RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY PREVENTION IN CONTEXT OF MIDDLE SCANIA
PREVENTION MEASURES EMPLOYED BY THE POLICE

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This thesis aims to describe how the police work with residential burglary prevention in police area Middle Scania. Since burglary has become a problem in this area in the past decade, it is interesting to know what measures the police take to reduce and prevent it. The results show that the police in Middle Scania treat domestic burglary as a serious issue and implement both specific prevention measures, such as a specialised intervention, and day-to-day prevention measures, e.g. spreading the information or mapping and patrolling certain areas. Most of the used prevention measures are based on Routine Activity Theory, implicitly or explicitly. Neighbourhood watch is recommended by the police, as well as simply getting to know one’s neighbours. Interestingly enough repeat victimisation does not appear to be a problem in Middle Scania. Not much is known about the type of the offender that commits domestic burglary. Both short term and long term measures should be applied in order for prevention to have a greater impact.

*Keywords*: domestic burglary, intervention, Middle Scania, prevention measure, police, residential burglary, Scania.


Nyckelord: bostadsinbrott, förebyggande åtgärder, Mellersta Skåne, polisen, Skåne.
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INTRODUCTION

In the last decade the amount of residential burglaries has increased noticeably in Sweden, in Scania and in Middle Scania, which raises an issue for the police forces in the country of how to manage that surge of crime.

It is assumed that domestic burglary in Sweden has a virtually non-existent percentage of unreported cases due to fact that it is impossible to get insurance money without reporting the crime\(^1\) (BRÅ, unknown; Pira, 2008). However, according to Swedish Crime Survey (NTU\(^2\)), a yearly self-report study which discusses the answers of random sample of the population about their experiences of victimisation, that is not the case (BRÅ, 2015c). This study asks the respondents, amongst other questions, whether the crime they had experienced has been reported. The results show that the rates of cases that were reported to the police have been varying from 70% in 2005 to 84% in 2013\(^3\). The numbers presented here show us that there are some cases when domestic burglary does not get reported. Despite this, residential burglary still has a smaller amount of unreported cases compared to other types of crime (BRÅ, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2012, 2013a, 2014, 2015a). One can also see that the propensity to report residential burglary has risen significantly in the last several years, from 70% to almost 90% and then lowered to some extent (approximately 85%) in the recent years.

In England and Wales the situation is similar. Some research accounts for the fact that approximately 35% of all burglaries are never reported to the police, as mentioned by Hirschfield, Newton and Rogerson (2010). However, according to other sources, the percentage of unreported crimes is low as well due to the fact that many people who are insured need to report the offence in order to get their compensation (Mawby, 2013).

Penalty rates for burglary range from at least six months to at most six years (Chapter 8 4§ BrB). In today’s praxis this means that the sentencing generally varies between six and ten months and an individual that was sentenced for the first time in their lives often will not be sent to prison at all. In a Parliament question to Minister of Justice, the previous government consisting of four parliamentary parties which together made up the so-called Alliance (the Moderate Party, the Liberal People's Party, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats) wants to alter this. They consider the penalty to be too mild in regard the severity of the crime and how much suffering it brings to people exposed to it. The Alliance wants to increase the penalty to a minimum of one year in prison. At the same time they want for residential burglary to become a separate type of crime from theft in order to show to the police that it should be prioritised (Sveriges Riksdag, 2014).

\(^1\) “Med bostadsinbrott avses inbrott i någons bostad. Brottet inryms under rubriken grov stöld enligt BrB 8 kap 4 §. Mörkertalet bedöms vara relativt lågt och oförändert över tid, bland annat på grund av att brottet måste polisanmälas för att den boende ska få ut försäkringspengar för det som stulits.” (BRÅ, unknown).

\(^2\) Nationell Trygghetsundersökning

\(^3\) 84% in 2013, 86% in 2012, 89% in 2011, 86% in 2010, 88% in 2009, 75% in 2008, 78% in 2007, 74% in 2006 and 70% in 2005
Residential burglary is a crime that not only hurts people financially but also affects them negatively psychologically. The emotional trauma people experience in connection to the burglary can be one of the worst consequences. Knowing that someone was in your home, went through your personal belongings is unsettling. Not to mention the fact that personal affects that have a high emotional value often get taken together with everything else never to return again, such as family jewels that were passed from generation to generation (Mawby & Walklate, 1997).

Burglary is one of the crimes that should be prevented, rather than dealt with its consequences. Especially, due to the fact that the percentage of solved cases is very low in comparison to other types of crime, approximately 5% of the cases, and the percentage of sentenced perpetrators is lower still. It rarely happens that a burglar gets caught in the act or the information gathered from witnesses is enough to arrest an offender. The same applies to securing evidence, most of the time, burglars do not leave evidence that could help to detain them (Pira, 2008).

It is also interesting to denote that according to NTU the residential burglary vulnerability is approximately 1% of households in Sweden during the last ten years and it has not increased significantly (BRÅ, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2012, 2013a, 2014, 2015a).

Since residential burglary has been a problem for some time now, it has come to the attention of the police that something proactive should be done to prevent this trend from developing even further. Police area Middle Scania was chosen as an area of significance for this thesis due to my personal interest and the interest of the local police to get a better understanding of how local residential burglary prevention measures look like and what methods local police areas Lund, Öresund and Ringsjöbygden employ in their day-to-day work with domestic burglaries.

**Background**

In this part, the current police organisation situation in Middle Scania will be shortly described as well as definition to residential burglary will be provided.

**Defining burglary**

Burglary is defined as “illegal entry to homes and other premises such as garages, offices, shops, warehouses etc.” (Mawby, 2013).

In England and Wales residential burglary used to be defined as “breaking and entering”, with required physical break-in. Nowadays, this law has been changed to “illegal entry”, that is, it no longer requires a physical break-in, trickery and entering without permission works as well. What is interesting is that according to their penal code an action can be classified as burglary without necessarily including theft of any objects. Attempted burglary, in this case, involves an offender that has in some way prepared and was on his/her way to commit burglary, but the entry was never gained. Harm and culpability of the offender are discussed when deciding on the gravity of the sentence an offender will receive for his/hers crime (Mawby, 2013; Sentencing Council, 2011).
Another point of interest is that committing burglary while possessing some sort of firearm or victim receiving any physical or psychological injury or trauma is considered to be aggravated burglary in England (Sentencing Council, 2011). Similar laws apply in USA, where the degree of burglary depends on whether the burgled residence was occupied, whether the offender had any weapons, whether the crime occurred during night time, or if there were any assaulted victims (Shover, 1991).

According to the Swedish Penal Code domestic burglary does not appear as a separate paragraph. Instead it is comprised as a part of the theft law that transforms regular theft into aggravated theft. That is, whenever someone is sentenced for committing residential burglary, they are actually penalised for aggravated theft (Chapter 8 BrB).

**How does the police structure look like in the examined area?**
The structure of the police organisation is under a process of change at the moment, which has started at the turn of the year (2014-2015). However, when I write about the police structure in Scania, I mean the former one that soon will no longer exist. The reason for that is that this thesis concerns the preventive measures that were applied while the old organisation was still operating. This means that when I describe the police structure in Scania, it might no longer be relevant. Right now Scania province is a part of the Police region South (which includes four counties: Kalmar, Blekinge, Kronoberg and Scania) (BRÅ, 2015b).

Scania is one of the 21 counties in Sweden. It has been divided into several police areas, one of which is Middle Scania that consists of seven municipalities: Lund, Kävlinge, Staffanstorp, Lomma, Eslöv, Höör and Hörby. This police area is further divided into three sub police areas (or local police areas): Öresund, which includes Kävlinge, Staffanstorp and Lomma municipalities; Lund, which includes Lund municipality; Ringsjöbygden, which includes Eslöv, Höör and Hörby municipalities. The main town of the police area Middle Scania is Lund.

**Purpose**
The overall purpose of this thesis is to examine how the police work with the local prevention of residential burglary. The specific aims are to examine which methods they use short term and long term, how much their work is influenced by the Routine Activity theory, whether repeat victimisation is an issue, whether it is known who the offenders are, and how the preventive work could be improved.

**Research questions**
The questions that will help me achieve my aim are:

- How do the police work with residential burglary in Middle Scania on everyday basis?

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4 "1 § Den som olovligt tager vad annan tillhör med uppsåt att tillänna sig det, dömes, om tillgreppet innebär skada, för stöld till fängelse i högst två år. […] 4 § År brotts som i 1 § sägs att anse som grovt, skall för grov stöld dömas till fängelse, lägst sex månader och högst sex år. Vid bedömande huruvida brottet är grovt skall särskilt beaktas, om tillgreppet skett efter intrång i bostad."
• Which preventive measures do they employ, both short term and long term?
• Could those measures be improved?

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In this part, previous research will be presented. When searching for previous research I have concentrated first and foremost on peer-reviewed articles. The search words I used when looking up those articles at Summon were: burglary, residential burglary, residential burglary prevention, predictive policing burglary, predictive policing, residential burglary and domestic burglary prevention.

I have as well received several tips on articles concerning domestic burglary from the police officers that I have interviewed, some of which I have used.

Types of burglary prevention

General unspecified prevention rarely gives a certainty of success; however more specialised situational crime prevention, such as target hardening and neighbourhood watch have a higher probability of succeeding (Shover, 1991). Interventions that combine short and long term strategies, by and large, appear to have the most influence on the offending. The same thought applies for the intervention where theory and implementation were thought through and complemented each other (Millie & Hough, 2004). Residential burglary techniques that are described below were chosen by me due to the fact that they are most in use in police area Middle Scania. Sorensen (2007) points out, however, that despite the fact that situational crime prevention in the form of target hardening and neighbourhood watch is widely used to prevent residential burglary, there is little evidence of it being particularly effective. This is due to absence of proper evaluation of these techniques.

Target hardening/guarding of property

In the last decade the focus went from treatment of offenders and detection of crime to crime prevention. One of the types of domestic burglary prevention is guarding of property or target hardening (Mawby, 2013). Target hardening is a type of guarding that refers to its physical component. There are also such types as personal, social and natural guarding (Wilcox, Madensen & Tillyer, 2007). I will mainly describe physical guarding, due to the fact that it is most recommended by the police in the examined area.

“Target hardening is a term used to describe the process of increasing the security of a property to make it more difficult to burgle, thereby increasing the effort needed by the offender to gain entry to a property” (Hirschfield, Newton & Rogerson, 2010, p. 321). The aim of target hardening is to discourage the perpetrator from committing a burglary. This strategy has turned out to be efficient and has been adopted internationally (ibid.). Target hardening entails securing one’s home against the invaders by installing additional locks, alarms, light sensors/timers or marking property. These measures of prevention have a
certain impact on burglary levels. People who do not have any security measures installed are more likely to be burgled, nevertheless, it often happens that people who need it the most are the ones who cannot afford it, such as individuals from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Mawby, 2013).

A study performed by Hirschfield, Newton and Rogerson (2010) examined the effect of target hardening on residential burglary in Liverpool, England. Because of their amount, individual properties were not the primary units of analysis in this research. Target hardening consisted of alarm installation, new locks for windows and doors, as well as security chains and fitting of movement detection lighting. The results show that some properties that were exposed to repeat victimisation were not target hardened and, the other way around, the ones that were target hardened were not burglarised. Many of the properties that were target hardened were situated in the high-crime areas, which means, that they could still be at risk despite the protection (ibid.).

