A Critical Examination of Features Differentiating Attempted and Completed Cases of Male Perpetrated Stranger Child Abduction in the UK.

Craig John Robert Collie

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Portsmouth

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Institute of Criminal Justice Studies

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
‘Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.’

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Dedication

In Loving Memory of Stephanie

For Tor, Ingrid & Angus
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<td>AAA</td>
<td>Action Against Abduction, A UK based charity</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACPO</td>
<td>Association of Chief Police Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEOP</td>
<td>Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoP</td>
<td>College of Policing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHR</td>
<td>European Court of Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMG</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO</td>
<td>Home Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misper</td>
<td>“Missing Person”, often used in the field by police and by organizations involved in searching for missing people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>Modus Operandi</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPB</td>
<td>Missing Persons Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>National Crime Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCMEC</td>
<td>National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>NISMART</td>
<td>National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOMS</td>
<td>National Offender Management Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPIA</td>
<td>National Policing Improvement Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>Parents and Abducted Children Together, former name of UK Charity Action Against Abduction (see AAA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGR</td>
<td>Post-Graduate Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAT</td>
<td>Routine Activity Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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Dissemination of Research

Publications:


Conference Papers:


Seminar Presentations:


Media:


Interviewed for Heart FM, 5th April 2016.
Thesis Abstract

This thesis is on the topic of stranger child abduction. In particular, the thesis carries out an examination of whether a distinction should be made between attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction, in order to address the primary research question of whether each of these should be treated as separate types of stranger child abduction. By comparing whether an offence was completed or not, it has been argued that researchers will be best able to identify those factors that can have an impact in determining whether harm will come to victims, and highlight those that play a role in crime prevention or the mitigation of the offence. Utilising an archival approach, drawing on media and legal sources to create a database of stranger child abduction cases, the thesis is able to examine four key areas relating to stranger child abduction, with the specific intent of examining whether key offence features can be meaningfully compared depending on whether the case was attempted or completed. The thesis concludes that attempted and completed cases are sufficiently distinct to be considered as separate types of offending, and that comparing stranger child abduction cases based on whether they were completed is a useful way of analysing this type of offence.

The thesis has the secondary aim of testing widely held assumptions regarding stranger child abduction, i.e., that certain resistance strategies prevent abduction or that offenders prefer to target lone victims. By examining the features of the established database, the relevance and role of these assumptions was tested empirically. It was concluded that, for the most part, many of the common sense assumptions relating to stranger child abduction, i.e., that running away from an offender and calling for help would be associated
with offences being attempted, were true. However, several assumptions and stereotypes were refuted, particularly with regards to children being effective guardians over one another.

To provide context for the study, the thesis begins by explaining that issues relating to missing people have been, and must be, analysed via a process of refinement that involves the discovery of increasingly specific types. The abduction of children by strangers has emerged as one of these types, and has become of great interest to the media, the public, and to policy makers. However, following a critical literature review, it is argued that this type of child abduction remains poorly understood, and is subject to a number of problematic stereotypes that have been taken as fact. What academic research has been done on the topic has been overly concerned with establishing how often stranger child abduction occurs, with relatively little effort being made to further refine knowledge on the topic. A strain of arguments within the literature is identified that has been calling, with increasing conviction, to begin analysing stranger child abduction in terms of whether the offence was attempted or completed, i.e., to use an outcome based approach. After reviewing evidence in the literature, the conclusion can be drawn that this line of inquiry ought to be explored further. This thesis takes up this challenge by, first, gathering data on a sample of 78 stranger child abductions that occurred in the UK utilizing information drawn from legal and media sources, and, secondly, analysing the features of these cases while controlling for whether the offence was completed or attempted. The thesis takes the form of four studies, each of which analyses a different aspect of stranger child abduction that has been identified as key to the offence.

