CHAPTER 5

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY IN THE MICRO-ENVIRONMENT

For a crime to occur, there must be both an individual who wants to commit an offence and an opportunity to commit that offence.

- Brantingham and Brantingham (1984:155)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to analyse and interpret the interview and case study data, with the aim to create a better understanding of what happened before, during and after the burglary event. These time sequences in the burglary process can be described as the situational conditions or risk factors that existed in the micro-environment prior to the burglary; the commission of the burglary event, and the responses of the victims and burglars after the event occurred. The conceptual framework (see par. 2.6) and the research expectations (see par. 2.7) served as the theoretical framework against which the findings could be compared and interpreted. It should be emphasised that the qualitative nature of this study did not allow for generalisations beyond the case studies involved. The findings were interpreted to reflect on the usefulness of the conceptual framework as an analytical 'tool'. Through the method of analytical comparison and agreement, the researcher searched for regularities and patterned relations in the data collected.

The findings of the research are discussed under the following headings: initial involvement of the burglars, situational conditions, the burglary event and the responses from the burglary victims and the burglars.

5.2 INITIAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE BURGLARS

5.2.1 Burglars' motivation

In the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2.2) the primary motivation of burglars was linked to the need for money, either as a means of subsistence, or to buy alcohol and drugs, or to purchase luxury goods. The corresponding research expectation reads as follows:

- Burglars are primarily motivated by the need for money (see par. 2.7.2).

The convicted burglars interviewed in the study, cited the following reasons for their involvement in residential burglary:

- More than 80 per cent of the burglars stated that they were unemployed and in need of money. In three of the cases the burglars said that they needed money to support their children (they were not married), and in one case the burglar said he bought drugs and alcohol with the money.

- In 50 per cent of the cases the burglars mentioned the influence of friends as a reason for their involvement in burglary.

- In 38 per cent of the cases the burglars indicated that they regarded burglary as a profession ("a work") that pays well. They also indicated that they usually work for a "boss" who pays them for the stolen goods.

These responses from the convicted burglars were further endorsed by the responses from the burglary victims and the experts who were interviewed. Except for one interviewee all the others were of the opinion that burglars are primarily motivated by the need for money. The reasons given by the burglary victims and experts for what they believe burglars need money for, include the following: greed, the need for a regular income, and to buy alcohol and drugs. One of the interviewees ascribed the motive to burgle to the inherent criminal tendencies within the person, and that the burglar usually looks for firearms.

During the hearing of two burglary court cases in 2000 in Pretoria, the accused told the court that they had left school early and that they were unemployed (Pretoria News, 2000). This corresponds with the evidence from the convicted burglars in this study.

A study by Reppetto (1994:21) on residential burglary and robbery in the Boston (USA) metropolitan area in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which 97 adjudicated burglars were interviewed, the following prompted their actions: "The satisfaction of a perceived need for money ... (was) the prime motive for most burglaries, although interviewees did acknowledge such subsidiary satisfactions as excitement, revenge, curiosity and feelings of group solidarity". Only 10 per cent of the interviewees in the Reppetto study indicated that they would continue with burglary if their financial needs were satisfied.

Further confirmation for the need of money was found in a study by Bennett and Wright (1984:31-33) of 309 convicted burglars in England. According to the responses of the burglars, the following factors could be identified as important motivators:

- Offences were triggered by instrumental needs (almost invariably the need for money) (46 per cent). About half of these respondents stated that the money was needed for subsistence or basic everyday needs, and the remainder claimed that they needed the

money for pleasure pursuits such as entertainment, gambling, drinking or drug-taking.

- The decision to offend was influenced of others (friends and peer-group) (46 per cent).

It became apparent during the course of the interviews associated with this study that all the convicted burglars came from broken background environments, for example, they mentioned factors such as growing up without a father, leaving school early, involvement in gangs, using drugs and alcohol, having illegitimate children, or being unemployed. The unstable environment in which they grew up would undoubtedly have contributed to their inclination toward criminal behaviour.

Brown *et al.* (1991:483) also emphasised the importance of developmental factors that could lead to delinquency. They mentioned the following pathways leading to anti-social behaviour:

- inadequate or ineffective early socialisation processes and weak conventional bonding during childhood;
- antisocial behaviour during childhood;
- a further weakening of conventional bonding during adolescence;
- exposure to illegitimate opportunities and delinquent or criminal persons resulting in pro-delinquent socialisation or bonding; and
- the choice or belief that the "payoff" generally exceeds the risks, culminating in involvement in frequent and /or serious delinquent behaviour.

According to Conklin (1995:183), the youth get involved in delinquency when there is a lack of access to jobs in order to provide the income they need to participate in peer-group activities and to buy the clothes and other things that would win them the esteem of their friends. Taking into account the poor socio-economic conditions in South Africa at this point in time, it is to be expected that residential burglary will continue to be an illegal but viable means for burglars to 'earn' a livelihood or to satisfy their need/greed for money.

5.2.2 Burglars' search for suitable targets

The rational choice model (see par. 2.3.3) is most often cited to explain the search behaviour of burglars, which in essence means that the potential burglar will try to maximise the yield of his actions, in terms of financial gain, and to minimise the risks of loss and judicial penalty (Trasler, 1986:23). Although criminal behaviour cannot always be explained in rational terms, it cannot be denied that burglars make decisions based upon previous

experiences, the advice of others, or to adhere to methods that are well-practised and familiar.

According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1984:344), burglars do not move randomly through space, but follow a patterned information-processing routine in target selection. They argued that the objective world is interpreted by the burglars, and cues are selectively used to construct images or templates of "good" and "bad" crime sites, which the burglars then use predictively to select suitable targets. Once the 'template' is established, it becomes relatively fixed and influences future search behaviour, thereby becoming self-reinforcing.

In the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2.2) a distinction was made between amateur and professional burglars as postulated by Beirne and Messerschmidt (1995:153). Amateur burglars were described as part-time burglars who commit unsophisticated, opportunistic burglaries when a suitable target arises while involved in other routine activities (lawful or unlawful). To the contrary, professional burglars tend to be older, more specialised, who employ considerable skill and planning in executing a burglary and select targets of substantial value, for example, the stealing of jewellery.

From the theoretical perspectives in the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2.2), the following interrelated research expectations (see par. 2.7.2) relating to target selection were formulated, and served as a reference during the research process:

- 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 will operate in an opportunistic manner.

During the interviews the burglars were asked to explain the *modus operandi* they followed in the search for a suitable target. From the responses it was possible to identify two basic approaches, which could be explained as follows:

- In the first approach the burglars followed a planned routine to gather information and to identify potential targets. Different methods were used to gather information prior to the selection of a suitable target, which included: driving around in the neighbourhood until a suitable target was spotted; making use of informants, e.g. job-seekers or domestic workers, they would even bribe these workers if need be. After the potential target has been selected, the burglars would continue to observe the target for two to three days to determine the number of residents, their movement patterns or routine activities, or whether they were on vacation. The burglars in this category usually worked in groups

and made use of modern technology such as cellular phones and motor vehicles. This category of burglars also corresponds with Beirne and Messerschmidt's (1995) description of professional burglars. Seventy per cent of the burglars in the present study could be classified in this category.

- In the second approach burglars acted in an opportunistic manner to identify a suitable target. Burglars in this category would usually work alone or with one partner. They moved on foot, looking for the right opportunity to commit a burglary. In the process they knocked on doors, rang the intercom, looking for signs that indicate the absence of residents, for example, no vehicles visible, locked gates, junk mail in the driveway, exterior lights on, or a dog in the house during the day. Sometimes they would only steal a bicycle from the site, not entering the residence. They might even return to a residence where they were previously employed, knowing the area and the movements of the residents. Thirty per cent of the burglars in the present study could be classified in this category.

In this study it was found that some of the burglars who regarded themselves as professionals, would sometimes decide to operate alone and in a more opportunistic manner. Two of the burglars who were interviewed indicated that they might either participate in a more organised burglary operation, or decide to act alone should an opportunity arise. It was therefore not regarded appropriate to distinguish between professional and amateur burglars as proposed in the research expectations (see par. 2.7.2), but rather to distinguish between planned and opportunistic burglaries.