Miethe and Meier (1990) suggested that social guardianship, which is having more than one person living in a residence, has a higher chance to prevent burglary than physical guardianship, e.g. extra locks and alarms. Robinson (2000) suggests that in order to reduce the chances of burglary, individuals living alone should vary the times when they are away from home to create a versatile schedule. The same applies to people living with someone else, the best one can do is not to have any clear set-in-stone schedule of daily activities. Another suggestion is to increase solidarity amongst neighbours.

Wilcox, Madensen and Tillyer (2007) have done a study on different dimensions of guarding (physical, personal, social, and natural) on both individual and neighbourhood levels in Seattle. They have noted that on the natural guardianship (defensible space) and physical guardianship (target hardening) appear to be the most crucial parts in recognising the importance of burglary victimisation. They also point out that crime prevention strategies are best working when they attempt to prevent crime on both individual and community levels (ibid.).

According to a study performed by Tseloni, Thompson, Grove, Tilley and Farrell (2014), which examined the effectiveness of burglary security devices in England and Wales, there is evidence that extra locks and external lights individually are the most effective. The alarms, surprisingly, appear to offer less protection than having no security measures at all. When combined, extra door or windows locks together with either security chains or external lights offer the best protection. The combination of other security measures offers better security than their sum.

**Neighbourhood watch**

Neighbourhood watch can include residents of a neighbourhood of varying size (everything from one street to several blocks to a small village) that wish to prevent crimes, such as burglary or vandalism, in their area through a constant supervision and reporting any suspicious activity to the police (Mawby, 2013). The goal of neighbourhood watch is to reduce crime and increase safety of the residential areas through increased attention from the residents in the area and knowledge of possible security measures (BRÅ, 2015d).
Neighbourhood watch is not a clear-cut police prevention strategy, but it is formed and sustained with support of the police. On the more official site of Swedish version of neighbourhood watch, grannsamverkan, it is clearly stated that if one wants to establish a new neighbourhood watch in the area, one should call 114 14, a non-emergent police phone number (Grannsamverkan, unknown), which clearly points to neighbourhood watch connection to the police.

The neighbourhood watch in Sweden is established in collaboration with the police who assist with knowledge and information, as well as an education for contact representatives often presented together with a representative from an insurance company and/or emergency services. Neighbourhood watch is based on a dialogue and cooperation between the residents and the police, with residents responsible for keeping it in working order (Grannsamverkan, unknown).

Neighbourhood watch has three major problems. The first one is that it is more affluent in the areas that might need it the least, that is, low crime middle class areas. The areas that require this sort of prevention are least likely to receive them, and the ones who would need this sort of program are not likely to join it even if available (Mawby, 2013; Shover, 1991).

The second problem concerns the implementation of this measure, because what it entails exactly is unclear. The rules of neighbourhood watch vary from place to place, making comparison hard, and might even change throughout the years. Keeping neighbourhood watch in working order is a hardship as well, due to the dwindling of enthusiasm from the residents or high people turnover in the area (Mawby, 2013).

The effectivity of this method is its third problem, because it only seems to affect the sense of security, rather than actual crime rate (Mawby, 2013). Robinson (2000) suggests that neighbourhood watch programs are mostly ineffectual due to the fact that many people do not want to participate.

**Predictive policing**

Predictive policing is a method employed by the police that uses specific analytical techniques to map crime in order to be able to pinpoint targets in need of police intervention and to reduce and prevent crime. The objective is to find methods that will help to reduce criminality, or make the efforts more effective. For something to be regarded as effective it must provide tangible results, such as lower crime rates. This technique is currently in use in the USA, but is relatively unfamiliar to the rest of the world, with gaining interest in Europe (Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex, 2014). The purpose of the method “is to compile past crime details, run them through algorithms and identify future hot spots of specific crimes, such as burglary, down to individual blocks or even smaller areas.” (Gordon, 2013, p. 18) (Gordon, 2013; Perry, McInnis, Price, Smith & Hollywood, 2013). Further improvements in predictability of residential burglary, no matter how small, will help to distribute the police resources in an efficient way (Johnson, Bowers & Pease, 2012).

What makes predictive policing possible is the fact that crime is statistically predictable. Crime is committed according to a specific pattern that is distributed
in time and space, generally because offenders favour particular types of crime if they were successful with those. Naturally, it is not always the case, some criminals operate outside of their comfort zone, but the reoccurrence is common enough to try and work out a method of prediction. This is supported theoretically as well, by a combination of Routine Activity Theory, rational choice theory and crime pattern theory that has been called a blended theory. This method is better fit for offences with limited human connection, e.g. burglaries, thefts and, surprisingly, robberies\(^5\), rather than interpersonal violence-type of offences. This technique allows controlling the resources in a much more effective way (Perry et al., 2013). The idea of predicting where the crime will occur is not exactly new, it relies on statistical analysis. The difference is that it uses specific algorithms, but it is not clear whether they are more useful than the already used instruments (Gordon, 2013).

Certain difficulties should be considered when using predictive policing technique, such as tactical utility should be prioritised over accuracy of a prediction. Thus a bigger area in a risk zone might be more accurate, but it has lower practical utility. Data quality can also create difficulties, therefore data of a bad quality affects the usefulness of predictions one can get. Predictive techniques are generally not great at identifying the risk factors behind the assigned high crime areas; this must be done manually by a practitioner. This model is there to help the police officers working with crime reduction; however, it cannot do anything without human assistance, predictions single-handedly will not reduce crime. Not every police department needs the most high-tech version of this model, if there is not enough data then there is no need for the model to be extensive. This program is costly and might not provide more results than any other similar methods, which is why, when acquiring it, one needs to consider how much data will be processed in order to use the right software (Perry et al., 2013).

Negative aspects of this technique include the fact that it is very people reliant, meaning that it “is only as good as the officers and analyzers who handle the data”, (Gordon, 2013, p. 19). Without the proper understanding of why the analysis is done and the data behind it, this technique will not yield much result (Perry et al., 2013). It is also unclear whether the information about possible crimes in an area police officers receive is a reason enough to stop a person for a search (Gordon, 2013). This question is a lot more loaded in USA, than it would have been in Sweden.

Burglars, who are they?

Little is known about burglars as offenders. Mainly because the research usually does not focus on any specific type of crime when studying offenders, chiefly due to the fact that many of criminals who are involved with residential burglaries are not limited to only one criminal activity. However, they rarely commit any violent offences. Known burglars are not entirely representative of burglars in general, amongst other reasons because they were arrested. What is known is that most

\(^5\) It is unclear why the authors included robberies into types of crime with limited human interaction.
burglars are male and young, and sometimes unemployed (Mawby, 2013; Shover, 1991).

Pira (2008) conducted a study of residential burglars in Sweden, where 20 offenders were interviewed for the purpose of examining how offenders think and what they do before, during and after committing a burglary, and their motivations for committing the crime. The participants had to have committed a residential burglary multiple times in the past 10 years. The participants were between the ages of 19 and 55. The motivation to commit burglaries was mainly explained by the desire to obtain money, for around 75% and excitement accounted for approximately 15%. Many reported excitement to be more prominent in the beginning of their criminal careers (Pira, 2008). Mawby (2013) also specifies monetary reward and excitement as an important motivator for burglary offences. Addiction to both alcohol and drugs is a problem for many burglars, which they sponsor with money they procure from burglaries. Many of them stop committing burglaries when they stop taking drugs (Mawby, 2013; Pira, 2008).

The respondents were asked the amount of residential burglaries they have committed during their criminal careers and how many of those they were sentenced for. Some of them were never caught and two were sentenced for 10% of burglaries. The result shows that the average percentage of burglaries that they were sentenced to was 2.4% or only 1.15% without those two offenders that had a 10% rate (Pira, 2008).

Breaking into a single-family house was considered to be the easiest by 16 of 20 interview participants, because there is no need to have control over the environment and because residents sometimes leave their windows unlocked. Urban environment, choice of escape route and proximity to an escape route are the factors that raise the chances of burglary being committed, as well as residences that are obscured or located in an unpopulated area (Pira, 2008). The offenders tend to choose their targets according to its level of guardianship and the value they can get from it (Tseloni, Wittebrood, Farrell & Pease, 2004). They also frequently tend to favour targets that are within the rout of their daily routine activities (Yu & Maxfield, 2014).

Most of the interviewees in Pira’s (2008) study stated that the preferable time of the year to commit burglaries was summer, due to residents being out of town. The same logic applies to bank and school holidays. Time of the day for a burglary was of little importance and mainly depended on the circumstances (Pira, 2008). Interestingly, in England, a lot of burglaries occur in the evening or at night (53% in 2000) and while someone is at home (Mawby, 2013).

Robinson (2000) points out that the property offenders regularly want to avoid all confrontation and preferably detection as well, which makes residences that are situated in areas that are more visible or easily surveillable at less risk for burglary. Higher property accessibility is a risk factor for residential burglary, as well as unoccupied residences. People’s routine activities matter in a sense that the more hours one spends away from home due to one’s everyday activity, the higher is the risk of burglary (Robinson, 2000).
Repeat and near-repeat victimisation

Repeat victimisation is defined as exposure to more than one crime over a specified period of time (Grove, 2011). Repeat victimization is a common occurrence when it comes to burglaries (Townsley, Homel & Chaseling 2003). Near repeat victimisation “refers to when an incident occurs to two nearby targets within a specific period of time” (Moreto, Piza & Caplan, 2013, p. 1106). Reasons for repeat victimisation include burglars returning for valuable objects they either forgot or the objects that were bought to replace the stolen ones, or burglars spreading information about the property being a good spot for a burglary (ibid.).

Individuals who live in the disadvantaged or high-crime neighbourhoods have a higher risk of both initial and repeat victimisation. Exposure to crime is assumed to increase the future victimisation or as Hirschfield, Newton and Rogerson put it: “[P]rior victimization is the single best predictor of future victimization” (p. 320). This is true not only for individuals but for the households as well. Meaning assuming that repeat victimisation presumes that if the victim has been victimised once, the chances of it occurring again are higher than for those who have never been victimised, then the residences that were burglarised at some point run a higher chance of being burglarised again, than those that were never exposed to a burglary (Berncasc, 2008; BRÅ, 2013b Hirschfield, Newton & Rogerson, 2010; Mawby, 2013). Repeat burglary can also be a signal that something in this household is attractive to a burglar, e.g. bad security or valuable objects. This conclusion allows for prediction of crime and infusion of predictive measures (Grove, 2011).

Repeat burglary can be divided into two categories, either it is the same offender that decided to return to the same object again or the object itself is somehow attracts repeated criminalisation. 8 out 20 respondents in Pira’s (2008) study stated that they generally do not return, while 12 said that they do. The reasons for returning were some valuable items they might have missed the first time, or that the residence was easy to break into, or returning after the insurance money were paid out to steal the new items people got to replace the stolen ones. Another reason for returning was the fact that the victims did not improve on their security, making it just as easy to break in the second time (ibid.). Some research points to the fact that many repeat burglaries have the same offender as the initial one (Bernasco, 2008).