The four studies are used: to show that the broad case profile of stranger child abduction varies when attempted cases are compared to completed cases; to provide evidence that direct, active, unequivocal resistance is associated with attempted cases and can therefore be considered effective; to assess the role of various forms of guardianship over children in preventing harm, which simultaneously pointed towards evidence of best
practice while also demonstrating that criminological theory can usefully be applied to stranger child abduction when utilizing an outcome based approach; and to successfully build on and develop understanding of how offenders approach child abduction, and demonstrate that aggressive offenders who use multiple strategies tend to complete abductions more frequently than those using a single method.

As a result of these findings, the thesis concludes that the attempted-completed distinction is a useful way in which to analyse stranger child abductions. This research calls for recording of future abduction incidents to include recording of whether the victim was taken or not, as well as for the relationship between victim and offender to be noted. The thesis demonstrates that attempted cases appear to have a distinct character and profile that differentiates them from completed cases, e.g., with offenders responsible for attempted cases being more likely to be younger adults, to target female victims to have had a general offending history and to employ just one or two types of offending approach, whilst offenders carrying out completed abductions tend to be older, to be more specialised towards sexual offending, and are more likely to use a variety of offending approaches characterised by aggression or the overwhelming of the victim. This has potential implications for the prioritisation of suspects in investigations following an abduction incident. Moreover, the thesis has been able to demonstrate that studies conducted using the distinction can produce pragmatic, usable results, can test existing assumptions, and can be used to apply criminological theory to real world offences.
Chapter 1: Missing Persons and Stranger Child Abduction

Chapter Summary

This chapter serves as a foundation for the thesis. It begins by introducing the reader to the concept of Missing Persons and how it has become an academic discipline of increasing relevance to various areas of study as well as for policy makers and practitioners. The importance of conducting research on this topic is emphasized, explaining how policy makers and practitioners benefit from the existence of a strong research base.

It is argued in this section that the issue of Missing Persons is so broad that it cannot be studied effectively unless it is broken down into smaller areas. As such, it is necessary for researchers to identify particular topics of interest within the area of Missing Persons that can be specifically examined. The process of refinement that lead this author to the topic of stranger child abduction is then outlined and defended.

The aims and objectives of the thesis are outlined, highlighting that this project is concerned with comparing attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction, and evaluating whether this comparison can act as a new sub-type of Missing Person that can aid in current and future analyses. The structure of the remainder of the thesis is also laid out in this section.
1.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on examining the topic of stranger child abductions. The aim of the research carried out was to compare attempted and completed instances of such offences. This has been done with a view to ascertaining whether case outcome is a meaningful metric against which to measure and study stranger child abduction, and to assist in identifying factors that can be used to prevent this type of offending from being completed in the first instance.

The abduction of a child by a stranger is a relatively rare occurrence, with only 247 cases being reported to police in the UK in 2013 (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). However, each incident presents risk of potential serious harm for targeted children, and is a source of anxiety for anyone concerned with child welfare (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Asdigian, 1995; Asdigian, Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1995; Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999). Despite this, stranger child abduction has been subject to relatively little empirical research, with much of our knowledge on the subject being based on anecdotal evidence or common sense (see Newiss & Traynor, 2013). It is the aim of this thesis to embark on an in-depth inquiry into the features of stranger child abduction cases that have taken place in the UK, and in particular to interrogate whether comparing attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction, as suggested by Gallagher, Bradford and Pease (2008), can assist in further enhancing understanding of this type of offending behaviour.

Before embarking on this analysis, it is necessary to establish the context for such research. This introductory section will outline the burgeoning field of missing persons as it pertains to academia and to policy, and will trace the route by which recent research trajectories have encouraged work to be undertaken on the specific topic of comparing attempted and completed stranger child abduction cases. Carrying out such a review is
necessary to understand how the current understanding of stranger child abduction has evolved over time, and is required in order to situate the topic of stranger child abduction as part of both the wider Missing Persons literature and to appreciate its place in the of broader criminological, psychological and sociological landscape.