The professional burglars explained their *modus operandi* in selecting a suitable target best. The burglars who were inclined to operate more opportunistically could also describe their *modus operandi,* but in less specific terms. The fact that both categories of burglars were able to describe their *modus operandi* for identifying suitable targets, confirmed the expectation that burglars would tend to follow a patterned routine in the selection of a suitable target. In the burglary study of Reppetto (1974:17), approximately 75 per cent of the burglars interviewed, indicated that they were engaged in some kind of planning prior to the burglary.

Bennett and Wright (1984:148) distinguished between three categories of burglaries, namely "opportunistic", a "search offence" and a "planned" burglary. They defined burglaries as "opportunistic" if the decision to burgle was precipitated by the chance discovery of a suitable target and the offence was committed immediately. The authors further defined the second category, a "search offence" as taking place when the burglars decided to commit a burglary, after seeking an opportunity and then committing the offence on discovery of a

suitable target. A burglary was defined as "planned" if there was a time gap between the selection of the target and the commission of the offence. More than 50 per cent of the burglars in their study described "planned" offences as the typical style of offending, with "search" offending just under 50 per cent, and very few as "opportunistic" offences.

The convicted burglars in the present study were also asked to give reasons why they selected a specific target (Question 1.5 in Appendix 2). Their responses are analysed in Table 5.1. It was possible to create categories of factors from the burglars' responses and to prioritise them according to the frequency mentioned by the convicted burglars.

TABLE 5.1: REASONS GIVEN BY BURGLARS FOR SELECTING A SPECIFIC TARGET

CATEGORY OF FACTORS	RATING	CUES CITED BY THE BURGLARS
1. Burglars had prior knowledge of area and potential victims	1	- Knowing the area - Worked in the garden before - Information from the domestic workers or gardeners - Knew the movement patterns of the residents
2. Absence of guardians (residents or neighbours)	2	- The street was very quiet - No signs of occupants (being afraid of making contact with the residents) - No neighbours/onlookers in sight
3. Ease of access and escape routes	3	- Residence is near to main road - Residence is next to open field
4. Design features of residence	4	- Signs of affluence - Concealed entrances
5. Absence of security measures	5	- Absence of armed response - Low surveillance (neighbours looking on) - Barking dogs (especially during the night) - Shelter to hide (Burglars indicated that such measures would not necessarily put them off, it would only make them more cautious)
6. Other factors	6	- Rainy nights (with lightning, thunder and dogs barking - the break-in events can go unnoticed)

From the responses the researcher was convinced that the convicted burglars had a good idea of what they perceived as a suitable target, although they were not always consciously aware of all the factors involved, and might even have acted upon an intuitive feeling of what seamed to be an appropriate target. In this regard cognisance should be taken of the fact that the decision-making processes of burglars can be influenced by a combination of driving forces, including environmental factors, personality, socio-economic needs and the level of motivation.

In the burglary study of Reppetto (1974:16), the interviewees gave the following reasons for the selection of a particular target:

- ease of access (mentioned by 44 per cent);
- appears affluent (41 per cent);
- feels inconspicuous - presence will not be questioned (21 per cent);
- isolated neighbourhood (19 per cent);
- few police security patrols (19 per cent); and
- anonymity of neighbours (12 per cent).

Most of the factors identified in this study (see Table 5.1) were in accordance with what Reppetto found in his study, for example, ease of access, appearance of affluence, and the absence of guardians, which could intervene in the burglary. For the burglars, the primary focus was on the possible rewards, in terms of stolen goods, and therefore would intentionally try to evade contact with the residents or other guardians, afraid of the risk of being caught.

5.3 SITUATIONAL CONDITIONS

When the burglar's path intersects with a potential target, in time and space, the immediate situational conditions influence the burglar's final decision whether or not to proceed with the burglary event. In the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2.4), the following situational factors were identified as having a possible effect on the vulnerability of a potential target, namely: a time that suits the burglar, attractive physical design features of the residence and its surroundings, absence of guardians and surveillance and the lack of adequate security and protection.

Against this theoretical background, 24 interviews were conducted within the selected case studies areas (see par. 3.8) to determine the appropriateness of the conceptual framework as an instrument to analyse and interpret residential burglary. For each of the case studies a risk profile was compiled after the interviews had been completed to determine the vulnerability attached to each of the residences. In this section the findings of the case studies, with reference to situational conditions, were grouped and discussed under four clusters of vulnerability factors, namely: vulnerabilities relating to the residents, vulnerabilities relating to surveillance, vulnerabilities relating to the physical design and vulnerabilities relating to security protection.

5.3.1 Vulnerabilities relating to the residents

In the research expectations (see par. 2.7.3), the following situational conditions, relating to

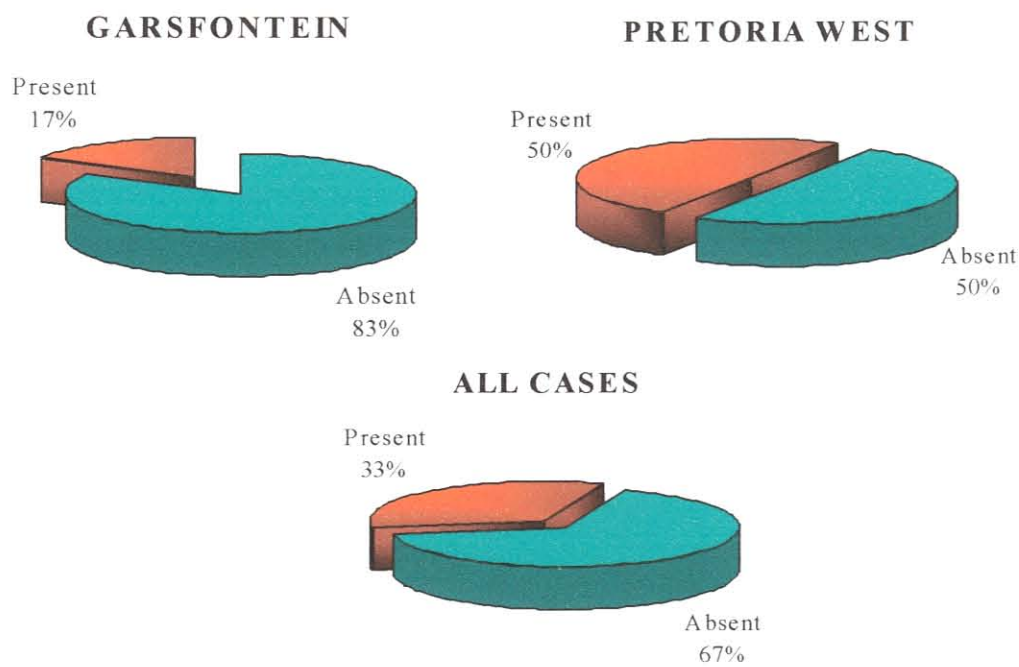
the residents, were postulated as possible risk factors:

- 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.

It was found in this study that in 66,6 per cent of the burglary cases, the residents were absent from home during the incident. For the Garsfontein area, this percentage was even higher standing at 83 per cent of the burglary cases. For the Pretoria West area, it was 50 per cent of the cases (see Fig. 5.1).

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

FIGURE 5.1: RESIDENTS' PRESENCE OR ABSENCE DURING THE BURGLARIES



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'

absence or being asleep during burglaries.

In his study, Reppetto (1974:48) found a much higher burglary rate among dwellings with a low occupancy rate, than among dwellings with a high occupancy rate. In the Bennett and Wright (1984:77) study, over 90 per cent of the burglars indicated that they had been "put off" by occupied buildings.

Only 13 per cent of the burglary victims in the present study could be classified as single residents, whilst 17 per cent of the victims could be classified as single mothers with children in the home. Only in one case could the burglary victim, a female in her late 60's, be classified 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 they all expressed the awareness that they were probably at greater risk as burglary victims. Except for one case, they all experienced at least one previous incidence of burglary in the last three years. The elderly woman, for example, had experienced three burglaries in the last three years, between 1996 and 1998.

With regard to possible carelessness on the side of the residents, it was found that in 25 per cent of all the cases, there were indications of negligence on the part of the residents. 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 careless on purpose, but unintentionally created opportunities for burglary through their routine activities, or through ignoring adequate precautionary measures by being thoughtless.

