultaneously. The more obstacles the burglar has to overcome, the greater the chances that he might decide to abort the burglary attempt. Other factors, such as the time of day, occupancy, the quality of material used in security equipment played a role in the final outcome of the burglary.

7.2.4 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.

7.2.4.1 Financial loss

Theoretical perspectives: 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.

Research findings (see par. 5.4.2): Based on the findings of the case studies, as well as observations that were made during the field research, three types of burglaries could be distinguished (from the burglar's perspective), namely: opportunistic burglaries (type 1); higher risk, planned burglaries (type 2); and lower risk, planned burglaries (type 3) (see Table 5.7).

Seventy six per cent of the burglaries in the Garsfontein area could be classified as lower risk, planned burglaries (type 3), and occurred when the residents were normally absent from their homes, and the chances of interference were less. These findings concur with the expectation that the damage or financial loss would be higher in the case of planned burglaries, when three or more burglars were involved; when the duration burglars spent inside the residence was extensive; and when they possessed the necessary skills. Contrary to the Garsfontein area, 50 per cent of the burglaries in the Pretoria West cases could be described as opportunistic burglaries, which involved little or no prior planning.

It was also found, as expected, that the average financial loss experienced in the Garsfontein police station cases was higher than those in the Pretoria West police station area. This could partly be attributed to the fact that more Type 3 burglaries occurred in the Garsfontein than in the Pretoria West area.

7.2.4.2 Market for stolen goods

Theoretical perspectives: 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 their livelihood. 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.

Research findings (see par. 5.4.3): 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 (see Table 5.9). 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. The Pretoria West cases, on the other hand, registered higher volumes on items such as linen, tools and money. The residents of Pretoria West probably live more on a cash basis, whilst the residents of Garsfontein prefer bank facilities, such as cheques and credit cards.

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 to whom the burglars delivered the stolen goods in exchange for money, sometimes far below the market price.

7.2.5 Residents' responses after the burglaries

7.2.5.1 Residents' feelings of safety

Theoretical perspectives: 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 the experience of a burglary.

Research findings (see par. 5.5.1): In this study it was found that the time factor played an important role in how people experienced feelings of safety directly after the burglary and after some time had elapsed. More than 50 per cent of the respondents indicated that they initially experienced heightened feelings of unsafety 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 certain categories of people experienced more intense feelings of unsafety, this included victims who made contact with the burglars, single female residents, and the elderly.

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 per cent of the respondents, was the tendency to be more on the alert or watchful for potential burglars or criminals in their immediate environment.

7.2.5.2 Implementation of security measures

Theoretical perspectives: 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).

Research findings (see par. 5.5.2): More than 90 per cent 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.

7.2.6 Burglars' responses after the burglaries

7.2.6.1 Burglars' feelings of guilt

Theoretical perspectives: 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 (see Table 2.4). 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.

Research findings (see par. 5.6.1): 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.

7.2.6.2 Crime displacement

Theoretical perspectives: The burglar's mental image of the environment and the target would be effected 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.

Research findings (see par. 5.6.2): 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 too 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 under circumstances of 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, which on the contrary also showed an increase (see Table 1.1).

7.2.7 Burglary prevention

The integrated burglary model could further be expanded to incorporate the search for solutions to the problem of residential burglary. The researcher was thus of the opinion that burglary prevention guidelines or principles could be formulated, based on the conceptual framework and the findings of the research. Chapter 6 was dedicated to the formulation of guidelines or principles that could be applied to the development of appropriate burglary prevention initiatives.

An integrated framework for burglary prevention initiatives was constructed and explained in Table 6.2. By 'integrated' is meant that the prevention initiatives should focus on the main elements of the burglary process, namely: the burglar, the neighbourhood 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.

At the micro-level, burglary prevention initiatives should focus on the elimination of opportunities for burglary through the application of situational crime prevention measures. Through the implementation of such measures, the burglar, who intended to break in, might find it increasingly difficult to enter the premises and thus be deterred from entering that specific residence. The more security or safety measures that were installed, the greater the chance that residents would feel safer in their immediate environment, and the greater the chance that, in case of a burglary, the damage would be less.

Measures at the micro-level should then be supported by measures at the meso-level, for example, the implementation of community organisation and actions, such as Neighbourhood Watch, or access control over strangers. Visible, community policing and community actions aimed at observing, monitoring or controlling the movement of potential burglars might serve as a deterrent to potential burglars, and also help to create a feeling of safety amongst residents. The local police, Community Police Forums and the municipal police services could play a leading role in applying the principles of community policing.