1.2 The Problem of Missing

In the UK, a person is considered to be missing when their whereabouts are unknown (College of Policing, 2013). Further information relating to definitions is dealt with in Chapter 2, however, for now, this simple operational definition is sufficient. Home Office figures (2010) estimate that around 250,00 people go missing in the UK each year, with police receiving upwards of 327,000 reports of missing incidents annually (Missing People, 2013). As a result, dealing with missing persons cases accounts for a very large volume of police workload.

There are numerous challenges faced by authorities when dealing with missing persons reports. The most immediate concern is to properly assess the level of risk faced by the missing person, and allocate resources necessary to properly deal with each case (Tarling & Burrows, 2004). The difficulty is that missing incidents can end in a wide variety of ways, ranging from trivial false alarms to high profile homicides. Getting the initial risk assessment wrong can lead to the case being mishandled, resources being wasted, damage to the reputation of the police, and, in the most serious cases, to harm befalling the missing person (Hedges, 2002).

As Newiss (2003) states, it is important to understand the types of people who go missing, as well as to ascertain the best ways for police and other organizations, such as Search and Rescue [an organization who deploys to search for vulnerable missing persons about whom there is concern, often operating in outdoor locations and in tandem with the
police, see Nichols, Goel, Nichols & Jones, 2014], to respond to missing incidents. Research has an important role to play in improving understanding of these areas. It is the aim of this thesis to advance knowledge in both of these areas by exploring ways in which to understand the specific missing person type of the child abducted by a stranger. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to ascertain any distinct profiles that emerge by comparing attempted and completed cases, and utilizing these profiles to assess the effectiveness of preventive strategies and predictive factors with a view to assisting in dealing with stranger child abduction incidents.

1.3 Missing Persons as an area of study

The issue of missing persons is by no means a new concern; however, it has recently become an increasingly visible and priority area of practice and policy. Individual cases receive ever increasing media coverage¹ (Henderson, Kiernan & Henderson, 2000; Wilson, Martins & Marske, 2005), police continue to diversify their approach to the issue (UK Missing Persons Bureau, 2014), and politicians at both the domestic and international level consistently refer to the topic as a matter of priority and development (Missing Children Europe, 2015).

As a result of this increasing interest, the topic of Missing Persons has become of increasing interest within academia. It is slowly emerging as an area of study in its own right, with work dedicated to understanding the phenomenon finding increasing demand from both practitioners and researchers (see, e.g., Fyfe, Parr, Stevenson & Woolnough, 2015). As a topic, Missing Persons (sometimes referred to simply as the issue of “missing”) represents a fulcrum point at which many disciplines converge (e.g., Holmes, 2008). Within academia,

¹ Arguably, the amount of media coverage is disproportionate to the level of risk faced by the general population, and may be misleading (see Best, 1988).
scholars working in the fields of criminology, psychology, social work, law, policy
development, and many others, can all take an interest in some aspect of the missing issue.

In the wider world, the Missing Persons issue represents a meeting point between
academia, emergency services of all kinds, social work, mental health practitioners, charities,
the media, education and families (see, e.g., Second International Conference for Missing
Children and Adults, 2015). All have a stake in the issue and an interest in improving how
such events are responded to and handled. Cases could potentially be international in nature,
or, equally, could be very local.

However, this creates a significant issue. The Missing Persons issue is incredibly
amorphous with many interconnecting topics, niche considerations, and emergent fields (see
Edkins, 2011; Fyfe, Stevenson & Woolnough, 2015). Cases run a huge spectrum of possible
scenarios: an elderly person with dementia wandering from a place of safety (Koester, 2008);
a hill-walker getting lost in the mountains (Gibb & Woolnough, 2007); an adult failing to
return after a night out (Newiss, N. D.); the discovery of an international trafficking ring
(Chase & Statham, 2005); a child being taken by a person without authority (e.g., Shutt,
Miller, Schreck, & Brown, 2004). When framed in this way, it will be apparent that a large
range of responses are required when dealing with these various scenarios. All of these events
and the areas they represent are distinct, and yet have become united under the heading of
Missing Persons. Hence, although Missing Persons might sound somewhat singular and
simple, being prima facie about people whose whereabouts are unknown, any given case
could raise multiple unique issues each requiring a unique response (Tarling & Burrows,
2004).