Townsley, Homel and Chaseling (2003) discuss the “infectious” rates of burglary and why the closer houses are to a site of burglary the higher risk they run of being burglarised. They point out homogeneity of housing as both a reason for increased risk of burglary, because burglar knows how the residents look like, and as a reason of lower risk of break-in, since the houses are similar to each other, the offender does not have the need to break into the same address several times. Target suitability and offender exposure should be considered as the risk factors for increased burglary as well. Near repeat victimisation is something that is prone to be contagious, and can be passed from individual to individual in a similar matter as a disease does. The more places are exposed to an offender the higher the chance of a crime occurring there, due to the fact that the offender has already familiarised himself with the area (Townsley, Homel and Chaseling, 2003; Tseloni et al. 2004).
Grove (2011) has done a meta-analysis of repeat burglary programs in UK, US and Australia, because these three countries share the common law system. However, the community policing is different in these countries, that is, the communication between the police forces and local citizens, which can influence the effect of prevention programs. The result of the research was unsurprising; it shows that the programs aimed at preventing repeat burglary victimisation can be successful on condition that the interventions are fitted to the situation they are made for, the individuals who execute the program are trained, and the intervention is adaptable to the situation. Overall, UK prevention programs seem to be more resultative than similar programs in US or Australia (ibid.).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Routine Activity Theory was chosen as a theoretic framework for this thesis, due to the fact that it is probably the most influential in local residential burglary prevention and in police work in general.

Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory is probably one of the most known criminological theories. It has been discussed and used countless times. This theory was formulated by Cohen and Felson during the late 1970s in order to analyse crime trends. The premise of the theory is founded on three main components that make committing a crime possible: a motivated offender, a suitable target and an absence of a capable guardian. These components have to converge in time and space in order for a criminal act to happen. The authors mean that a criminal act cannot occur in case one of these components is removed from the equation (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Routine Activity Theory is established on two principle ideas: “(1) that the structure of routine activities in a society influences what kind of situations (person–environment interactions) emerge; and (2) that people commit acts of crime in response to situational conditions (opportunities).” (Wikström, Oberwittler, Treiber & Hardie, 2012, pp. 38).

“Routine activities theory […] explains the role of the physical and social environment in the generation of spatial concentrations of burglary” (Hirschfield, Newton & Rogerson, 2010, pp. 319-320). This theory suggests that “individual level efforts to increase the security, surveillance, or guardianship provided to one’s home should decrease burglary victimization risk” (p. 772). If people’s routine activities require them to spend more time outside their homes, then the probability of offenders meeting their targets without any capable guardian present will increase. Domestic burglary relates positively to the amount of non-household activities people engage in (Wilcox, Madensen & Tillyer, 2007). For example, routine activity proposes that offender target selection most likely occurs during an “everyday activity” rather than a specific scouting expedition. Since offenders also have the areas that they visit routinely this leads to those areas having a lot more exposure to the risks of burglary. “[B]urglars have shown
that they tend to offend within close proximity to their homes or other nodes” (Moreto, Piza & Caplan, 2013, p. 1105).

As this theory has existed for quite a while it has gathered a certain amount of critique against it. There are several points that Wikström et al. (2012) mention, one of them being that the theory fails to mention the exact process of how the interaction between people and the environment causes crime. Another point they make is that the theory is unsuccessful to account for people’s individual differences which means that the “motivation” of the motivated offender is not explained. There is not enough explanation concerning what constitutes a “suitable target” either, except for a few “likely” descriptions. Capable guardian is explained as a person who is not only able to stop an occurrence of crime but is also willing to do so (Wikström et al., 2012).

Despite the theory’s shortcomings, it is widely used to prevent crimes of opportunity both in the international and local context, due to the fact that its premises are easy to understand and implement.

METHOD

In this section, the chosen methods for this thesis will be discussed.

Qualitative method

In order to collect the necessary empirical data the qualitative method was chosen, on account of it being more suitable to fulfil the purpose of this research. This is due to the fact that qualitative research values words more than numbers, is inductive, is interpretative and is constructionist, meaning that the collected data are the result of interactions between individuals (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative interviews were chosen for this aim, on the account of them being better suited to answer my research questions in a descriptive way. However certain amount of statistical data was used to aid the descriptive potentials of qualitative method and to establish a certain sense of objectivity, lacking in qualitative methods.

Sample

In order for the sample group to be relevant to the research questions, purposive sampling was used, which implies individuals with specific characteristics were interviewed. For the purpose of this research, my participants were chosen in accordance to which occupation they possess, police officers. This kind of sampling largely implies that the results are not possible to generalise to the general population. Criterion sampling is the approach that is the most beneficial for this research, since all of the interview participants must meet the criterion of being a police officer and having worked with burglary cases for quite some time (Bryman, 2012). To be able to discuss the whole of the Middle Scania police area, I have interviewed four police officers that work in one of the three local police areas: two from Öresund area and one each from Ringsjöbygden and Lund areas. The reason for interviewing two officers from Öresund area is that both of them
initiated and implemented a specific intervention that was aimed at reducing burglary rates in their police area.

**Interviews**

The interviews were performed in two different ways, depending on who was interviewed.

**Semi-structured interviews**

Interview guide (see Appendix) is a list of questions that was created prior to the interviews in order to aid with the process. It allows the researcher to stay on topic while the interviewee has enough leeway to answer freely. One does not have to follow the guide to the letter nor ask questions in any precise order, it is just there to serve as a support while allowing for flexibility (Bryman, 2012). Leading questions are a trap that should be avoided while devising ones interview guide, unless they are there on purpose (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The two semi-structured interviews were performed with two police officers responsible for a specific intervention against residential burglary in Kävlinge (Öresund police area). Semi-structured interview type was chosen in this instance instead of unstructured interviews due to the fact that it allowed me to concentrate on the specific measures that were taken to prevent residential burglaries as well as being able to ask additional questions if necessary.

**Unstructured interviews**

Two unstructured interviews were conducted as well with a police officer in Eslöv (Ringsjöbygden local police area) and a police officer in Dalby (Lund municipality local police area). Here no interview guide was used, save for the aide-mémoire that prompted me to stay on the topic of residential burglaries. The reason for employing this particular interview approach is due to the fact that in the other police areas, save for Öresund, there was no one specific preventive measure that was supposed to reduce the residential burglary. Therefore, it was interesting to know how they work with this issue on a regular basis. Generally, unstructured interviewing reminds a great deal about a regular conversation (Bryman, 2012).

The most important part with both interview approaches is that the interviewees should feel like they had time to answer the questions asked fully, that they did not get cut off and that all the necessary data was collected (Bryman, 2012).

**The layout of the interview guide**

The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews consisted of several major parts. First part included the background questions about their work experiences and how long they have worked with burglary. Then questions about the general burglar-kind and which type of burglar is most common in their area. Next part consisted of general questions that were more pertinent to the specific police area and the issue of residential burglary in that area (e.g. Öresund). Part three included detailed questions about the intervention itself. The last part consisted of various questions that have to do with possible prevention of residential burglary. The
guide is concluded with an open-ended question which inquires whether there was anything that was left unsaid.

The interview guide was afterwards altered to become the aide-mémoire when used to interview the police officers from Ringsjöbygden and Lunds local police areas. This was done to facilitate the course of the unstructured interviews.

**Time frame and place**

Both types of interviews were conducted in Swedish on the account it impeding the conversation if the participants have to talk in a foreign language. All interviews lasted approximately one to one and a half hour long. All interviews were conducted at the police stations where the interviewees felt comfortable with surroundings and because they might have been stressed due to time pressure if we met at some other place. This also gave me an opportunity to gain other statistical data.

**Statistics**

Statistic data that was used was taken from The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention 6(BRÄ). I have chosen to look at statistics for the past ten years, that is, from 2005 until the end of 2014. The reason why I excluded the first months of 2015 is because the statistics for those months are still preliminary, thus not entirely reliable. The other reason is that the police organisation have changed, which means that even if I looked at the preliminary statistics all I would be able to get were those for the whole Police region South.

Residential burglary statistics is divided into burglaries that are committed towards single-family houses and terrace-houses, and apartments. The reason for this distinction is that the examined area has a higher amount of single-family houses and the crime rates towards those are significantly higher than for apartments.

**Reliability and validity**

“Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept” (Bryman, 2012, p. 169). It reflects upon whether the results of a study can be replicated later. Reliability can be considered from three points of view: stability (over time), inner reliability (can the measured scores be compared?) and inter-observer consistency (whether different observers are consistent). The reliability can be divided into external and internal. External reliability refers to the extent to which a research can be repeated (Bryman, 2012). Since interviews, especially unstructured, are often flexible in nature this criterion is not an easy one to meet. The existence of an interview guide is a step in the direction of establishing external validity, as well as using statistics that do not change over time. Internal reliability is generally a concern when there is more than one researcher, whether they agree on what they hear or see (Bryman, 2012). However, I am the only one conducting this research, meaning I cannot affect this criterion.

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6 Brottsförebyggande rådet
“Validity refers to the issue of whether an indicator [...] that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept” (Bryman, 2012, p. 171). Validity can as well be divided into external and internal. External validity refers to an extent of generalizability of results (Bryman, 2012). Due to the fact that my research involves a very specific part of the country and only a few local police areas, it can only be generalised to areas with similar characteristics. Internal validity accounts for whether the observations and theoretical conclusions researchers form are related to each other (Bryman, 2012).

**Limitations**

Qualitative method has its limitations in the fact that it is quite subjective, which can be perceived as a negative point in comparison with the quantitative method, since the interpretation of the collected data is dependable on the researcher itself (Bryman, 2012).

Interview with victims could have been conducted as well to broaden the understanding of residential burglary. Other actors involved in burglary prevention could have been interviewed as well to get a fuller picture of how well the preventive measures work, for example municipality actors or individuals involved with neighbourhood watch. However, it is not pertinent to my research question and requires additional time and resources.

**Ethical considerations**

Before each interview the purpose of this research was discussed and inquiries about the usage of recorder were made. Informed consent is an important fragment of ethical considerations, due to the fact that the interview participants require the knowledge for which purpose the collected data will be used for (Ryen, 2004; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interviews were recorded in order to facilitate the process of transcription; however the note were taken as well over the points that seemed the most interesting or in case of wanting to inquire further into the discussed matters (Bryman, 2012). The participants were asked if further contact could be made in case of more questions that might arise when the data analysis will start (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

This study was not reviewed by the Ethics Committee, due to the fact that it was deemed unnecessary for the information that was provided. However, general ethical guidelines were followed to ensure the best results.

**Analysis**

The interviews were transcribed to allow for easier comparison to each other and to be able to easier search for answers to my research questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Text condensation was used as a method for analysis of the interviews. Meaning-bearing units in the interview text were identified with help of my research question and condensed to a text. The rest of the interview that did not bear any meaning (that is, did not answer my research questions) was sorted out. These meaning-bearing units were categorised into code groups based on
their context. Some groups thus could become more comprising than other. Each and every of these code groups were later analysed separately in accordance with Routine Activity Theory and previous research (Malterud, 2014).

Statistics were analysed by looking at the number of residential burglaries throughout the years on three different levels (whole Sweden, Scania and Middle Scania) and comparing the numbers to each other to get a clear understanding of whether the crime rates have increased.