At the macro-level greater emphasis should be placed on the implementation of already existing policies and strategies relating to crime prevention. Multi-agency planning at the national, provincial, and municipal levels should be aimed at facilitating specific programmes or operations at the community and local level to address a specific crime problem. At the macro-level, the primary focus of burglary prevention in broader society should be to correct criminogenic conditions that are associated with the root causes for criminal behaviour. 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 institute further measures aimed at rehabilitating convicted burglars.

In residential areas where individual efforts to improve security are linked to crime prevention initiatives of the local police and the community, and are supported by the law enforcement agencies at the macro-level, they will have a greater chance of success than in those residential areas where crime prevention initiatives are implemented in isolation.

7.3 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The development of an integrated burglary model was ultimately a culmination of the realisation of the objectives for this study (as stated in par. 1.6). In the following summary, an evaluation of the realisation of the research objectives is given:

The **first** objective was to provide a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon of residential burglary. In Chapter 2 an overview was given of the most prominent theories and models within the realm of 'environmental criminology' that highlighted the elements and processes involved in the burglary event. This school of thought emphasises the importance of the physical environment in the decision to commit a criminal offence and pays less attention to the impact of pathological, biophysical, psychological or social factors. Much of the conceptualisation was based on the writings of Reppetto (1974), Brantingham and Brantingham (1981), Brown and Altman (1981), Herbert (1982), Bennett and Wright (1984), Cornish and Clarke (1986), Conklin (1995), Murray (1995), Sheley (1995), and Lab (1997).

The **second** objective was to construct a conceptual framework (based on the theoretical explanation) to conceptualise the residential burglary process. The conceptual framework, as explained in Chapter 2 (see par. 2.6), provided an integrated understanding of the burglary process, and gave a structured and systematic description of the components and elements involved in the burglary process.

An integrated understanding of the burglary process, implies an understanding of the main components and elements involved in the burglary process, namely: the environment (with reference to the macro-, meso-, and micro-environment) in which the burglary took place, the situational conditions that existed prior to the commission of the burglary, the burglary event itself, and the responses of the residents, as well as the burglars in reaction to the burglary event. The elements refer to the burglar(s) who have the motivation to burgle, a suitable target/residence, and the resident(s), as the victims of the burglary.

The **third** objective was to use the conceptual framework to develop appropriate research expectations and a methodology to guide the research process. The conceptual framework was used to identify the key factors and variables. A range of research expectations that gave expression to the burglary process, were formulated (see par. 2.7).

A realist approach was adopted for this study, instead of a positivistic approach, often used in geographical studies. The central focus was therefore to gain a thorough understanding of the burglary process, rather than to give a quantitative account of the characteristics of the burglary process. For this reason the case study approach was chosen as the research design, and qualitative techniques in the form of semi-structured interviews were used to collect, analyse and interpret the research data.

It is believed that the research philosophy, design, and methodology (as explained in Chapters 1 and 3), not only provided a scientific basis for the research undertaken in this study, but also broke new ground in the research field of geography of crime in South Africa.

The **fourth** objective was to apply the conceptual framework as a 'research model' to investigate residential burglary in South Africa, with specific reference to selected case studies in the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area. In this regard the application of the conceptual framework and the methodology adopted for this study provided specific outcomes or findings that could be linked to the research expectations accepted for this study.

The findings relating to residential burglary patterns in the macro- and meso-environment were explained in Chapter 4, whilst the findings relating to residential burglary in the micro-environment was explained in Chapter 5.

The **fifth** objective was to formulate principles or guidelines that could be applied to the development of residential burglary prevention measures/initiatives. Based on the research findings and the insights gained through the literature study, a residential burglary prevention framework was compiled and presented in Chapter 6 (see Table 6.2). The aim of the integrated framework was to lay down principles or guidelines that could be applied to the construction of prevention strategies or the implementation of prevention initiatives. In essence the integrated framework implies the assessment of the vulnerability of a specific location and to suggest specific counter or preventative measures that might reduce the occurrence of residential burglary or limit the damage in the case of occurrence, and to enhance a feeling of safety.

The **sixth** objective was to revise and improve the conceptual framework as an integrated burglary model that could be applied to the study of residential burglary. The conceptual framework in itself only provided a theoretical rationale of the burglary process and served as a basis for the formulation of the research expectations. In the research phase the conceptual framework was tested and validated through the research findings. Through qualitative as well as quantitative research techniques the research data and evidence were collected, analysed and interpreted in order to confirm or reject the research expectations. In Paragraph 7.2 the revised and enriched version of the conceptual framework is presented as the integrated burglary model.

The **seventh** objective was to interpret the value of the integrated burglary model for its ability to analyse and interpret the burglary process, and to give advice on prevention initiatives. The realisation of the abovementioned objectives culminated in the final construction of the integrated burglary model. The value of this model is vested in its ability to:

- conceptualise the burglary process;
- predict certain outcomes relating to the factors and variables in the burglary process;
- identify and analyse the risk factors that determine the vulnerability of a specific target; and
- suggest appropriate burglary prevention measures or initiatives.