5.3.2 Vulnerabilities relating to the surveillance

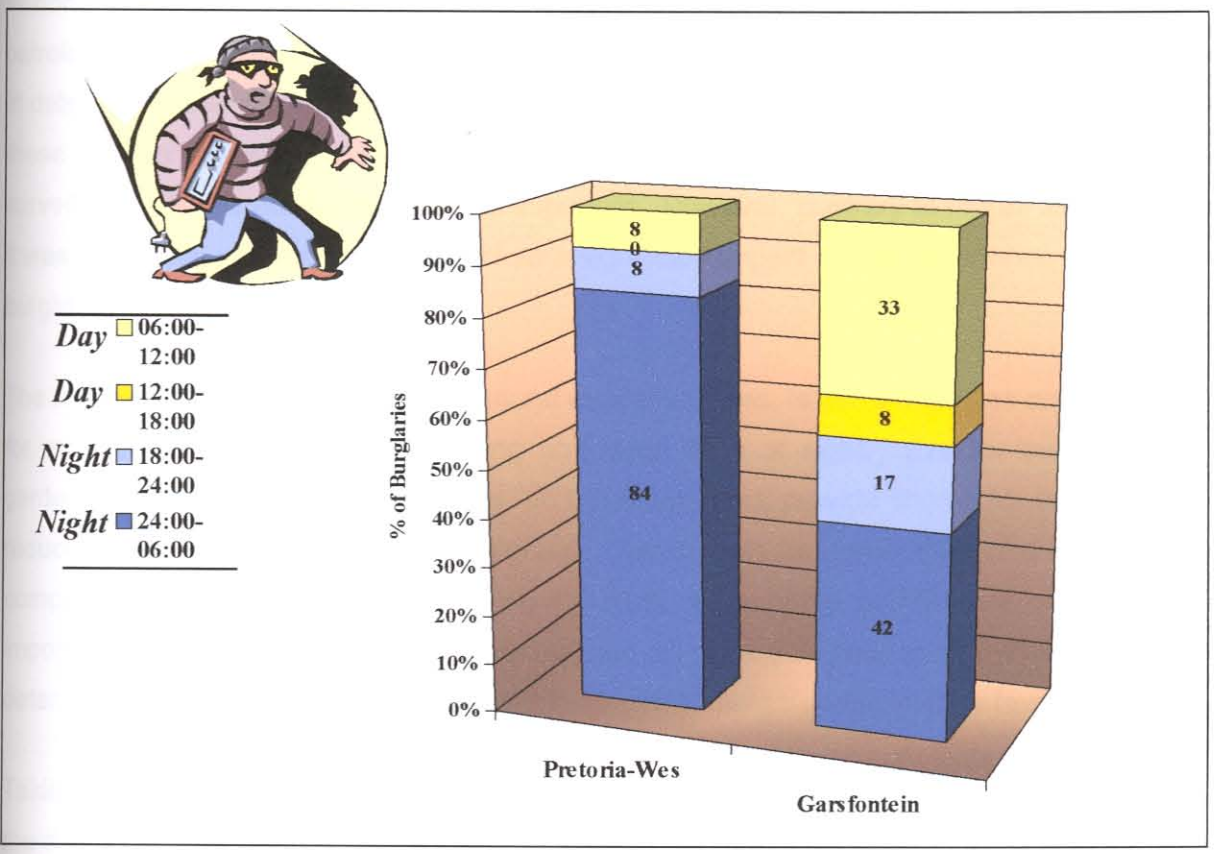
In the research expectations (see par. 2.7.3), the following situational conditions, relating to surveillance, were postulated as possible risk factors:

- During periods when the residence is vulnerable due to low surveillance.
- When there is poor visibility around the residence.

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 24:00 mid-night and 06:00 in the morning (in 42 per cent of the cases), and

between 06:00 in the morning and 12:00 noon (in 33 per cent of the cases). In the Pretoria West area the risk period only centred around the period, 24:00 midnight to 06:00 in the morning, in 84 per cent of the burglaries. Hypothetical, the evenings could also be regarded as a risk period, when residents usually went out for entertainment and social activities, especially over weekends, although the majority of respondents reported that they seldom went out in the evenings.

FIGURE 5.2: TIME OF THE CASE STUDY BURGLARIES



The risk periods for burglary coincided with the time of the 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. Over weekends, absence from home usually coincided with activities such as shopping, sport, church attendance or other recreational activities. These risk periods, as portrayed in Figure 5.2, also coincided with time intervals when informal surveillance in the neighbourhoods was at its lowest, due to the reduced outdoor activities or movement of neighbourhood people during these periods. The differences in the burglary rates in the different time slots between the Garsfontein and Pretoria West areas, could be attributed to the fact that, in the Pretoria West area, more houses were occupied during the day; the neighbours were more involved with each other; and the residential sites more open with good visibility, whilst in the Garsfontein area more houses were left unattended during the day time. The visibility factor in the Garsfontein area was lower due to big trees and shrubs in the gardens as well as high walls and fences on the outside.

An analysis of the SAPS residential burglary statistics for 1998, for the Garsfontein and Pretoria West areas, confirmed a more evenly distribution of burglaries between day and night, for the Garsfontein area, whilst in the Pretoria West area, burglaries were more common at night time. Statistics for the Garsfontein area showed that 38 per cent of burglaries took place during the day, 37 per cent during the night, with 25 per cent unknown. In the Pretoria West area, the percentages were 29 per cent during the day, 38 per cent during the night, and 33 per cent unknown.

In none of the case studies investigated did formal surveillance, including police or civilian patrols, Neighbourhood Watch, security guards, or CCTV-cameras, play any significant role in deterring residential burglary. The reason for this was the mere absence or infrequency of these security measures in the areas under investigation. This does not imply that formal surveillance should not be regarded as important. However, contrary to formal surveillance, it was found that informal surveillance had a significant impact on the occurrence patterns of burglaries in the case studies.

The rationale behind visibility in and around residential sites, is that it improves surveillability, for example, through improved lighting and open lines of sight. Exterior buildings, big garden bushes and concealed corners, on the other hand, provide shelter for burglars and reduce the chances of them being observed. The experts from the police and the security companies, who were interviewed during the study, were of the opinion that visibility is an important deterring factor. The convicted burglars did not regard good lighting as an important deterrent, but mentioned the presence of big shrubs in the garden as in their favour.

Taking these visibility factors into account, a table (see Table 5.2) was compiled to identify the differences between the case studies. It could be concluded that the residential sites in the Pretoria West case studies were more open (see factors 1 and 2) than those in the Garsfontein case studies, whilst the exterior lighting was better in the Garsfontein cases. Although it was difficult to estimate what specific impact the visibility factors had on the burglars' decisions, there was an obvious connection between the more noticeable absence of exterior lighting in the Pretoria West cases and the occurrence of burglaries during the night.

According to Lab (1997:32), lighting as a means of increasing surveillability has been one of the most researched individual crime prevention strategies. He cited from various crime studies to show the inconsistency of the results. Reppetto (1974, cited in Lab, 1997:32), for example, comparing differing levels of lighting in Boston, reported no correlation between lighting and robbery or burglary. Wright *et al.* (1974, cited in Lab, 1997:32) on the other hand, found significant reductions in violent crime and some decline, although not statistical ignificant, in property crimes in illuminated areas. The greatest effect of improved street

lighting appears to be on the fear of crime. Lab (1997:32) made mention of seven research programmes that measured fear of crime, in which all but one, found that residents felt safer as a result of the increased lighting. Good lighting therefore enhances the feeling of safety amongst residents.

TABLE 5.2: VISIBILITY FACTORS IN CASE STUDIES

PERCENTAGE CASES RELATING TO VISIBILITY FACTORS		
VISIBILITY FACTORS	**GARSFONTEIN**	**PRETORIA WEST**
1. Good street lighting	83%	83%
2. Big plants in front of dwelling	58%	36%
3. Good exterior lighting around dwelling	58%	42%
4. Open to the street (no security fence or wall)	42%	58%

In general, the residences in the Garsfontein area were better lit during the night through exterior lighting than those in Pretoria West. On the other hand, the visibility during the day was better in the Pretoria West area, because the residential sites were more open, surrounded by low walls or fences, and had fewer big trees and shrubs in the gardens. Better visibility increases the chances of a burglar being observed and will therefore lower the vulnerability or risk rating of a particular residence.