RESULTS

In this part, the statistics of residential burglary for the years 2005 through 2014 will be presented broken down to the whole country, Scania and all seven municipalities that comprise Middle Scania. The results of the four interviews with police officers from each local police area will be included here as well.

Statistics

Chosen statistics include not only completed crimes, but the attempt as well. Each table shows first the total of crimes within a specific area and then a division between single-family houses and apartments.

*The whole country compared to Scania*

Residential burglary is more common in areas with single-family houses rather than apartment complexes. Most of the residential burglaries in Sweden are committed in Skåne, Hallands och Västra Götalands provinces, and during the last quarter of the year that experiences the most night-time (BRÅ, 2011b).

Table 1. Police-recorded residential burglary

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Statistics obtained from BRÅ

From Table 1 we can see that even though the number of police-recorded residential burglaries fluctuates throughout the years, it is steadily rising both in the whole country and in Scania. If we compare the total amount of residential burglaries for the whole country in 2005 with 2014 we can see that it has increased with roughly 34%. The increase percentage for Scania for the same years is 29%.
Middle Scania

Table 2. Police-recorded residential burglary

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| **Total**      | 665  | 584  | 784  | 981  | 919  | 824  | 1035 | 1040 | 1146 | 1113 |

Statistics obtained from BRÅ

In Table 2 the seven communities that make up the police are Middle Scania are represented. One can observe the same trend in this table as the one we have seen for the whole country. When comparing the total amount of police-recorded residential burglaries in Middle Scania year 2005 to 2014, one can see an increase of 67%.
Some municipalities have become more afflicted than others throughout the time, such as Kävlinge, where we can see an increase from 51 burglaries in 2005 to 188 burglaries in 2013. During 2014 they have had a special intervention that was aimed at decreasing the rates of residential burglary, and we can see that the amount of offences decreased to 119 for 2014. The same goes for Lomma and Staffanstorp that also have seen an increase from 51 and 47 in 2005 to 128 and 115 in 2014 respectively. All these three municipalities make up the local police area Öresund, which have been plagued by a rising number of residential burglaries.

Eslöv does not seem to be as exposed to the burglaries as Kävlinge, but the numbers have been rising the last three years even there. Höör and Hörby municipalities have also seen the numbers of burglaries rise. Local police area Ringsjöbygden has overall not has seen as much change in crime rates for burglary as Öresund, but it has increased.

Lunds municipality has also seen an increase in numbers of residential burglary, from 312 in 2005 to 460 in 2014, with variation in the years.

**Interviews**

Following text is a summary of the results of the four interviews with police officers from the three local police areas that comprise Middle Scania.

**Police area Öresund**

This part is a summary of two interviews with police officers from local police area Öresund.

Residential burglary is a phenomenon that occurs frequently in this area and all patrolling policemen have to deal with it. There is no specific group of people that just solely take care of residential burglary; instead the patrolling police officers attend most crimes that happen. They could start working with it from the first day of service, depending on whether their car will be called to a burglary crime scene. A great deal of residential burglaries occurs during the darker time of the year, during autumn and winter.

Most of the time, individuals get burgled while they are away from home. It is very rare that a burglary occurs while someone is present in the house. The residents call the police when they get home and discover that they were victimised. The police, in their turn, dispatch a car that is available at the moment, usually with two policemen. Upon the arrival, one of the police officers set off to take up a police report with the residents, question them about what happened and what is missing, and possibly talk to any potential witnesses. In the meantime, the other police officer starts with a crime scene investigation. All police officers have undergone a specific education to be able to secure any existing evidence. Crime scene investigation starts outside the house and continues inside. It is done in order to secure any tracks the offender/offenders might have left, and includes taking pictures of the crime scene. In most cases, there is no apparent evidence left by the burglars. After this is done, the policemen return to the station to write
a report concerning this case. It is possible to contact forensic technicians in case of more serious crimes or more extensive goods collection.

It is hard to know who the perpetrator generally is because of the low clearance rate in this type of crime. The only known ones are the ones that have been caught at some point. There have been discovered four types of offenders. First type is the addicts that are looking to finance their addiction. Second type is life-style criminals that commit various types of crimes, including residential burglary. Third type is the adolescents, who somehow got introduced to this type of crime. Lastly, the fourth type is the phenomenon of out of country criminal gangs that travel to Sweden solely for the purpose of committing residential burglaries. They are one of the most motivated types of criminals, because they commit many criminal acts in a limited time.

It is difficult to say which one of these types is predominant in the local police area Öresund. According to one of the interviewed police officers the clearance rate is around 3 % and there are around 300 cases total, which makes the amount of perpetrators known to the law approximately 9. The other police officer reported similar numbers. If they had to guess then the amount crimes committed by life-style criminals and out of country criminal gangs would be predominant.

The addicts and adolescents usually get caught due to the fact that they get sloppy and leave a trace of, for example, DNA. The more experienced and motivated offenders seldom leave any traces of themselves in a house. Instead, the life-style criminals and criminal gangs get caught due to someone’s observation of their behaviour, the fact that they act suspiciously in some way. General public notices something and contacts the police, who, in turn, are able to react quickly and arrive on time, thus catching the perpetrators in the act or nearby and preferably with the stolen goods. If the perpetrators are caught with the goods, but cannot be bound to the place where burglary happened, they will be sentenced for fencing, handling of stolen goods. The most stolen objects are the ones that are valuable and small and easily turned into cash. These are jewellery, mainly gold, watches, antiquities, cash and small electronics.

It is not quite known what motivates these individuals to commit crime beyond the monetary gain or feeding their addictions. Both interviewed police officers has given several suggestions on that matter. One of the possible motivators for a perpetrator to commit residential burglary is the low clearance rate in this type of crime and the low percentage of individuals that actually get caught. For example, if one breaks in someone’s house and manages to take goods that are worth around 10 000 SEK, then in 5 to 10 minutes this person managed to “earn” a large sum of money, which leads them to want to repeat this experience. Another theory is that out of country gangs come to Sweden because it is financially well-off country, where people have valuable objects in their home as well as insurances that cover them. This means that the criminals do not need to consider whether a residence has anything or whether it has been burglarised before. Another motivator could be a low prescribed scale of penalties; minimum one can get is 6 months in prison, but a lot of the time, people get even lower penalty than that. That is, even if a burglar does get caught, he/she might get away with a low punishment, which makes it worth committing this crime.
Another possible suggestion given by both interviewees as to why this local police area should also be considered under such exposure for residential burglary is its geographic location. There are many highways, such as E6 and highway 11, nearby as well as the proximity to Malmö, Landskrona and Helsingborg. All of this makes it easy to get in and get out of this area.

There are approximately 75,000 inhabitants in the three municipalities that make up local police area Öresund. The rise of the number of burglaries started around 2006, which according to the interviewed police officers might depend on the gold prices and then to some part how easy it is to get in the country in the EU. In certain municipalities the difference between domestic burglary rates now and before 2006 is a hundred per cent increase. In the last years, the average amount of completed residential burglaries in the single-family houses has been around 300-350 cases with a slight variation between years. In addition to these numbers there have been a certain amounts of attempted burglaries as well. In 2014, from January 1 until the start of the intervention (15 of September 2014), the rise in crime rate was almost 40% in comparison with 2013 during the same period. This was especially extreme keeping this in mind, 2013 was the year when the most residential burglaries were reported. That situation in the local police area Öresund concerning residential burglaries required more poignant involvement, since 2014 started off with even higher numbers.

People that live in this area mainly reside in single-family houses rather than apartments, which implies a certain level of prosperity. It is also easier to break in into a single-family house, because the risks of being noticed are significantly lower than in a multi-apartment house. The garden also provides a certain level of protection from observation. Perimeter security in form of doors and windows is not as good in a single-family house as it is in an apartment. If an individual lives on a third floor and has a safety door, then it is very hard to break-in into such a place. However, most single-family houses have a lot of windows that are not protected as well as a patio door that has a lower level of security. Perimeter security includes safety locks on windows and maybe a movement lamp at the back of the house.

Repeat victimisation is not a phenomenon that seems to occur a lot in Öresund police area. Even though it occurs to a certain extent, it does not present an issue; hence the police do not purposefully work with it. However, if an individual gets victimised by a residential burglary, they receive information on how it can be avoided in the future, somewhat similar to the information in the brochures. For example, if there is an alarm, but it is only installed on the first floor, then it should be extended to the second floor. If a garden is overgrown and one cannot see inside, it offers a lot of privacy, but at the same time it can hide the burglar from the neighbour’s glance. It is always up to the victim whether they will follow the advice. Burglars are innovative in their actions and no amount of protection is going to stop them if they are dead set on getting in, but one could benefit a lot to make it harder for them.

One of the manners in which a person could protect their valuables is through DNA-marking, which is easily acquirable. An individual can buy a kit that has its own personal mixture and code. The person then marks their valuables with this mixture that is invisible to the naked eye and registers the code in their own name. If the valuable gets stolen, a police officer can shine on them with a UV-lamp and
see that they have been marked, swab them and get the name of the owner. It is not a fool proof method, but it is one more step in preventing burglary.

Neighbourhood watch is a phenomenon that does exist in several municipalities in local police area Öresund. However, the police in this area do not cooperate with them on any sufficient level and cannot answer for how efficient they are. They are, nevertheless, cautiously positive towards the idea of neighbourhood watch.

A possibility arose for the two interviewed police officers to implement a proper intervention for residential burglary during several months under their leadership. The intervention continued from 15 of September 2014 until the 28 of February 2015. It was specifically made to suit the needs of area of interest, that is, police area Öresund. The reason for this intervention seeing the light of day was the motivation of those two police officers that felt residential burglary has become a pressing issue in their local police area and something had to be done about it. At first, they wanted to concentrate on the evidence found at crime scene investigations, but the traces are so few that this thought was not viable. Instead, they decided to work preventively. They have examined what others have done, how the residential burglary looks like in this particular area and how offenders look like in this area. Most of the perpetrators seem to have a car to help them when committing burglaries. During the intervention time, the two police officers who started the intervention have been exclusively working with it, in order to achieve the best results. The goal of this intervention was to decrease the amount of completed and reported crimes in area Öresund. According to them, the intervention was based partially on similar interventions done in Australia and Great Britain.

The intervention takes its roots partially from the Routine Activity Theory. The suitable target component is present in Öresund area, as mentioned previously. There are many single-family houses and many of them do not have any alarms or other security measures, as well as there are many valuable objects in most of them. The motivated offender component is not covered in this intervention directly but is affected through the component of absence of capable guardian, which was the key element in the intervention. The reason behind that is the knowledge that an offender will definitely be committing a crime in the area, but it is uncertain of when and where, so there was a need to create a sensation that there is someone who is watching over the area. The absence of capable guardian was also covered in the intervention by keeping track of the local police area by patrolling the area and standing visibly in strategic places. Patrolling was done in cars, as well as on foot and sometimes even on horses.

Beyond just being visible, the police were also on point with screening the cars and stopping some of them for inspection. When the offenders know that the police are nearby and possibly even stopped them for inspection, and if the residents are vigilant as well, then the offenders might decide to abort their mission and leave.