The trustworthiness (reliability and validity) of the integrated burglary model can be found in the scientific approach and design of this study, the methodology that was used, and the research findings and evidence that confirmed the research expectations. Although the trustworthiness in terms of the research findings is confined to the case studies that were investigated, it is believed that the integrated burglary model has a much broader application value as a conceptual framework. It should also be recognised that the integrated burglary model is a dynamic framework that can be improved and adjusted to changing circumstances.

In conclusion, it is the opinion of the researcher that the aim of the study has been successfully realised in that the understanding of the burglary process has been enhanced and principles for the prevention of residential have been formulated as a result of the way in which this investigation was carried out. It is also believed that the research has made a contribution to the disciplines of Geography and Criminology, and that the research findings could be used in further research and programmes seek to resolve the problems of residential burglary.

7.4 CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCIPLINE OF GEOGRAPHY

In this study the central focus throughout was on the burglary event and process, the vulnerability of location and the interaction between people and their environment, a perspective that places this study in the interest field of the geographer. These elements are also of great interest to the environmental criminologist, who has a prime interest in the location of criminal events, rather than in the theories of crime causation. The study of crime events therefore creates the opportunity for multi-disciplinary research under the encompassing concept of social science. According to Herbert (1987:146), environmental criminology as well as the geography of crime offers an approach to the study of crime which is less concerned with theories of causation and more concerned with criminal events and places where they occur: the focus is thus on the offence rather than the offender.

Recognising residential burglary as a social problem needing a solution, this study makes a definite contribution to the study field of Social Geography, conceptually, methodologically and by providing a relevant model. The following aspects could be identified as being particularly significant:

- **Conceptually:** The integrated burglary model provides a systematic explanation of the burglary process and emphasises the geographical dimensions of the burglary event in terms of location, vulnerability and people-environment interaction. Furthermore, the inclusion of the concept of the 'geography of crime' as an integral part of the practice and teaching of social geography in South Africa should be given real consideration.

- **Methodologically:** The study was designed within the paradigm of qualitative research (although quantitative techniques were also used), and to comply with a realist approach to research. Against this philosophical background, the case study approach provided an appropriate methodology for the research in that the geography of the context could be clearly demonstrated. The construction of a conceptual framework, the formulation of research expectations, techniques of data collection and analysis, and the interpretation of the findings have been documented.

- **Model application:** The development of the integrated burglary model was based on scientific research and can be applied in situations where the need exists to analyse and explain the occurrence of residential burglary, and to suggest preventative measures and initiatives to curb the problem of residential burglary.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO BURGLARY PREVENTION

In Chapter 6 an integrated approach to prevent residential burglary is advocated, and is based on the conceptual framework that explains the burglary process (see par. 2.6), as well as the research findings of this study. No single method or technique would be sufficient to address the problem of residential burglary. Instead, a combination of actions and programmes may have a better chance of success. The following recommendations were formulated with the aim to strengthen the capabilities at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels of preventing residential burglary.

Recommendation 1: To investigate possible alternative or additional means of punishment for convicted burglars other than the traditional system of imprisonment, which seems to be failing as a deterrent and in facilitating the rehabilitation of burglars. One option is to develop a new system of community service for convicted burglars, as a partnership programme, involving Correctional Services, local authorities, local police stations and non-government organisations (NGOs). Another option is to institute victim-offender reconciliation programmes in which the victim and offender reach an agreement on the payment of compensation, the return of stolen property or reparations for damage, as well as doing work as redress (Oppler, 1998:52).

Recommendation 2: To improve the investigative and detective capabilities of local police stations that may lead to an increase in the rate of successful prosecutions and convictions of burglars. According to Oppler (1998:18), between 80 and 90 per cent of burglaries occurring in South Africa, go undetected and are difficult to solve. To assist in the investigation of burglaries, greater emphasis should be given to the role of fences and "swop shops" in the buying and trading of stolen goods. Proper marking of household goods, including the recording of serial numbers, can also strengthen the investigations into burglaries, if the stolen goods can be traced to a specific owner and location. In this regard insurance companies can play an important role in encouraging home owners to mark and record their property. The building of investigative capabilities, however, is closely linked to the availability of sufficient financial, logistical and human resources, which include skilled and well-trained detectives.

Regular feedback and communication between the police and the burglary victims to inform them on progress made with the investigations will also enhance confidence in the police service and the sharing of crime related information between the community and the police.

Recommendation 3: To develop a national policy framework that would assist the provincial governments in drawing up legislation that would standardise and regulate the

establishment of 'enclosed neighbourhoods' in such a way that it would contribute in the creation of safer neighbourhoods, without compromising the objectives of creating integrated, developed cities.