In conclusion it can be stated that the residents in the Pretoria West area were in general more alert and involved with each other during the day than the residents in the Garsfontein area, where residents tended to favour a more private lifestyle. The greater presence of adults in and around residences in the Pretoria West area during the daytime, probably as a result of people not working, also increased informal surveillance and more community involvement. If, however, there were criminal elements amongst them, then the same factors that enhanced informal surveillance, could become a risk factor. Two of the respondents in the Pretoria West area, for example, indicated that they suspected people from within their community as being involved in burglary activities.

Although difficult to quantify, the research findings in this study suggests that periods of improved surveillance lowered the risk of being targeted by burglars.

5.3.3 Vulnerabilities relating to the physical design

In the research expectations (see par. 2.7.3), the following situational conditions, relating to the physical design of residences, were identified as possible risk factors:

- When there are visible signs of wealth.
- When design features indicate easy entry to the building.

In this section the focus is on the physical design of the buildings in the case studies, and does not include aspects such as the control and use of space around the buildings, which refers to the more broader concept of environmental design. In this study the concept of situational conditions was preferred to that of environmental design to describe the risk factors in the micro-environment. The rationale behind physical design that constitutes one aspect of the situational conditions, was explained in the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2.4), also confirming that 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 risk of being caught. The attractiveness of a potential target will depend on the environmental cues and the immediate characteristics of the target as perceived by the burglar. Physical design features and surveillance factors are therefore closely interlinked with each other.

The residential neighbourhoods in the Garsfontein police station area could be classified as middle to high income areas. The majority of residences portray an appearance of relative wealth in terms of design features. Taking into account the external appearances of the buildings in the Garsfontein case studies, it was not possible to distinguish them in any significant way from the neighbouring buildings in terms of their wealth appearance. The residential area as a whole projected an image of a middle- to high income status. As mentioned previously (see par.4.5), the convicted burglars indicated that the residential areas best suited for burglaries were located to the east of Pretoria (Waterkloof, Garsfontein, Moreletapark), and in the Centurion area. Through their environmental knowledge, the burglars were of the opinion that the goods they were looking for, would be found in the residences in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria.

In the Pretoria West case studies it was different. In 50 per cent of the cases the residences that were targeted were more attractive and reflected greater wealth than the surrounding residences. Generally, these residences were in a better condition as a result of having been recently painted, or renovated, or the garden was well kept. The possibility existed that the wealthier appearance of some of the residences in the Pretoria West area created the impression that such residences would yield higher rewards, and therefore increased the risk of being targeted.

Judging by the external appearance (by the outside), it seemed as if residences in the Garsfontein area had a greater chance of being randomly selected for burglary than the

residences in the Pretoria West area where the better looking residences had a greater chance of being selected.

With regard to the expectation that design features with easy entrance or escape from the building will increase its vulnerability, it was found that burglars prefered to break in from the rear or the side of the residences (see Table 5.3). The reason for this was probably to reduce the chances of being observed. Design features that allowed easy access to the rear part of the building or created concealed entrances, for example patio doors, would therefore increase the vulnerability of that specific residence.

TABLE 5.3: ENTERING OF BUILDINGS IN THE CASE STUDIES

PERCENTAGE OF CASES ENTERED FROM THE REAR, SIDE OR FRONT		
	Entering from the rear or side	**Entering from the front**
GARSFONTEIN	83%	17%
PRETORIA WEST	67%	23%

In the Garsfontein area where more burglaries occurred during the day than in Pretoria West, more than 80 per cent of the burglaries occurred from the rear or side of the residences. These results are confirmed by Reppetto's (1974:49) viewpoint that residential crimes are, by definition, low-visibility crimes, which take place off the street and generally out of view of the police or passers-by.

The preferred way of gaining entry to buildings is summarised in Table 5.4. The most common method of gaining access was through sliding doors, followed by windows, preferably from the rear part or the side of the residence.

In the Garsfontein area, the method most often used to gain entrance to the building was through sliding doors, whilst in the Pretoria West area, it was through windows at the rear or side of the buildings.

TABLE 5.4: DESIGN FEATURES RELATING TO THE ENTERING OF BUILDINGS

PERCENTAGE OF CASES RELATING TO SPECIFIC ENTRANCES					
	Sliding doors	**Windows at rear and side**	**Windows at the front**	**Doors at rear and side**	**Doors at the front**
GARSFONTEIN	41%	17%	17%	25%	-
PRETORIA WEST	25%	41%	17%	8%	8%
AVERAGE:	33%	29%	17%	17%	4%

Windows of bathrooms and laundries were preferred to other windows, probably because burglars suspected that, in most instances, these rooms were not fitted with alarm sensors, which gave them extra time to break in without activating the alarm. Doors, including sliding doors, that exited onto a patio-area or were situated in a concealed area, were also preferred, probably because they were in most instances not visible from the street. Even if these entrances were secured by "target hardening" such as locks, security gates or burglar bars, the burglars would not be deterred, because they usually carry equipment, like a crowbar, to overcome these obstacles.

Another design feature that added to the vulnerability of the residences, was where the burglars could enter the garage through an inside door. In three of the Garsfontein case studies, the burglars gained access to the garages through an inside door, in which cases three vehicles were stolen together with the rest of the goods. In all three cases the garages fronted directly on to the street with no fence or wall in-between.

5.3.4 Vulnerabilities relating to security

In the research expectations, it was postulated that limited security protection (see par. 2.7.3), would increase the vulnerability of a potential target.

In the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2.4), the rationale was followed that the lack of visible security measures would increase the vulnerability or risk of a residence of being targeted. On the other hand, the more that security measures were implemented, the more difficult it would become for the burglar to enter the residence, and thus the vulnerability would decrease.

5.3.4.1 Responses from the burglary victims

The responses from the burglary victims in the case studies, with regard to the security measures that were in place before the burglaries, are summarised in Table 5.5.

From Table 5.5, it is clear that, in most of the case studies, the burglars could enter the residences with relative ease as a result of inadequate security measures. Most of the residences were equipped with security gates at the exterior doors and burglar bars at the windows, in general regarded as standard equipment for every residence in any event. Another observed feature related to security was that residents were inclined to erect fences or walls not only as a means of protection, but also to improve their privacy. More security lights were installed in the Garsfontein area, whilst the presence of dogs was more common in the Pretoria West area. Even with the many deficiencies in security measures, the

residences in the Garsfontein area were better protected than those in the Pretoria West area. The installation of alarm systems and linking-up with armed reaction units were only found in the Garsfontein area, although to a limited extent. The Garsfontein cases with electrified fences and/or guards were part of bigger housing complexes that had electrified fences, as well as access control and guards at the entrance gates. Although more than 70 per cent of the interviewees said they experienced good neighbourliness, none of them were involved in any kind of Neighbourhood Watch or civilian patrols, or could recollect the existence of any such activities in their neighbourhoods.

TABLE 5.5: SECURITY MEASURES IMPLEMENTED PRIOR TO BURGLARIES

PERCENTAGE CASES WHERE SECURITY MEASURES WERE PRESENT		
SECURITY MEASURES	**GARSFONTEIN**	**PRETORIA WEST**
1. Security gates at exterior doors	83%	83%
2. Burglar bars at windows	83%	92%
3. Fences or walls in front of residence	58%	50%
4. Effective exterior lighting	58%	33%
5. Dogs	50%	67%
6. Alarm	25%	-
7. Electrified fences or razor wire on the walls	16%	-
8. Surveillance cameras and/or security guards (at housing complexes)	16%	-
9. Alarm connected to an armed reaction unit	8%	-

5.3.4.2 Responses from the convicted burglars

The convicted burglars were also requested to comment on the effectiveness of certain security or protective measures taken by residents. Three categories could be distinguished according to what they perceived as having an effect on their decision-making. The results are summarised in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6: BURGLARS' RESPONSES CONCERNING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECURITY MEASURES

SECURITY MEASURES		
LITTLE EFFECT	**SOME EFFECT**	**MORE EFFECT**
- Walls and fences - Razor wire or spikes - Security gates at doors - Burglar bars at windows - Police patrols	- Good visibility (including lighting) - Alarm system - Dog (s) - Electrical wire - Security around complex	- Presence of occupants - Alarm plus reaction unit - Neighbours watching or overlooking residence

None of the burglars who were interviewed showed much concern about any of the security measures. They believed that most security measures can be by-passed or overcome if other factors, such as the absence of guardians, are positive. 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 all played a role in the final outcome of the burglary. However, the burglars were aware of the fact that they might be faced with unforeseen obstacles or risks whenever they decided to commence with the burglary.