Another important part of the intervention was spreading information to the residents of the burglary affected area concerning what they can do in order to protect themselves from being burglarised. This was done by police volunteers handing out brochures that describe how one inspects and reinforces the perimeter security of the house. The measures that are a part of this security are extra locks,
illumination of backdoor and patio or possible alarm installation. It has been mentioned that in case of travelling away for a period of time, one should be able to contact the neighbours to keep track of the house. Residents should have general awareness of the area, where they live and pay attention to any out of place visitors or odd behaviour. Additional part of the information that was handed out included guidelines on preventing valuable objects from being stolen by storing them in protected places. This applies especially to the items not in general use, such as old heirlooms.

An interim evaluation has been done in December 2014 to assess how the intervention was progressing from the 15 of September to 15 of December. The results for the examined period of time show a 42 % decrease and 78 fewer reported crimes in Öresund area and 30 % decrease and 122 fewer reported cases in Middle Scania. In the evaluation of their own intervention they have compared how the numbers of burglary rates related to the rest of Scania, the other four police areas: Malmö, South Scania, North-West Scania and North-East Scania. This was done in order to control for the displacement. For the whole Scania there were 116 fewer reported cases during the same period in comparison to 2013. One could say that there was a minor case of displacement, but it is not necessarily the case. Jerry Ratcliffe’s “Myth of Displacement” was used in the evaluation to support the claim of there not being an issue with displacement.

During the whole time of the intervention, 15 December 2014 – 28 February 2015 a total of 175 residential burglaries were committed in local police area Öresund. The intervention had other effects as well, since there were more policemen patrolling they were bound to discover other crimes. Different types of criminals were caught, drivers that were under the influence, individuals without driving licence and so on.

Unfortunately, I was not able to get a hold of final evaluation of this project, despite trying to do so. Therefore, I cannot remark on whether it was successful or not.

**Local police area Ringsjöbygden**

This following part is a summary of an interview with a police officer from local police area Ringsjöbygden.

Every policeman has to work with burglary at some point in their career. The residential burglary situation does not seem to have changed drastically in the last several years in local police area Ringsjöbygden; it is more or less even. The priority in this area is on the apartment buildings and single-family houses. Most residential burglaries in Eslöv concern single-family houses because there are only three neighbourhoods that have apartment buildings, and some in the centre of town. A lot of residential burglaries in Eslöv have occurred in the areas with older houses, which are easier to break into.

In Kävlinge, the police had a project where they could work with residential burglary full-time under a fixed period of time, which normally does not happen often. They had some police cars that were specifically assigned to the project and controlled the exit roads to that local police area. In addition to getting results on
residential burglary, they also caught some individuals driving under the influence of drugs and unauthorised driving.

There should have been a similar project in the local police area Ringsjöbygden, but there were other issues that had to be dealt with, such as an increased amount of crimes committed by adolescents. Instead, there have been implemented a project called Bergainsatsen which concentrated on helping adolescents. Simultaneously, it helped with the residential burglary issue, because in that area a great deal of burglaries was committed by adolescents. Another type of offenders that is noticeable in that area is the criminal gangs from other countries. The interviewed police officer mentions that they come from Baltic countries, Romania, and they drive around in Scania and Småland and then they take the stolen goods by boat back. The police in Ystad and Trelleborg work with it a lot because they are harder to trace and find than the local criminals.

Sometimes, when the police detain burglars, they can find maps of the neighbourhood with markings that show who lives where and how it looks consistent with them observing the area. For example, some houses are crossed out because the owners have dogs.

There is an interesting burglary phenomenon in local police area Ringsjöbygden with the short periods of time it took to commit a domestic burglary. It is not the usual scenario, where the owners were away on a trip for a longer period of time and when they return they notice that they have been burglarised. Instead, the crimes have occurred in a time it takes a person to go to the store, everything from 15 minutes to two hours. Generally, when a burglar enters the house, he/she goes to the bedroom and examines which objects belong to a woman and which to a man and continues on to the female side. If it is an older couple that lives there, then they usually have their family heirlooms in the room, which are never actually used. Then the burglar goes to the male side, maybe finds a golden watch, takes it and then it is done. It does not take a long time at all.

When it comes to the apartments, the burglar usually enters through a balcony or patio door, the first two floors being the most exposed. A patio door is the most vulnerable place of the apartment. After many years of use, the door’s hitches no longer sit tight, making it easier for a burglar to break in using a crowbar or a wrench by putting it in the gap and pulling so the hitches let go. In this case, the residents might not even understand where the burglar came in, because as soon as one removes the crowbar, the hitches snap back into place and there might not be any break marks. One can still lock the door without any problems and it appears to be working as usual. According to the interview person one could prevent it by obtaining an item that is called safety espagnolette, which is a locking device that looks like a metal rod and is mounted on a patio door or a window. Another problem with a patio door is that a burglar does not necessarily have to break a window to get in. Many of these doors are modelled so that top part is a window and bottom part is a wooden sheet. If one hits it enough times it can detach and one can just get into the apartment/house that way.

The police in Ringsjöbygden area actively strive to start neighbourhood watches in their area and have already established several. It is not an entirely easy task and the sizes of participants vary from one street to entire neighbourhood. There are numerous requests from individuals that call the police about starting a
neighbourhood watch. Customarily, first there is a meeting with people who want to build a neighbourhood watch cooperation. At this meeting the police are present and as well as a representative of an insurance company that brings signs that people starting the watch can set up in their area. During that meeting the police and the insurance company go through the necessary precautions one could do to prevent residential burglary.

The advice residents receive on preventing burglary is not anything new and out of ordinary, it is the same recommendations people have heard before, but that generally get forgotten. One of these things is to make it look like someone is at home, when the residents are away for a longer periods of time. This is done partially with the help of the neighbours that could, for example, throw half of their garbage away in the other bin or hang their laundry at the other house. During winter time, neighbours could help by shovelling the snow, or at least walking to and from the porch to leave a trail in the snow. The police advocate for having a light in the backyard that noticeably shines when someone comes closer. If one then told the neighbour about going away and they suddenly see a backlight come on, then they know that someone is there. Another thing a resident could consider is cutting the hedges in order that the backyard is not completely hidden from the outside world. If it is, then the neighbours will not be able to see much of what happens there. A lot of people roll down their blinds and close curtains or take all the flowers away from windows to put them in a bathtub when they are out of town, all of this is a sign to a burglar that no one is home.

The police officer I have interviewed point out the importance of people knowing who lives on their street. One does not have to know every personal detail about them, but recognising faces and the cars that are usually in the area is preferable. In that case, if a resident sees someone who does not belong, they could come forward and say “Hello”. Consequently, that person knows that they have been seen, in case it is a criminal. People can go outside for a walk in two’s or three’s while they are, for example, walking their dogs. This gives the residents the possibility to casually observe the area they live in.

The same advice applies to suspicious cars. If one sees something out of ordinary and it does not feel right, it is better to call the police. One should not write it up on a post-it and call the police in five days, by then it will be irrelevant. There are people that sit at a dispatch centre in Malmö that take care of calls all the time. One could call several times per day; it is preferable to not calling at all. If a person calls about a car and someone has done so previously at another place and the police stop the car for a control, they might find some stolen goods. The society is one of police’s sources.

After the neighbourhood watch has been established, people who are a part of it choose a representative that receives any information from the police about burglaries and sends it further to every participant involved.

Repeat victimisation is not a phenomenon the police consider to occur often and generally not something they concentrate the resources on, at least, not concerning residential burglary. It is more common out in the country with the theft of diesel. In the beginning of the year, the police have handed out brochures with tips about how one can prevent future burglaries to every household in an area of Eslöv that was subjected to a high amount of burglaries. The tips are of the same kind that
was previously mentioned. Afterwards, the police and the volunteers stood nearby food stores and handed out the rest of the brochures and talked to general public. There were some individuals that came and talked about how traumatic their experience with residential burglary was.

One interesting thing that the interviewed police officer mentioned is that sometimes, it can take a while before the dispatch can send any car to a victim of a residential burglary, and when the police come to the crime scene they discover that the residents have cleaned up after the burglars. It is very understandable they do not want to sit idle in the mess that was created by the burglars, but it is utterly important to avoid coming in contact with as much as possible in order to preserve any potential evidence. It happens quite often that the burglars leave some sort of trace of themselves on site, most likely because of adrenalin and the general stress they are feeling.

**Local police area Lund**

The following segment is a summary of my interview with a police officer from local police area Lund.

Residential burglaries as a type of crime are hard to work with. There are more break-ins in the single-family houses rather than apartments. The amount of residential burglaries fluctuates throughout the year; October through March is usually a high season for residential burglaries due to the nights being longer. It is not enough to just deploy a lot of work power to catch the burglars, so other strategies must be employed, such as working with specific places during specific times. One of the most important aspects of preventive measure is to work with people who live in different residential areas, because the probability of the police patrol being in a right place at a right time is increased if the police have received a signal from a resident that something suspicious is happening. The more eyes that are watching the more sufficiently the resources can be used. A time when a burglar can be caught red-handed was due to someone calling to the police and making a good observation.

An aspect of the preventive police work in the local police area Lund is giving information about decreasing the risks of burglary to the residents. The simplest course of action is making it look like someone is at home, while the residents are actually away. This is important, because if the offenders think that someone is present then they will not try to break in. Illumination that is controlled by a motion detector, which makes light go on when somebody is nearby, is much better than lamps with a timer, because after a while one can see the pattern in the timer. The best option, according to the interview person, would be to have lights controlled by a motion detector both outside and inside the house. One could also try thinking like the burglar and ask the question: “Where would I break in if I were a burglar?” and then make sure to strengthen that point of the house. Alarms are more useful if they go off when the window or door is broken, rather than when the burglar is in the middle of the house.

One can never prevent burglary completely, but some steps can make a difference nonetheless. Some of them are simple, others are costly and whether they get taken depends on how much an individual is interested in protecting their home. Individuals who have experienced an unknown person in their homes going
through their possessions generally are more prone to spending more money than those who have not been exposed personally to the problem.

The interviewed police officer mentions Swedish research from Pira (2008) that shows that burglars think many people hide their valuables in similar places. Offenders also consider that they could burglarise those people with their eyes closed. They also mention that if one has broken in at a place once, then after a while one can return, because people have most likely gotten new items to replace the old ones and hidden them at the same place as before. Those who have suffered from a burglary have a higher risk of being burglarised again unless they take some measures to prevent it. There are people that have been burglarised two-three times in the course of three-four years. Thus repeated victimisation is a phenomenon that has been noticed in this local police area. In these cases the police inform them that they are at a higher risk of being exposed to the residential burglary again if they do not take some measures.

As another aspect of preventive work it is customary in Lund’s municipality to create a map for the patrolling policemen to show where the burglaries have occurred. This map covers four weeks of residential burglaries at a time as well as any tips that were received concerning this type of crime. It allows the police in this area to use their resources more efficiently, so the police can be visible in the marked areas and can stop cars for inspection. This map is updated every week to keep up to date. Some areas appear almost always on that map, which might mean that there is a criminal that live somewhere nearby there and if one manages to catch that person then the amount of crimes in the area will with high probability decrease. The areas with residential burglaries are always changing, that is why it is considered looking back in time more than four weeks is unnecessary.