Recommendation 4: To implement social crime prevention programmes in areas of poverty and high unemployment, with the aim of addressing the socio-economic conditions that could be linked to the causes of crime. These programmes should integrate the efforts of the law enforcement agencies, local authorities, welfare departments, and the private and business sectors. The primary focus should *inter alia* be on job creation or state allowances for the unemployed; skills development and training; reservist systems to support the police; Neighbourhood Watch; housing projects; and educational and developmental programmes for children. An important aspect of social crime prevention would further be to change the perception in certain communities that advocates the viewpoint that it is acceptable to steal from the "rich", and for the same reason to buy or own stolen goods.

Recommendation 5: To establish effective crime prevention centres or units at the functional levels of the Area SAPS and the local police station area, 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 CPFs, and to apply the principles of community policing as stipulated in the White Paper on Safety and Security (1998); and
- to apply situational crime prevention, including environmental design, as an approach of diminishing opportunities for crime by modifying the situations in which offending occurs.

Recommendation 6: To effectively communicate with ordinary citizens, through the printed and electronic media, with the aim to educate and inform them on the latest developments with regard to crime prevention, and what they can do to protect their property and create a safe and secure environment. The SAPS, Business Against Crime, CPFs, as well as academic and research institutions can play a major role in this regard.

The integrated burglary model (see par. 7.2), based on the conceptual framework and the findings of this study, for example, can be applied in individual cases, or local communities, to identify vulnerabilities or opportunities for burglary, and to suggest specific action or measures to prevent such offences.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

For reasons mentioned at the beginning of this study, including the cost implications of a quantitative survey study, the decision was taken to rather follow a qualitative approach to research the burglary process in a more confined way. For this purpose the research was based on semi-structured interviews and secondary data sources to verify the conceptual framework and to develop an integrated burglary model. An inherent weakness of this approach was that the findings of the case studies only allowed for analytical generalisations that related to the research expectations based on the conceptual framework.

Although the integrated burglary model has wider application value in terms of its ability to conceptualise the burglary process and to identify key factors and variables, the measurements and patterns of these factors and variables do not necessarily hold true for other residential areas in the South African urban milieu. To increase the reliability and validity of the integrated burglary model, that would allow for broader generalisations, it would be appropriate to apply the model in further studies that are more representative of the population of all types of residential areas in South Africa.

Another possibility would be to incorporate components of the burglary model, especially those that seem to be relevant and of specific interest, into national victimisation surveys that may be conducted in future. An example of such a study is the victims of crime survey that was conducted in 1998 under the auspices of Statistics South Africa.

The availability of modern computer software programmes also creates the opportunity to develop a computerised risk assessment model (based on the integrated burglary model) that can be applied in the assessment of the vulnerability of potential residential targets and to suggest preventative measures to counter such vulnerabilities.

The emphasis on crime prevention has only recently, since the early 1990s, gained prominence in South Africa, and although progress has been made with regard to policy guidelines and the establishment of structures such as the NCPC, there is still need for research to support these efforts and to monitor and evaluate the successes or failures of specific programmes. The opportunity thus exists to initiate crime specific research that

aims to support specific crime prevention initiatives, and to monitor and evaluate their progress over time.

With regard to the issue of 'crime displacement', further in-depth study is needed to determine whether, and to what extent, residential burglars had 'displaced' residential burglary in favour of other types of crime.

7.7 CONCLUSION

Residential burglary is a serious problem in South Africa, taking into account its high occurrence rate and the financial and psychological impact it has on peoples' lives. It is also expected that this type of crime will remain a problem for as long as a large part of the population are exposed to poor socio-economic conditions.

This study confirms the notion that most burglars are motivated by the need for money. Thus, for as long as the South African society is burdened with high unemployment and poverty, which is estimated at as high as 40 per cent of the population (Business Day, 2002), and the prospects for economic growth remains at between 2% and 3%, it is expected that the societal conditions will remain favourable for criminals to continue with a 'career' in burglary. In addition to these conditions, other factors may also serve as incentives for burglars, for example, the 'tolerance' towards property crimes in some communities, the tendency to buy stolen goods, and the incapacity of the law enforcement agencies to fulfil their duties.

Based on the findings of this study, it is argued that effective prevention of residential burglary can only be realised through an integrated approach towards crime prevention, which combines the efforts of the individual households with that of the local communities, and the law enforcement and development agencies involved in crime prevention. At the macro-level, crime prevention programmes and initiatives should focus on the criminal, 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, on the contrary, 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, to minimise the opportunities for residential burglary in a specific area as well as the vulnerabilities attached to a specific target.

There are no easy solutions for complex situations and the challenge remains to change society in such a way that the population develop a 'zero-tolerance' attitude towards all forms of criminal behaviour.