According to Brown *et al.* (1996: 442), sophisticated burglars are not afraid of burglar alarms not connected to reaction units, because they know how to disarm them. Burglars also know that it is highly unlikely that police or security patrols will observe a burglary once it is in progress.

It is also important to note the interplay between security factors and the time of the burglary. Two of the burglars, for example, mentioned that barking dogs were a greater deterrent during the night than during the day, because they believed that residents and neighbours were more alert to warning signals during the night than during the day.

5.3.4.3 Responses from the experts

For the purpose of this study the interviews that were conducted with the members of the two security companies and the SAPS in Garsfontein and Pretoria West, were regarded as expert opinions on the subject of residential burglary. According to their responses, they were in agreement that the following factors could increase the vulnerability of residences:

- when the residence is unattended;
- when residents are asleep;
- when the residence is near a main road and/or open veld;
- low visibility around the residence (e.g. big shrubs in the garden and poor street lighting); and
- when the resident's routine activities are easy to detect.

A number of other factors were also mentioned by the experts as contributory to the vulnerability of a potential target:

- cul-de-sac streets, with less outside pedestrian and vehicle movement;
- high walls, behind which burglars could hide;

- little contact with neighbours or an understanding to watch over each other's property;
- building activities in the vicinity;
- visible valuables in and outside the residence, e.g. a luxurious car;
- low on security protection;
- near public places where strangers usually gather; and
- buildings with concealed entrances.

In conclusion the following comments could be made about the situational factors that played a role in creating favourable conditions for the burglaries to take place.

The purpose of this section on situational conditions was to identify and investigate the situational factors that existed prior to the burglaries, and to determine in what way they could have 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 who 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 varying degrees of vulnerability that made them likely targets at the time of the burglaries. What specific impact these vulnerabilities had on the decision to commence with a burglary or not was impossible to establish. Nonetheless their contribution to the creation of burglary opportunities is clear. The risk profiles based on the findings of the analysis of the case studies in both the Pretoria West and Garsfontein areas, suggested that, in all the burglary cases, there were situational conditions that favoured the burglary event.
It should be emphasised that the risk factors only reflect on the vulnerability of a residence and should not be interpreted in a deterministic way as if they caused the burglary. The interplay of the risk factors, together with other factors such as the weather conditions, as well as the motivational level, skills and knowledge of the burglar, may have created the opportune circumstances, in time and space, for a burglary to take place. The combination of risk and other factors present before the burglary constituted the unique setting, interpreted by the burglar as favourable or not favourable for the burglary. It could be concluded that the final decision depended on the burglar.

Bennett (1986:52) cited numerous studies to show that the 'final decision' by burglars to offend or not to offend was mostly influenced by cues relating to the risk of getting caught. He also stated that burglars were mostly concerned about "signs of occupancy", "surveillability", and "presence of neighbours". Cues relating to the potential 'rewards' of the

offence or the 'ease' or 'difficulty' of entering the building, were mentioned much less often by the burglars in these studies. According to Bennett (1986:52), it should also be emphasised that the final decision to commit the burglary was taken upon the convergence of a number of factors perceived by the burglar as favourable in terms of minimising the risks and maximising the rewards.

In their study on burglary Bennett and Wright (1984:42) also found that most of the burglars were conscious of actively making a decision to offend in response to specific situational stimuli. This does not mean that previous experiences did not influence their current perceptions and the decision-making process. Bennett and Wright (1984:40) also postulated that the original decision to offend was taken independently of situational factors, and was mostly motivated by the need for money. However, they argued that the final decision to actually commit the burglary would be influenced by the immediate situational conditions.

In a study on residential burglary in which Winchester and Jackson (1982:22) compared the experiences of non-victim households (sample size 491) with those of burglary victim households (sample size 434), they found "environmental risk" to be the most important differentiating factor and not security measures. However, the researcher from this investigation, is of the opinion that burglars do not view environmental factors separately from security measures but will, in effect, consider all the available risk factors before making a final decision.

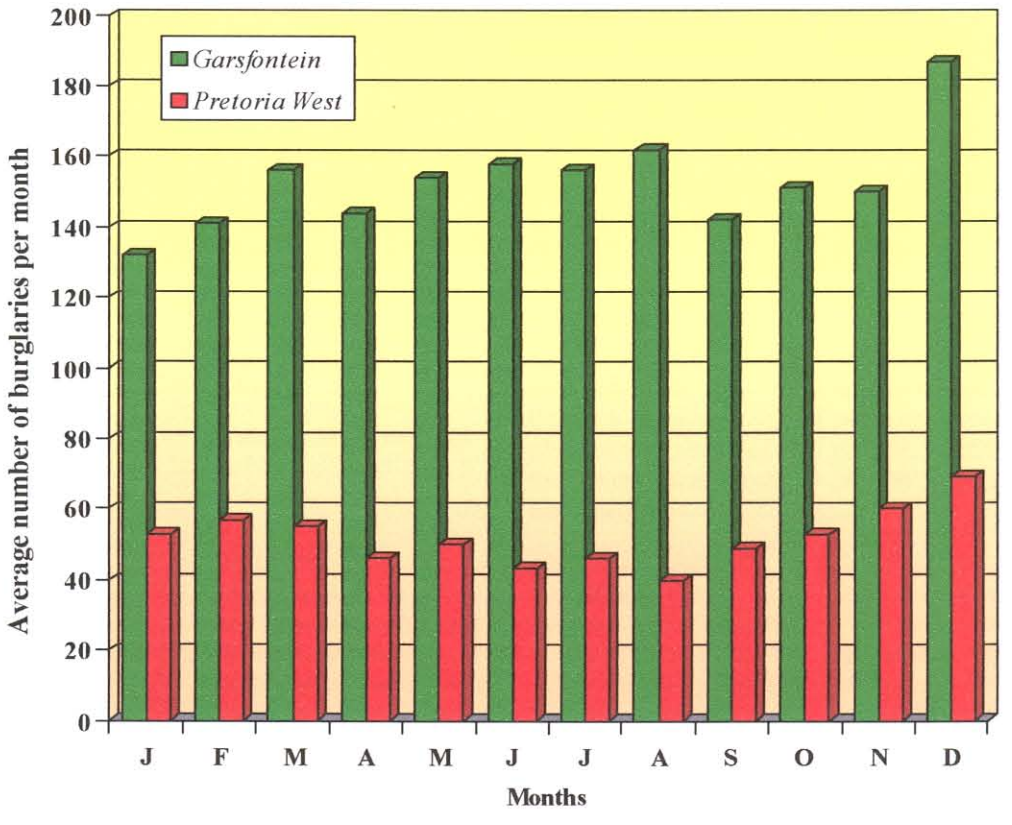
Reppetto (1974:52) also came to the conclusion that the most critical factors in the differential geographical distribution of residential burglary are: the location of the neighbourhood; the affluence of the residents; and the vulnerability of the dwelling (measured by its physical accessibility and protection, occupancy, visibility, and the social cohesion of the neighbourhood). However, the relative weight of these factors and how they related to each other in accounting for differential burglary rates, appeared to differ substantially from one area to another.

5.4 THE BURGLARY EVENT

In this Section, the emphasis shifts from the time period before the burglary commenced to the actual commission of the burglary event with the aim to gain a better understanding of what happened during the burglary. As stated in the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6.2.5), the final decision to commence with the burglary will depend on the burglar perceiving the situational conditions as favourable.

- whether the burglary was professionally executed;
- the number of burglars involved;
- the duration burglars spend inside the residence; and
- the level of competence of the burglars.

FIGURE 5.3: SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY



Data source: (Crime statistics provided by the office of the SAPS Pretoria area Commissioner)

A further research expectation was postulated, namely:

- 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 (see par. 2.7.4).

In order to evaluate and interpret the data on the extent and nature of the case study burglaries, it was appropriate to develop a typology or schemata to integrate the data into a coherent entity that would also reflect on the research expectations as stated above. The typology is explained in Table 5.7. The tendencies in Table 5.7 are based on the findings in this study and should be interpreted within the limitations of the small research sample. It nonetheless provided a useful framework for the analysis and interpretation of different types of burglaries.