There is a follow-up for the period October-March every year, due to the fact that it is the darker period of the year. One can easily see who is at home and who is not. Most people leave the lights on during the weekend if they are going away, but in the middle of the week when people are at work there are no lights on. Most people are home around six o’clock in the evening and most burglaries happen between the hours of 15-20 in the evening. The total amount of burglaries in Lund during this period is: 2008/2009 - 274, 2009/2010 - 138, 2010/2011 – 286, 2011/2012 - 239, 2012/2013 - 268, 2013/2014 – 368. As one can see, there is a dip in amount of burglaries in 2009/2010 and a significant increase in 2013/2014. These are completed burglaries either in an apartment or single-family house.

It is hard to say which preventive measures are the ones that give results, that is why it is great that there such studies as Pira (2008) have done. Some research say that if a person get caught during one burglary, then he/she has probably done a great amount more, around 20-25 before they got caught.

There is a problem with criminal gangs that travel here from other countries that have it as a profession, committing burglaries. They burglarise three to four houses in the same neighbourhood before they move on to another place. However, at this point in time, the most problematic criminals are local burglars, the ones that live nearby. Those could be addicts or adolescents or life-style criminals. The most stolen items are jewellery, money, home electronics, cameras, laptops, tablets, mobile phones and such small items. It is very seldom that TV’s
get stolen, but it happens. Sometimes it is more unusual items, such as clothes and food; then the crime was most likely committed by a homeless person.

There are several towns in local police area Lund that have neighbourhood watch. It is considered by the interview person to be a good factor to decrease residential burglary chance almost by half. However, to be beneficial, this neighbourhood watch has to be active. It is very important that people talk to each other, listen to each other and cooperate.

There was a special intervention in local police area Lund during 2005, due to the fact that there was a spike in burglaries during 2003 and 2004. It was focused on police visibility in Dalby, Sandby, Genarp and Veberöd along highway 11 during three months (with a starting date 1 February 2005). This was done by vehicle control at special control points and times, information about crime prevention, contact with media and other collaboration partners. The control points for vehicular screening where decided due to what happened in that area. It was about spending short time at a lot of places to create the illusion of there being a lot of police patrols in the area. The amount of burglaries has decreased significantly, almost by half, especially in Veberöd that received most of the resources. Despite this intervention succeeding in its goal, the resource management does not allow for repetition of it yet.

There are several reasons behind why people choose to commit residential burglary. One of them is that it has become harder to break into commercially owned buildings. Businesses, stores and banks manage their money quite a lot differently than they used to, making the money harder to get a hold of, decreasing the gain and increasing the risks. Residences, on the other hand, often are empty and unattended during the days. People have a great deal of valuable items at home that are easy to sell and divest. It is also hard to persecute someone for a burglary if they have not left any traces, such as DNA or fingerprints, or if someone did not see them in the action. This also contributes to reasons why people commit residential burglary. In case if there is no trace of as person, one has to concentrate on the objects that got stolen. Bad descriptions, lack of photographs or markings and so on, make it hard to find any stolen object and connect them to a specific burglary.

Despite all the information, it often happens that when the police visit a crime scene, they discover that the burglars got in at exactly the point they warn about. As in the houses have bad locks, bad windows, and their backyards are protected from everyone’s view from the outside and the lights were off. This is because many people reason that “It will never happen to me”.

In order to be able to prevent residential burglaries in a better way, it would have been exceptional if residents could rely more on their instincts and contact the police if they suspect anything out of order is going on. This is due to the fact that the police cannot do that preventive work entirely on their own. It happens very often that someone has seen something prior to a burglary, but they decided not to contact the police for some reason. It is much better if people call one time too many rather than one time too little, because since the burglars rarely leave any traces it is very hard to find them after the crime has been committed, unless they are found together with the stolen goods.
DISCUSSION

In this part, the results will be discussed in accordance with previous research and Routine Activity Theory.

Despite what Pira (2008) writes about the preferable time of the year to commit burglaries being summer, it does not seem to be the case anymore; at least not in the examined police area Middle Scania. The times have changed and nowadays the burglars seem to prefer darker time of the year, according to my interviews. The report from BRÅ confirms that most residential burglaries in single-family houses are committed during the last quarter of the year, when the daylight is scarce (BRÅ, 2011b). The same information was received from the interviews with police officers. It might be so that the trends have changed in the past several years for some reason, making it simpler for offenders to commit crime during darker months of the year. It still stands, however, that the holiday periods are characterised by increase in residential burglaries, because many people travel and are out of town, leaving their houses unattended.

If one examines the rates of residential burglary, one can see two contradicting developments, depending on where the data came from. Official crime statistics from BRÅ show us that residential burglary has been increasing, slowly but steadily, for the past ten years. This is most obvious when one compares the numbers from 2005 to 2014. For the whole country the increase was 34 %, for Scania – 29 %, and for Middle Scania the increase was 67 %. The escalation in the police area Middle Scania is the most striking one with almost twice as much as for the whole country and more than double compared with Scania county.

However, evidence contradicting the increase can be found in Swedish Crime Survey, NTU. There it is stated that throughout the years, from 2005 to 2013 (the latest existing survey only covers year 2013), only approximately 1 % of households in Sweden has been exposed to residential burglary.

NTU is a self-reporting survey with varying amount of respondents every year, while statistics from BRÅ are official record of amounts of crimes that have been reported to the police, including both completed and attempted offences. The survey covers the whole country, where the increase according to statistics has been the least, only 29 %. The amount of households subjected to a residential burglary in 2013 was 1,2 % (BRÅ, 2015a). This means that despite the rates of reported crimes, only 1,2 % of all households in Sweden have experienced residential burglary. This might create an illusion that this crime is insignificant, and that is why it is important to realise, that even if the percentage of all households does not increase as fast or as noticeably as the reported cases of burglary, it does not mean residential burglary is not an issue. If the trend continues, then the increase will become apparent within several years even for all households in the country.

Another curious statistical moment is the amount of unreported cases that differ as well, depending on where one looks. Both literature (Mawby, 2013; Pira, 2008) and the interviewed police officers consider the amount of unreported cases of residential burglary to be virtually inexistent. On the other hand, NTU points out that these numbers fluctuate from 70 % to 89 % during 2005-2013 (BRÅ, 2007,
In this case, self-report survey is a good measure to get the fuller picture of how many cases of residential burglary get reported. There are several possible explanations to why some burglaries remain unreported. First one suggests that the victims might not be prone to report any burglary attempts or cases where nothing much got stolen, because the feel like there is no point to it. Second explanation could be that the cases that do not get reported are when residents that suffered residential burglary do not have a home insurance; hence they have no incentive to go to the police. This is more likely to happen to victims living in apartments, rather than single-family houses. The third possibility is a feeling of hopelessness, when the victim does not expect reporting the crime to bring any results. No matter what the reason is, it is important to recognise the fact that the amount of unreported cases is not as insignificant as it is perceived to be.

Defining burglary, again

What constitutes domestic burglary varies according to different countries’ penal codes. If one takes, for example, the definition of burglary used in USA and England and Wales, one can see some significant differences in comparison to the Swedish penal code. In England and Wales, the burglary does not require for any object to be stolen, it is the fact of entering illegally that makes an offence an act of burglary (Mawby, 2013; Sentencing Council, 2011). However, in Sweden for an offence to be classified as a residential burglary an act of stealing has to occur, according to one of my interview participants. Merely breaking into a house and entering the premises is not enough, it would only qualify as trespassing. If the door is open and a person goes in and takes something, then this action is classified as a theft from a residence. In order for a criminal action to be considered as a residential burglary both the stealing and the breaking in components have to be present (interview 1).

Aggravated burglary in USA and England and Wales, amongst other attributes, constitutes committing burglary while possessing a weapon or there being a victim that got physically or psychologically hurt (Sentencing Council, 2011; Shover, 1991). However, by Swedish law, residential burglary is already a type of aggravated theft, meaning that the degree of aggravation cannot be increased further. At the same time, as stated by one of the interviewees, using any sort of weapon to intimidate or hurt a human being during a burglary makes it a robbery rather than burglary (interview 1).

These differences remind us to be mindful of such inconsistencies when comparing the legislation of different countries or any prevention measures these countries employ. The fact that a criminal offence, such as burglary, is not entirely defined in the same way in penal codes of those countries might affect how it should be prevented. That is, instead of directly copying the preventive measures that seem to have worked somewhere, one should stop and consider whether the goal of that prevention is even applicable in the current situation. Instead of directly applying an approach that was used in, for example USA, one should examine what that measure is supposed to prevent and whether a similar problem exists in one’s country, for example Sweden.
Preventing residential burglary

Residential burglary is a type of crime that should be prevented, because after it has been committed the chances of either catching the perpetrators or even returning stolen goods are not very high. This does not mean that nothing should be done to detect the crimes, it is very important that proper investigative work is performed, because even if the percentage of cleared cases is low, it is not non-existent. However, preventive work will most likely bear more fruit in the long term.

The preventive measures that police works with in order to decrease the rates of residential burglary are very often based on the same premises as Routine Activity Theory is founded on, explicitly or implicitly. This is highly noticeable during my interviews, where the police officers from local police area Öresund that had a specific intervention to work with talk openly about have used Routine Activity Theory in the planning of the intervention. At the same time, it is also quite clear during the interviews with two other police officers from local police areas Lund and Ringsjöbygd that their regular day-to-day way of preventing residential burglary or preventing second victimisation is also based on the very same theory.

Commonly, the instructions that are given to the general population on how to prevent domestic burglary are similar no matter where in Middle Scania police area one is. This implies that the police’s approach is more or less unanimous and target hardening is believed to be effective. There might be different aspects of the perimeter security that are emphasized by different officers, but all agree about which measures should be done. However, as has been pointed out in my interviews, it is a question of expenses for most people, and how much one is willing to spend on one’s security. Nothing is a 100% deterrent if a burglar decides that he/she has to break in. Nevertheless, unless it is an order to steal something special, most burglars will go and look for an easier target if they encounter a residence too protected for their taste. This is exactly how a suitability of a target is reduced.

**Target hardening**

The preventive measures that the police in Middle Scania advocate in order to prevent domestic burglary are a part of so-called target hardening techniques, which aim to deter offenders from burglarising the specific targets (Mawby, 2013; Hirschfield, Newton & Rogerson, 2010). The intervention executed in Kävlinge during a span of almost six months had a goal decreasing the numbers of completed and reported residential burglary cases in police area Öresund. It was aimed at affecting two of three aspects of Routine Activity Theory – a suitable object and absence of capable guardian. All the residences in the local police area were considered as suitable objects, which mostly includes single-family houses. In order for these residences to no longer appear as suitable targets something had to be done about their perimeter security. The information was spread to the residents in the area in form of brochures that were handed out by the volunteers. This information included guidelines on how they could increase the security of their dwelling to avoid being a victim of the burglary or being repeatedly victimised. These guidelines included such measures as extra locks, installing alarms, if they did not have any, or extending the alarms to include all stories, installing movement-activated illumination in the backyard. Another aspect of
reducing the suitability of target is not leaving any valuable objects visible through windows or patio door, because this might increase risk of a burglary happening. Similar instructions were given to the victims of the burglaries by police officers reporting the crime in all three local police areas of Middle Scania.