5.4.1 Time that burglaries occur

According to the Garsfontein police station burglary statistics for 1998, the occurrence of burglaries peaked on Fridays and Saturdays, with the fewer cases on Mondays, and from Tuesdays onwards there was an increase in the burglaries towards the weekends. In the Pretoria West police station area, the pattern differed slightly with a relative even distribution of burglaries between Tuesdays and Saturdays, peaking on Friday nights, and the lowest occurrence on Sundays and Mondays.

In the Garsfontein area most burglaries from Mondays to Thursdays, were committed during the day, whereas burglaries during Fridays and Saturdays were mostly committed during the night. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that residents go to work on weekdays, leaving their homes unattended, while over weekends there is a greater chance that the residents would leave their homes unattended in the evenings. This tendency was also confirmed by the SAPS burglary statistics for 1998 in the Pretoria West area, except for Wednesdays when more burglaries occurred during the night than during the day. The risk periods during the day and night are shown in Figure 5.2, which indicates that approximately 63 per cent of the burglaries in the case studies occurred during the night between midnight and 06:00 in the morning, and 21 per cent of the burglaries occurred between 06:00 and 12:00.

In the Pretoria West area, the occurrence of residential burglaries were higher during the summer months of Octobe r to March, than the rest of the year (see Fig. 5.3). Burglaries peaked during the holiday month of December, which could be regarded as the period when most residents were away on holiday. In the Garsfontein area, burglaries also peaked during December, with no clear pattern for the rest of the year. In an IDASA study of crime patterns in Pretoria during 1998 (Altbeker, 1998:17) it was also found that property crimes as a whole was reasonably evenly spread throughout the year. This was especially the case in the Pretoria Central, Sunnyside and Brooklyn areas, where high property crime rates were recorded throughout the year. However, with regard to residential burglary, the month of December stood out as the period in which most burglaries occurred in Pretoria.

School holiday times do not necessarily coincide with higher burglary rates, as these tend to depend on the residents' activities and movements such as whether they stay at home or go away on holiday, in which case the likelihood for burglary increases.

5.4.2 Extent and nature of burglaries

In the research expectations (see par. 2.7.4), it was postulated that the extent of financial loss experienced during a burglary event may proportionately relate to the following factors:

TABLE 5.7: EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE CASE STUDY BURGLARIES

VARIABLES	TYPE OF BURGLARY		
	OPPORTUNISTIC BURGLARIES (TYPE 1)	PLANNED BURGLARIES	
		HIGHER RISK (TYPE 2)	LOWER RISK (TYPE 3)
DURATION OF BURGLARY (time inside the building)	The duration of the burglary is very short - a typical 'smash-and-grab' burglary.	The duration of the burglary is very short - less than 5 minutes. The residence is protected by an activated alarm system, and armed reaction unit, or residents are asleep, or can return at any moment.	The duration of the burglary is longer - more than 5 minutes. Likely that the residents will be absent for longer periods, e.g. at work, or on vacation.
NUMBER OF BURGLARS	In most instances one or two.	In most instances three or more.	In most instances three or more.
COMPETENCY OF BURGLARS	Act in an amateurish way, e.g. throw stone through window. Move on foot. Minimum skills needed.	Act more professional. Have the necessary skills and equipment to overcome security barriers. Use cell-phones and vehicles for communication and fast escape.	Act more professional. Have the necessary skills and equipment to overcome security barriers. Use vehicles, or hide goods to be picked up later.
EXTENT OF DAMAGE	The burglar is on the lookout for one or two easy removable items, or items that lie around, or placed near a window or door, like a cell-phone, wallet, watch, Hi-Fi, or jewellery.	The time factor is crucial and the burglars are therefore in a hurry and very selective. They focus on high value items, especially electronic items, e.g. Hi-Fi's, TVs, video-machines, CDs, computers, microwave ovens, cameras, as well as jewellery, clothes and firearms.	Burglars have more time and will search more extensively for valuables, e.g. empty cupboards and wardrobes. In addition to the items already mentioned in the other burglary types , the following items are also in demand: fire arms, silverware, cutlery, food/meat, paintings, blankets, Persian carpets, curtains, tools, and when the opportunity arises, even the owner's vehicle.

According to the information gathered on the extent and nature of the burglaries, it was possible to distinguish between three broad categories or types of burglaries, namely: opportunistic burglaries; higher risk, planned burglaries; and lower risk, planned burglaries (from the burglar's perspective). The distinction between opportunistic and planned burglaries was explained in paragraph 5.2.2. The three types of burglaries in the typology

could be constructed in terms of the variables as identified in the research expectations on the extent of financial loss (see par. 2.7.4). The descriptions of the three types of burglaries were based on the findings of the case studies, as well as observations that were made during the field research.

In terms of the duration of burglaries, Brown *et al.* (1996:443) were of the opinion that experienced burglars would minimize the amount of time they would spend in a house, usually not exceeding five minutes and preferably less. In this manner not even the fastest response to a silent alarm would threaten the burglars. They also argued that burglars would first head for the bedroom, due to limited time, knowing that most people keep valuables, especially money, jewellery, and weapons there.

This study showed that burglars would adjust to the situation, for example, when the residents were at home or asleep, they would, however, avoid the sleeping quarters. The time burglars stayed in the residences varied, depending on the type of burglary. If the residence was protected by an alarm system, connected to an armed reaction unit, then the burglars usually had less than five minutes (which is the estimated reaction time) before members of the reaction unit arrived. The possibility also existed that burglars could decide to abort from entering a residence as a result of intervening circumstances, for example, returning residents, a visit from the neighbours or the arrival of an armed reaction unit.

In planned burglaries, the burglars usually operate in numbers of at least three or more to increase their ability to work faster and to maximise their reward.

With reference to competency, the tools most often used by the burglars during break-ins (to force open security gates, door locks and security bars), were crowbars and bolt-cutters, and, to a lesser extent, shifting spanners. The burglar bars at the windows were either cut or bent away, while the glass of the windows was removed or broken. Windows of bathrooms were favourite targets, probably because bathrooms are usually not protected by alarm detectors. In at least two of the cases in the present study, the burglars used a child to climb through the bathroom window to open a door from the inside. With continuous improvements in the security of residences, burglars were also compelled to increasingly make use of vehicles to ensure a fast escape from the crime scene.

Table 5.8 shows the results after the framework (in Table 5.7) was applied to the case studies. It is evident that most (76 per cent) of the burglaries in the Garsfontein area could be classified as Type 3 burglaries, suggesting that they were perceived by the criminals as lower risk burglaries, executed when the residents were absent from home, and the chances

of interference were less. In three of these burglaries a vehicle was also stolen, and in one case, contact was made between the burglars and the resident. According to the victim (a single female resident), the burglars looked surprised to find her in the residence, and they held her hostage for the duration of the burglary.

TABLE 5.8: TYPES OF BURGLARIES IN THE CASE STUDY AREAS

TYPES OF BURGLARIES IN THE CASE STUDY AREAS				
		TYPE 1 (more opportunistic)	**TYPE 2 (higher risks for burglars)**	**TYPE 3 (lower risks for burglars)**
% of cases	**Garsfontein**	8%	16%	76%
	Pretoria West	50%	16%	34%
Av. R value per burglary	**Garsfontein**	R10 000	R12 500	R31 800* * *The value of the stolen vehicles excluded.*
	Pretoria West	R3 000	R8 500	R24 500*

In contrast to the Garsfontein area, most burglaries (50 per cent) in the Pretoria West area could be described as Type 1 burglaries, suggesting that they were executed in a more opportunistic manner, with no or little prior planning. It was also found, as expected, that the average financial loss experienced in the Garsfontein police station cases was higher than those cases in the Pretoria West police station area. This could partly be attributed to the fact that more Type 3 burglaries occurred in the Garsfontein area.

The two insurance brokers who participated in the research, respectively and independently confirmed that the average financial loss due to a burglary in the Garsfontein area could be estimated between R25 000 and R35 000, and between R30 00 and R40 000. They were not in the position to provide figures for the Pretoria West area, because of the small clientele base that they had in that area. However, according to police statistics for 1998, the average financial loss due to a burglary in the Pretoria West area amounted to between R6 000 and R8 000.

Evidence from the findings of this study showed that, when the opportunity arose, the burglars would steal the resident's vehicle, especially if the keys were found in the house and the stolen goods could be loaded into the vehicle. In the larger scale burglaries, cell-phones were often used to communicate with the waiting vehicle (if not already on the premises), whereas in smaller, less sophisticated burglaries, the burglars had to move on foot and sometimes had to carry the stolen goods, with increased risk of being detected. Leaving the premises and site constituted the greatest risk for the burglars being observed and caught red-handed with the stolen goods. It was *inter alia* for this reason that the burglars who were interviewed, attached so much importance to escape routes.

Because burglaries were executed in a rush, the premises were sometimes left in chaos, although not a single case in this study showed evidence that burglars had purposefully vandalised any property. The burglars also indicated that they did not carry hand weapons during the burglaries and that they preferred not to make contact with the residents or any other person in the vicinity of the burglary scene. Although more than 50 per cent of the burglars acknowledged that they sometimes used alcohol and drugs, they denied the possibility of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while committing the burglary. According to Conklin (1995:297), factors such as alcohol, drugs and firearms can be regarded as facilitating factors in the commission of a crime, but do not cause crime *per se*. Further research is needed to investigate the specific role of alcohol and drugs in the commission of burglary events.

5.4.3 Types of goods stolen and the disposal thereof

In the research expectations it was postulated that burglars would tend to select those items that they know are marketable (see par. 2.7.4).

Table 5.9 provides a list of items that were stolen in the case studies. From these results it is evident that the easily portable, and easy-to-dispose-of expensive items were the most popular ones, including: electronic products for entertainment; clothing; electronic household equipment; jewellery; linen; food; and chinaware. On average, higher volumes of goods were stolen from the residences in the Garsfontein cases than the Pretoria West cases, especially in terms of high value items such as: TVs, video machines, clothing, jewellery and chinaware. The Pretoria West cases, on the other hand, registered higher volumes of items such as linen, tools and money.

TABLE 5.9: TYPE OF GOODS STOLEN

PERCENTAGE OF CASES WHERE SPECIFIC GOODS WERE STOLEN		
TYPE OF GOODS	**GARSFONTEIN**	**PRETORIA WEST**
1. **Electronic products for entertainment** - TV - Video machine - Hi-Fi - Radio	 83% 83% 75% 42%	 42% 50% 67% 8%
2. **Clothing**	75%	58%
3. **Household electronic equipment** (e.g. microwave, kettle, toaster, sewing-machine)	67%	50%
4. **Jewellery**	50%	33%
5. **Linen**	42%	50%
6. **Food/liquor**	42%	25%
7. **China-/silverware**	42%	17%
8. **Paintings**	25%	17%
9. **Tools**	25%	33%
10. **Vehicles**	25%	8%
11. **Computers**	17%	-
12. **Cameras**	17%	8%
13. **Cellular phones**	8%	8%
14. **Money**	8%	25%
15. **Firearms**	8%	-

The items that burglars in this study were looking for, showed a large resemblance to burglars' preferences in other countries, although the priority order of the items might differ. In Australia, for example, research has shown that the top ten priority items included: (1) TVs/VCRs, laptop computers; (2) cash, credit cards, handbags/wallets, (3) jewellery, (4) home audio equipment, (5) power tools, including garden tools, (6) household electricals, (7) computers, (8) clothing, especially leather jackets and clothing with brand labels, (9) prescription drugs, and (10) bicycles (Department of Justice and Customs, Australia, 2000).

Burglars normally do not want to keep the stolen goods, and would therefore try to sell them as fast 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. According to Barkan (1997:325), the 'fences' sell the stolen goods to customers, many of whom are in legitimate occupations. These customers, otherwise law-abiding

citizens, are willing to take the chance of buying the stolen goods for much less than it would otherwise cost, and in the process overlook the fact that they are aiding and abetting burglary.

Information provided by the convicted burglars in the present study also indicated that when they work in an organised manner, they usually work for a 'boss' ('fences') who pay them for the stolen goods. This is probably the reason way so many burglaries are carried out in a selective manner. As one burglar acknowledged, by saying: "If I want a TV set for myself, I would rather sell the stolen one and buy a new one for myself". The burglars will therefore focus on those items they know they have a market for or those that have been requested for by the 'boss'. According to Livingston (1996:224), the burglar needs to get rid of the stolen merchandise as soon as possible as it constitutes incriminating evidence should the police make an arrest. Fences, dealers in stolen goods, will probably pay the burglars only a fraction of the item's value, but the money is better and more certain than what the burglars could get by selling the merchandise themselves (Livingston, 1996:224).

In the South African context very little information is available on the role of 'fences' and the way illegal stolen goods find their way into the open market, for example, to swop shops. Another problem is that fences usually operate in a police area other than the one from where the goods were stolen. This hampers effective co-operation and investigative work between the different police stations. In the combatting of residential burglary far greater emphasis should be placed on the role of 'fences' in the illegal trade of stolen goods.

5.5 RESIDENTS' RESPONSES

In this section, the focus will be on the way in which the residents responded to the burglaries and what additional security measures they took after the burglaries.

5.5.1 Feelings of safety

Brantingham *et al.* (1986:139) distinguished between the fear of victimisation and a feeling of safety. For them the fear of victimisation can be described as an individual's estimate of crime trends in the macro-, meso- and micro-environment, as well as the probability that he/she, personally, will be victimised. Feelings of safety, on the contrary, measure whether people feel safe in specific places, regardless of their fear of crime. It may therefore appear that a person who is afraid of victimisation, may still feel relatively safe in his/her home and known environment. According to Livingston (1996:22), the fear of crime is based on perceptions of crime rather than personal experiences of crime. He argued that fear of

crime originated not just as a reaction to crime but also as part of a person's perception of the immediate environment.

In the research expectations for this study it was postulated that residents would feel less safe in their immediate environment as a result of the burglary (see par. 2.7.5).

During the interviews, the respondents were asked to reflect on how safe they felt in their immediate environment since the burglary had occurred (Question 3.3, Appendix 1), and in what way the burglary changed their routine activities (Question 3.4, Appendix 1).

The different responses were grouped together and summarised (see Table 5.10).

TABLE 5.10: DIFFERENT RESPONSES OF RESIDENTS

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS WITHIN EACH CATEGORY OF RESPONSES		
CATEGORIES OF RESPONSES	**GARSFONTEIN**	**PRETORIA WEST**
1. No significant changes in routine activities	64%	58%
2. Became more safety conscious	58%	50%
3. Felt relatively safe	50%	42%
4. Felt relatively unsafe	50%	55%
5. Experienced sleeping disorder (at least for a while)	25%	17%
6. Avoid returning home late in the evening	25%	8%
7. Feelings of distrust in other people	17%	17%

The findings of this study suggest an approximate 50/50 division between those respondents who experienced increased uneasy feelings of safety and those who said they still felt relatively safe in their immediate environment. A possible reason why not more of the respondents felt unsafe was the fact that in most of the cases no contact was made between the burglars and the residents. The realisation that the burglary was not directed at them personally could make them feel more "distant" from the event. The one respondent who was held hostage for the duration of the burglary expressed the highest degree of trauma and anxiety, and was treated for depression and disturbed sleep patterns afterwards. It is to be expected that people who personally experience the burglary as a close encounter will be more intensely affected by the event. Evidence was also found in this study that certain people perceived themselves as more vulnerable than others, which included single female residents, the disabled, the elderly and the children. 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.

According to Livingston (1996:14), the victimisation by burglary is indirect, whilst that of violent or personal crimes, such as rape and robbery, are direct and seem to have a greater psychological impact on their victims, for example, in terms of depression, anxiety and phobias. Livingston (1996:15) also argued that the more indirect the link between cause and effect of a crime between criminal and victim, the weaker the public reaction will be. It is thus understandable that the media will give more prominence to burglary incidents that coincided with personal violence or assault.

More than 50 per cent of the respondents also indicated that the initial heightened feelings of unsafety returned to "normal" after some period, and that they did not make any significant changes to their daily routine activities. The fact that most of the victims had improved their security after the burglary, could also have contributed to returned feelings of relative safety. One important change mentioned by the respondents (more than 50 per cent) was the tendency to be more alert or watchful for potential burglars/criminals. A few respondents also mentioned the inconvenience they suffered as a result of the intrusion of their privacy and the financial losses they experienced.