The research on target hardening in Liverpool showed that residences that were target hardened after a burglary had a lower chance of being burgled again, and at the same time many residences that were exposed to a burglary were never target hardened (Hirschfield, Newton & Rogerson, 2010). This is peculiar; because it seems like people who were exposed to a burglary would try to protect themselves from the same thing happening again. However, according to my results, it is not that uncommon residents that were victimised do not try to install any preventive measures to avoid future victimisation. One of the reasons can be that, as Mawby (2013) mentions, the victims do not feel like they can afford any new security installations. Another is that the residents might feel resigned and hopeless, as if it is not going to help. This is unfortunate, because the offenders are most likely return if no security upgrades were made (Pira, 2008).

One the one hand, no one can protect their property infinitely, all of the measures can be circumvented and scarcely anyone wants to live in a prison-like settings. On the other hand, if a person does nothing after being exposed to a burglary, then he/she is increasing the chances of being victimised again. Pira (2008) and Bernacso (2008) as well as my interviewees have pointed out that it is easy for an offender go back to a house they already know. From a routine activity perspective, the target is still suitable because nothing has been done to lower its suitability. Even more so, it might have become more suitable due to the fact that the burglar has already been there once and he is familiar with his surroundings and more confident since it went well last time (Townsley, Homel and Chaseling, 2003).

Alarms are one of the foremost security measures that are recommended by the police to prevent residential burglary. There are many different types of alarms in different price ranges, as mentioned in my interviews. Tseloni and others (2014) have found that burglar alarms on their own are counter-productive in preventing burglary. This finding is worth considering and possibly worth mentioning as well. It shows that when installing an alarm one should also install some other kind of security measure at the same time, such as external lights or extra locks. It is possible, that a sole alarm signals to the offenders that there is something valuable in the house, but since there are no other security measures, it is quite easy to break in. This applies especially if, as mentioned by interviewees, the residents only have alarms installed on one of the floors, or have the detectors wrongly placed.

Social guardianship, as suggested by Meier and Miethe (1990) is effective in residential burglary prevention. Especially if people in a household have a varying schedule (Robinson, 2000). This is explained by the fact that offenders do not want any kind of interaction with anyone, not even to be seen; therefore they generally do not target a residence if someone is at home. Varying schedule makes it hard for criminals to map people’s daily activities, hindering them from committing burglary. It is, of course, hard to recommend as a proper prevention measure, because most people have daytime jobs with very little flexibility.
Neighbourhood watch

Neighbourhood watch is not entirely a prevention measure that is exercised solely by law enforcement, but it is heavily recommended in police area Middle Scania by the police officers, as well as it is established with the help of local police authorities.

The police in Middle Scania have a positive attitude for neighbourhood watch, especially in local police area Ringsjöbygden, where they have helped to form several of them. This helps residents to get to know who lives in their area, and since they are working towards a common goal, bond with them on another level than just with people they live next to.

In local police area Lund the police are more cautiously positive, pointing out that it is a good measure, but only if the members of it are active. Indeed, after a neighbourhood watch has been established, it is not enough to just put up signs and hope that it will prevent crime. The participants have to be engaged by, for example, taking walks in their neighbourhood to show that there are people present and to greet any unknown individuals. This makes the residents capable guardians of their homes in the absence of the police, thus hopefully reducing the chance of victimisation.

There are some aspects of neighbourhood watch, which can render it completely ineffective. One of them is that it is very contact dependent; it requires the members of the watch to continue talking to each other and for the representative of the watch to remain in contact with the police. The same concern arises if many people leave and move out of the area, it might become difficult to sustain the watch in working order then. Therefore, neighbourhood watch is not a permanent solution and has to be formed with caution. It will not prevent crime by simply existing, in order for it to be effectual; its members have to remain active.

Another issue that exists is the problem with placement of neighbourhood watch programs in the areas that need them the most (Mawby, 2013; Shover, 1991). It is, however, not as noticeable in Sweden, since it is the residents who decide whether they want to start neighbourhood watch in their area; thus making it possible for any area, high or low risk, to obtain this sort of program to protect themselves from burglary. However, the residents in less advantaged neighbourhoods might be less inclined to associate with this kind of program, even if they might be more in need of it than a middle class neighbourhood.

Alternative prevention measures

There are further prevention measures that are employed by the police in Middle Scania, save for advocating for target hardening and neighbourhood watch.

One of the parts of the specific intervention aimed at reducing residential burglary in Kävlinge was the police patrolling the area and police controls in strategic places. This was done both to increase the visibility of the police, to show that there are capable guardians in the area to stop any criminal activity, and to perform random car controls. Inspecting cars was done both to show that the police are present and active, but also to decrease the motivation of any possible offender. One of the reasons why this intervention seem to have given results is because, as my interview subjects have pointed out, it has been tailored to fit the
local police area where it was used, which as Grove (2011) states, is a sign of a successful intervention.

When the residents are not at home, for example at work or travelling, their dwellings become more suitable of a target for burglars, hence only the presence of capable guardians, the police or possibly neighbourhood watch, can prevent a crime from happening. This is what the police in Kävlinge tried to achieve, partially, with the aspect of intervention that required the police patrols to be visible and stop the cars for inspection.

Even if residents are not a part of any neighbourhood watch they are encouraged by several of interviewed police officers to be vigilant nonetheless. Getting to know one’s neighbours and the people who live in one’s area, at least superficially, is something that has been recommended by all four interviewed police officers. This is to increase the awareness of who resides in the neighbourhood, possibly who visits them and how general routines of the whole area look like. Recognising individuals, knowing that they belong in the area helps when there is something out of order happening, such as suspicious individuals or behaviour. In case if one does notice some odd behaviour one could call the police tip line right away. This recommendation helps the police to have extended “eyes and ears” everywhere, thus making the residents more capable of guarding their property.

Another benefit of knowing who one’s neighbours are is being able to ask them to look after the house while travelling away for a longer period of time. This is done in order for a house to appear occupied, even while the owner is away, because empty houses run a higher chance of being burgled (Robinson, 2000). If a neighbour could go over and pick up the mail, or leave some marks in the snow, it will reduce the target’s suitability that tends to grow the longer the owners are away from their residence (Wilcox, Madensen & Tillyer, 2007).

Electronics, such as tablets and cameras, should not be left visible either; they should not be seen through a window. Losing something precious like old heirlooms could be devastating, especially since all one gets in return form the insurance company is money, which cannot be compared to the items emotional value. In order to diminish the damage that is done to an individual by burglary it is advised by the police that any valuable objects, such as heirlooms, should not be kept within an easy reach if they are not in use. This way, even if the person gets a break-in, they might not lose something that is irreplaceable. This, of course, is no longer a prevention measure, but rather a neutralisation of consequences.

Using the security measures one has installed at home and not leaving valuable possessions in open places as well as being mindful of one’s surroundings should become daily routine activities aimed at protecting one’s home, a habit, in the same way as locking the door when leaving home. These actions alone can go a long way of preventing residential burglary.
Predictive policing

Predictive policing is starting to become more widespread in Europe. It is an analytical method that helps predict where future residential burglaries can occur, in order for police resources to be allocated more efficiently. It is based on a principle that crime is statistically predictable and is quite similar to other statistic prediction methods.

The closest method to predictive policing in Middle Scania is the one used in local police area Lund, which charts four weeks of residential burglaries on a map given to the patrolling police officers. The positive side of predictive policing is the fact that it can be used on a daily bases, rather than being a short-lived intervention. I am not advocating for this specific method to be used in police area Middle Scania, but some sort of analytical program could improve chances of preventing domestic burglary. If there is some similar statistic program in use already, I have not been informed about it.

Burglars

The main type of perpetrator of residential burglaries looks different in various police areas in Middle Scania. From the information grasped in my interviews, it appears that in local police area Öresund most residential burglaries are committed by either criminal gangs from out of country or local life-style criminals. While in local police area Lund the main type of offender is generally restricted to local offenders: the drug addicts, adolescents and life-style criminals. In local police area Ringjöbygden, adolescents seem to have been prevailing in many residential burglaries, but other types were not excluded either. It is very interesting to see such difference in offender types in just one police area. This makes it tricky to use a prevention of universal type, when knowing that act differently depending on who they are, on what motivates them. They might even have a different perception of target suitability.

Pira (2008) states in his study that the perpetrators are mainly some kind of addicts, however this does not correspond well with the results I have received from my interviews. This brings up the question of how representative his study in fact is for Sweden and for offenders overall. Every piece of knowledge we have about burglars as offenders is based on the ones who got caught, which according to Mawby (2013) might provide a false reference frame, because they were not successful in their enterprise. There might even exist some group (e.g. adolescents, addicts or life-style criminals) that we are missing altogether, because they never have been arrested.

It is known that most burglars do not specialise in just one type of crime (Mawby, 2013; Shover, 1991). However, it is unknown whether this statement could be applicable to the out of country criminal gangs that travel to Sweden specifically for the purpose of committing burglaries. They might be subject to other criminal offences as well, but the question is whether those offences are something else entirely, or in some way connected to burglary, for example fencing of the stolen goods. If they do specialise, this means that these gangs are a phenomenon not entirely spread out to countries such as UK, US and Australia, where burglary is also big issue. This implies that the Swedish criminal system will have to find its
own ways to prevent this type of burglary. One could look somewhere else in Europe to see whether other countries have similar issue with criminals who travel to other wealthier countries in order to commit crimes, and how they are dealt with.

Local offenders that live in an area increase the chances of crime occurring there by simply being present there (Townsley, Homel and Chaseling, 2003). This is due to the fact that these offenders commit crimes, such as burglary, in the area where they live or work, but also because they most likely associate with other offenders. Routine Activity theory tells us that offenders most likely choose their targets during engaging in their regular everyday activity (Moreto, Piza & Caplan, 2013; Yu & Maxfield, 2014). This does not mean that they act on their choices right away. It is possible that after a target have been selected the burglar returns and observes it for some period of time before acting upon his decision, as has been mentioned in my interviews. This also confirms the fact that if an offender lives or works in an area, then the amount of crimes committed in that area is higher than in a neighbourhood void of any offenders. Knowing that allows for better chances of a prevention to succeed and lower the number of crime in the area.

As well as low penalty rates, money can be seen as another motivator for committing residential burglary. They might start due to different motivators, e.g. money, excitement or/and curiosity (Mawby, 2013; Pira, 2008), but they continue because the monetary gain is higher than the risk of repercussions.

Repeat and near repeat victimisation

Despite what the literature suggests about repeat and near repeat victimisation and how big of a problem it is (Townsley, Homel & Chaseling 2003; Mawby, 2013), interestingly enough, only one of the interviewed police officers could answer definitively whether repeat victimisation was a problem in a given area. Either this aspect is something that is not perceived to be an issue in the Middle Scania or it actually does not occur often enough to be noticed. All of them could certainly name a few of cases when they have experienced repeat victimisation, but it never appeared to them as a problem that needs to be dealt with; whereas in literature describing residential burglary it is one of the most mentioned issues. Near repeat victimisation was not mentioned at all as an issue.

There is a notion of burglary having a sort of spreading effect, that is, if one house in a neighbourhood was burglarised then the houses closest to it are the most at risk, because the offender is now acquainted with the area (Townsley, Homel & Chaseling 2003). It is impossible to deny the existence of this phenomenon in Middle Scania completely. However, this does not seem to happen on a wide enough scale in the area, for the police to notice and acknowledge it as a problem. This theoretic reflection might apply more to the local burglars, rather than out of country criminal gangs. Breaking in to a house somewhere nearby the place of their residence makes the burglar familiarise with the neighbourhood even more, making the targets more suitable in his/hers eyes. Thus, catching a burglar like that would help lowering the number of burglaries quite significantly, as pointed out by one of the interviewed police officers. Routine Activity Theory in connection with repeat victimisation implies that certain targets are more
attractive to the burglars, than others, in such extent that they choose to come back.

This contradiction of theory versus empirical data could have several reasons behind it. For once, it might be due to a fact that the notion of a repeat victimisation in terms of a domestic burglary refers mainly to high-crime or disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Mawby, 2013; Hirschfield, Newton & Rogerson, 2010). Whereas here, in the described area, there are not that many neighbourhoods that could be described as disadvantaged, on the contrary, most of them are quite well-off. Another explanation could be that in some areas residential burglaries are performed by visiting criminals. They tend to leave the country after burglarising the residences in several regions, making it hard for them to return to victimise the same residences again.

A further consideration is the fact that the program the police use to view reported crimes is not adapted well to show such statistics. The data it displays can be misleading in the sense that even though it can look like there have been several burglaries at the same address it might belong to an apartment building. In order to be sure, that a single-family house has been exposed to burglary more than once, it needs to be checked manually, which is time-consuming.

If repeat victimisation or near repeat victimisation were a problem in police area Middle Scania, it would be a good ground for prevention, since some research implies that the same offender often are involved in repeat or near repeat burglaries (Bernsco, 2008). Meaning, if this issue ever becomes apparent, then prevention could be based on trying to catch those offenders after initial burglary has occurred.

**Increasing penalty**

It has been mentioned in several interviews that penalty rates for residential burglary are too mild, which might be one of the reasons that motivates offenders to commit this crime. This is most likely caused by in combination with clearance rates being very low. Even if a burglar does get arrested, and the chances of that happening are slim, the punishment will most likely not be harsh, especially if one is a first-time offender or there are not enough evidence tying one to the crime scene (Sveriges Riksdag, 2014).

One could reflect that the maximum of six years is actually not a mild punishment at all, but then again if in praxis most offenders receive a sentence varying between six and ten months (Sveriges Riksdag, 2014), it is understandable that the reward might be worth the risk. If Pira’s (2008) study is still applicable and the numbers are relevant for today’s criminals as well, then 2,4 % or 1,15 % rate of getting caught per perpetrator is incredibly small, considering how much an offender can “earn” during 10-15 minutes of a robbery (interview 1; Tseloni et al. 2004). This makes for a quite motivated offender that chooses to continue committing this type of crime. Of course, this time does not include planning the crime and observing the area, but the profit is worth the risk for most burglars.

Criminologists learn very early in their education that increasing the punishment is not the way to go to prevent future criminality. There exist two groups that
justify punishment in different ways: reductivists, who consider the purpose of punishment to prevent future recidivism, and retributivists, who consider the punishment to be a retribution for the committed crimes (Carrabine, Iganski, Lee, Plummer & South, 2004). The fact that the Alliance wants to increase the sentence rates (Sveriges Riksdag, 2014) shows that they take the issue of residential burglaries seriously and want something to be done about it. The current government is prepared to discuss this matter as well (Sveriges radio, 2015).

However, depending on which type of crime justification they have in mind, reductivist or retributivist, the Alliance’s proposal could be interpreted differently. From the reductivist point of view, increasing the minimum punishment might not do the trick. Raising the sentence limit to one year in prison might just result in even fewer sentences overall without having a deterrent effect on the criminals. With clearance rates remaining as low as they are today it will not be productive to make the punishment harsher from the prevention point of view. If one looks at this law suggestion from the Routine Activity point of view, then the only aspect of it that the minimum penalty increase affects is the motivation of the offender, which is arguably the hardest component to influence. The offenders will most likely stay equally motivated as they are today, whether the punishment is increased or not, mainly due to the fact that so few of them get caught.

From the retributive point of view, low clearance rates still remain a problem, making punishment a sort of damage control, where one punishes those who manage to get caught extra hard. However, the Alliance does point out that one of the reasons of raising the minimum punishment is due to the fact that residential burglary is one of the crimes where the victims get affected a lot on a personal level, making the existing punishment not entirely adequate for the trauma victims experience. This is retributivist logic and, from this point of view, the increase of minimum penalty is a suitable reaction.

Instead of increasing a minimum sentence, one could possibly consider using the logic of “three strikes” policy used for some crimes in USA. That is, after an offender has committed his third offence within the same type of crime he/she is given a 25-year-to-life sentence. Similar legislation exists in England and Wales for, amongst other crimes, domestic burglary, where the penalty is increased to minimum three years after being arrested for the third time (Lindström, 2007). The same policy could be used in Sweden. Meaning that instead of increasing the overall punishment, third time offenders can receive a harsher minimum sentence. However, this as well will be complicated by the low clearance rates.

Another interesting point that the Alliance makes is creating a new category of crime called “residential burglary” instead of it being a sub category of “theft” as it is at this moment. Highlighting this type of crime might demonstrate that it has become sufficient of a problem that more potent measures should be taken against it. This action also allows for such a thing as “aggravated burglary” to exist within the Swedish penal system, making the crime even harsher if need be. An example of such aggravating circumstances can be that the break-in happened while someone was at home (e.g. sleeping) or if any valuable objects were stolen that bear a sentimental value (e.g. old heirlooms), that either got destroyed can never be returned to their owner.
Why is Middle Scania afflicted with residential burglary?

There have been given several theories in my interviews as to why Middle Scania, and specifically local police area Öresund, has seen such an increase in residential burglary in the last decade.

Geographic location of local police area Öresund has been mentioned as a possible explanation of burglary rates escalation. It is situated nearby several highways with multiple exit and entrance roads, making it easy for burglars to get away, thus increasing the suitability of the whole area as a target due to the fact that one of main type of offender is the criminal gangs from outside the country. Easy access to different countries within EU has also been mentioned on why there might be many out of country criminals. Scania in particular can be easily reached both by highway on Öresund bridge and ferry-boats.

The whole area of Middle Scania, save for town of Lund, consists many of single-family houses which are considered by offenders to be easier to break into (Pira, 2008). Most of those houses have also something valuable that can be stolen, according to one of my interview persons. Indeed, if one examines the average income for the whole Scania in 2013, one can see that all three municipalities in police area Öresund have a higher income than most other municipalities in Scania (SCB, 2015).

Gold prices have been discussed as a possible reason for increased burglary rates. The prices on gold have grown for the past several years, contributing to why gold is one of the foremost stolen objects together with cash. The higher the gold price the more motivated the offenders become to steal anything that is golden. This statement requires more research than given here, but it seems like it could be a possible explanation.

It is hard to say which one of the mentioned factors has the most influence on spiking of residential burglary. Chances are it is the combination of aforementioned theories, not excluding some other factors that are currently unknown.

Suggestions for improved prevention

Preventing residential burglary is by far a better option than working with and trying to fix its consequences. Even though this could be said about any type of crime, it does not make it any less true.

Since the routine activity theory is actually based on three concepts it would be great if the third one, motivated offender, could be covered by domestic burglary prevention as well. It is difficult without knowing the target group; hence the first priority would be to distinguish the main offenders in the area, in order for the intervention to be aimed specifically at them. Something similar was done in the local police area Ringsjöbygden, when the police initiated an intervention aimed expressly at adolescence thus lowering, amongst other things, burglary crime.

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7 Except for Vellinge municipality, that is in the second place after Lomma
rates. As Grove (2011) pointed out, the intervention should be made to fit a specific situation and be flexible enough to change if need arises.

Mapping techniques similar to the ones used in local police area Lund, where they map residential burglary occurrences for the past four weeks in order to know which areas should have an increased police presence, are a useful tool in predicting future possible criminality as pointed out by Moreto, Piza and Caplan (2013). Thus something similar could be used in other police areas. Millie and Hough (2004) suggest that combining long term and short term intervention strategies is the best way to prevent future residential burglary. Using mapping techniques, or statistical analysis, can count as a long term intervention, while doing some intervention similar to the one in local police area Öresund, will cover the short term measure.

**Future research**

Suggestions for future research include looking at the collective efficacy of the neighbourhood as another possible prevention measure for residential burglary. That is whether one could prove that the more people living in the same neighbourhood know each other, or at least know of each other’s existence, the harder it is for a burglar to commit crime in that neighbourhood.

Another interesting development of current study would be interviewing the victims of residential burglary and neighbourhood watch participants from the police area Middle Scania. This would give a fuller picture on how the crime is experienced by the residents, whether the phenomenon of repeat or near repeat victimisation is present, the reasoning behind establishing a neighbourhood watch and whether it appears to be successful in its goal.

As mentioned before, connecting gold prices and domestic burglary could make for an interesting research examining whether these two factors can be depended on each other.

**Conclusion**

This thesis has aimed to answer the questions of how residential burglary prevention looks like in Middle Scania, both as specific programs and as a part of everyday policing. The results have shown that there have been both explicit interventions with purpose of reducing residential burglary as well as daily policing techniques that work with that matter. There are many aspects of burglary prevention that are worth discussing, and my work here has only scratched the surface of the vast amount of information one could procure. That is why I have both given suggestions on future domestic burglary prevention as well as research propositions.

In conclusion, I want to mention that there are many people who think: “This will never happen to me” and do not give the security of their homes a second thought until it is too late. As mentioned previously, if everyone becomes a bit more
vigilant and attentive to their surroundings, it would go a long way in preventing residential burglary.
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APPENDIX

Interview guide

- Generella frågor (namn, ålder, hur länge har varit polis)
  - Hur länge har du jobbat med inbrott?
  - Beskriv den generella inbrottstjuven (kön, ålder, singel/inte, härkomst, bostadsort, anställningssituation, begår brott i grupp/själv)

- Generellt om situationen
  - Kan du beskriva nuvarande situation i ert område? i jämförelse med hur den såg ut tidigare?
  - Varför tror du att inbrott är ett stort problem i området?
  - Hur klassas inbrott under svenskt lag?

- Konkret om insatsen
  - Beskriv den åtgärd ni genomförde, om du kan?
  - Hur kom ni fram till slutgiltiga insatsen?
  - Tror du att spridningseffekt är aktuell?
  - Fick ni flera som var intresserade att jobba på samma sätt?
  - Hur ska ni beräkna resultaten av insatsen?
  - Är upprepad utsatthet någonting ni upplever som ett problem här?

- Vet du vad predictive policing är? (predicting where and when the crime is likely to occur)
  - Tror du på det?

- Är det lönt att installera sådana förebyggande åtgärder som larm och extra lås?

- Grannsamverkan, finns det?
  - Tror du att det hjälper/hade hjälpert?

- Vad är det som behövs för att öka effektiviteten av brottsförebyggande arbete av inbrott?
  - Samarbete med t.ex. kommunen?

- Något annat du vill tilläga?