The same tendencies, with regard to changed feelings of safety and routine activities, were experienced in both the two case study areas of Garsfontein and Pretoria West.

5.5.2 Improving security

In the research expectations it was postulated that residents would implement additional security measures after the occurrence of a burglary (see par. 2.7.5).

The respondents were also asked to name the new security measures they implemented after the burglary (Question 3.7, Appendix 1). The range of security measures they implemented, is summarised in Table 5.11.

There was a clear distinction between the security measures that were implemented in the Garsfontein area from those that were implemented in the Pretoria West area. In the Garsfontein area, where the residents were 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. These included upgrading of existing burglar bars at the windows, erecting security gates at the front and back doors, installing security lights, acquiring a dog and fostering friendly relations with the neighbours.

The noticeable dominant tendency to acquire alarm systems and subscribe to armed reaction units in the Garsfontein area, could also be ascribed to the role of insurance companies which required specific improvements in security measures after the burglary had occurred. The high cost factor attached to the installation of an alarm system and the running costs of subscribing to an armed reaction unit were probably the reasons why the residents had not implemented these measures earlier.

TABLE 5.11: NEW SECURITY MEASURES IMPLEMENTED AFTER THE BURGLARY

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS IMPLEMENTING NEW SECURITY MEASURES		
NEW SECURITY MEASURES	**GARSFONTEIN**	**PRETORIA WEST**
1. Installation of alarm system	50%	8%
2. Subscribed to armed reaction unit	50%	-
3. Automatisation of access gate to site	25%	-
4. Security gates at exterior doors	17%	25%
5. Improved existing security gates	17%	33%
6. Improved burglar bars at windows	17%	33%
7. Acquired a dog	17%	25%
8. Subscribed to radio control room	17%	-
9. Became involved with community patrols	17%	-
10. Improved visibility in front of residence	8%	-
11. Erected fence to close residential site	8%	8%
12. Added razor wire to existing walls	8%	8%
13. Elevated existing walls	8%	8%
14. Fostered relations with neighbours	8%	33%
15. Carried a firearm	8%	8%
16. Installed security lights	-	17%

Members of the police and the insurance company representatives who were interviewed, also expressed concern about the alleged involvement of security company members in isolated burglary events. Incidents were reported in the media where security personnel, who were the first to arrive at the scene of the burglary after the burglars had left, removed goods from the premises, making them also guilty of theft. Subsequent to this report security companies had implemented additional precautionary measures to counter possible involvement of their personnel in corruption, for example, they were not allowed to enter the building before the police had arrived.

With regard to the service rendered by the police, the response from all the respondents was that they were relatively satisfied with the initial reaction of the SAPS, which included, the reaction time to arrive at the burglary scene, the completion of the crime report or statement,

the issuing of a case number and the arrangements made for taking fingerprints. The respondents were, however, disappointed in the lack of feedback from the police on whether any progress was made with the investigations. Except for one firearm and one vehicle that were recovered, none of the respondents received any information on whether stolen goods were retrieved or not or whether any arrests were made.

According to a survey study of crime in Pretoria in1998, by the ISS, the victims of property crimes in Pretoria who notified the police of their offences, were more satisfied with the service they received than victims of violent crimes, such as murder and rape (Louw, 1998:26). The report suggested that cases of serious crimes such as assault and rape were often more difficult for the police to pursue, since victims frequently withdrew charges due to fear of reprisal, the sensitivity of such cases, and the fact that evidence was often more difficult to collect. Residents in the traditional white suburbs also responded more favourable about the police service than the residents in the former black townships, where personal and violent crimes were more rampart. Thirty three per cent of the people living in the traditional white suburbs were positive about the police's ability to control crime, while less than 25 per cent of the people living in the inner city, townships and informal settlements thought likewise (Louw, 1998:31).

What has become clear from this research is that the respondents had little confidence in the police's ability to protect them from burglary, and that they had to take protective measures themselves.

5.6 BURGLARS' RESPONSES

5.6.1 Feelings of guilt

In the research expectations it was postulated that burglars would tend to rationalise not to feel guilty about their criminal behaviour (see par. 2.7.6).

The burglars that were interviewed in this study showed very little remorse or 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 it was necessary for them to burgle in order to survive or to support their dependents. Furthermore, they felt that the 'rich' could easily recover their losses through insurance claims.

Whether they will continue with burglary after their release was difficult to establish, because they knew the "correct" answer would be to say no. However, one of the convicted burglars

said he would be honest with the researcher, indicating that he would resume his burglary career after being released. Sentences of between four and five years imprisonment for first convictions, taking into account the possibility of early release on parole, would not be sufficient to change the habitual burglar from giving up burglary. As one of the prison warders commented, "imprisonment might even enhance the burglars' skills and knowledge through conversational sharing of previous experiences with other convicted burglars".

It can thus be postulated that burglars will persist with burglary as long as they regard the chances of being caught as slim, and retain the perception that burglary provides the opportunity to earn a good living.

5.6.2 Crime displacement

In the research expectations it was postulated that burglars would adapt to changing circumstances that may arise from improved security initiatives to be able to continue their criminal activities (see par. 2.7.6).

According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1981:29), burglars would tend to act according to an established 'template' of cues which were developed through previous experiences. During the interviews with the burglars it became apparent that some burglars (mentioned by three) also exercised a degree of flexibility in their approach to the commission of a burglary. They would, for example, not always "work" in a group, and may decide to go out alone, looking for an opportunity to burgle.

The ability to adjust to changing circumstances is referred to in the literature as crime displacement, which *inter alia* occurred as a result of improved crime prevention measures (Lab, 1997:73). From the responses of the convicted burglars, as well as the opinion of the experts consulted for the present study, it became evident that burglars would continuously adapt to changing circumstances, by improving their skills, moving from one target area to another, and changing the time of committing the offence. According to Lab (1997:73), these forms of 'displacement' have to do with an improving competency and the ability to adjust to changing circumstances, it did not indicate that the burglar had decided to stop being a burglar or to move to another type of crime.

In the Bennett and Wright (1984:50) study on burglary, 43 per cent of the burglars reported that, if they were prevented from committing a burglary, they would usually commit another burglary against another target the same day. Forty-one per cent said that they normally did not attempt to commit another offence the same day, and sixteen per cent said that their behaviour depended on circumstantial conditions. If burglars were prevented from

committing another crime, it could result in a reduction of the total number of burglary offences, otherwise it could only result in the displacement of burglary offences.

The burglars who were interviewed in the present study were of the opinion that the majority of burglars (in general) would not abandon burglary for another type of crime on account of increasing security protection measures taken by residents. According to them there would always be enough opportunities to continue with burglary. In contrast to this, there were police members who suggested that the increase in residential robberies and car hijackings in recent years represented a shift from residential burglary to armed robbery and hijackings. Although an increase in residential robbery and hijackings occurred between 1994 and 1999, according to the police statistics, it was not coupled with a decrease in residential burglary, which on the contrary, also showed an increase (see Table 1.1).

5.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of Chapter 5 was to analyse and interpret the results of the case studies and interviews conducted during the research phase, and to build a better understanding of the phenomenon of 'residential burglary' in the micro-environment. This was done through the application of the 'conceptual framework' and the 'research expectations' as put forward in Chapter 2 (see par. 2.6 and 2.7). The police station areas of Garsfontein and Pretoria West were used as the case study areas. Although the findings were presented by the use of percentages it was not the primary aim to "test" the research expectations in a statistical way but rather to display the variations in the findings and to determine whether confirmatory evidence for the conceptual framework and research expectations could be found.

The findings of the research were grouped under the headings as explained in the conceptual framework and were presented in such a way that it would enhance the understanding of the burglary process, with special emphasis on the following aspects:

- what motivates the initial involvement of the burglar;
- the search for a suitable target;
- the immediate situational conditions that could influence the burglar's final decision to continue or not to continue with the burglary;
- features of the burglary event; and
- responses of the burglary victims and burglars after the occurrence of the burglary event.

In Chapter 6 an overview is given of the different approaches to crime prevention, as well as

an explanation of practical principles that can be applied in the control and prevention of residential burglary at the macro-, meso- and micro-level.

A complete summary of the findings in relation to the research expectations and a refinement of the conceptual framework is presented in Chapter 7.