The Home Office (2011) acknowledges that “agencies are not always clear about
these roles and responsibilities, nor do they always recognise the risks of harm” when dealing
with Missing Persons cases. Thankfully, however, the area remains a collaborative one with practitioners, policy makers and researchers working together to advance the field. It can be argued that a key role of researchers and academics in this collaboration is to provide clarity. An important part of this provision of clarity is to provide evidence for future action. The overlap between academia and practice means that there is demand for research in this area that is not only informative, but also pragmatic and purposive (see Moran et al., 1997). While policy can be built up based on experience and on logic, it can also be informed more fully by detailed analysis and research that provides additional, robust evidence on which to base practice. In the context of Missing Persons, research is particularly important in helping to resolve the high levels of uncertainty that surround such incidents in order to enable responders to act with some degree of confidence (e.g., Koester, 2008; Fyfe, Parr, Stevenson & Woolnough, 2015).

Because of the breadth of areas to which Missing is relevant, it is necessary to limit research inquiries to specific topics- in this case, stranger child abduction. This paper conducts an in-depth examination of the particular topic of stranger child abduction, and specifically focuses on the extent to which various factors influence whether an offence is completed or whether it is attempted. The route by which the existing body of literature has arrived at considering stranger child abduction to be of distinct relevance will be discussed; however, one point should be made now. The decision to focus on distinguishing attempted cases from completed ones is felt to conform particularly well to the requirement that research in this field be pragmatic, actionable and useful. The research carried out in the present study seeks to not only improve knowledge of this offence, but also help to identify

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2 For example, the 2nd International Conference on Missing Children and Adults 2015 featured papers and panels from police officers, academics, search and rescue operatives, and child welfare specialists.
current shortcomings in practice and contribute towards plans for future practice, and even more exacting and comprehensive research in the future.

It should also be noted that researchers have a responsibility not to overstate the value of their findings (Krefting, 1991). This is particularly true in a collaborative field such as Missing, where practitioners in the field rely on the veracity of the research on which their responses are based, and vulnerable people’s lives are potentially at risk (Tarling & Burrows, 2004). As such, utmost care will be taken to be as realistic as possible when reporting findings and making recommendations.

1.4 Narrowing the Missing Issue: Missing Children

As intimated above, the topic of Missing is vast. It is far too vast for any one practitioner to claim even reasonable expertise in more than one or two of its constituent fields, and must be narrowed down considerably in order for meaningful research to take place (see Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1992).

Even when focusing attention on cases involving missing children specifically, the complexity and breadth of missing issues remains. The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children best capture the breadth of the topic as they refer to the situation as “the multi-faceted series of problems collectively known as ‘missing children’” (NSMEC, 2015).

No case involving a missing child can be conceptualized as low risk, and, at a practice level, are never assessed as such by UK police (Tarling & Burrows 2004). Several member states of the EU have laws, policies and provisions stating that cases involving missing children are of special character requiring immediate response, or stipulate that not having
attained the age of majority is a “characteristic that indicate[s] an alarming, high-risk case of a missing person.” (European Commission, 2013, p. 13).

Domestic government policy at all levels refers to the duty to safeguard children (e.g., Home Office, 2014; Jago, 2011). It is a responsibility shared by all agencies, and one taken on as well by various bodies from the third sector, e.g., helplines, Search and Rescue (Calder, 2004).

Issues and offences with direct links to missing children can include: abduction; sexual exploitation; child abuse; domestic violence; human trafficking; forced marriage; asylum issues; precursor to major crime (CEOP 2011). The seriousness of the issue is expressed succinctly in a piece of guidance offered to police investigators by ACPO (2005), who are advised that “[w]hen in doubt, think murder”. Any missing person case, including those involving a child, could potentially be the beginning of a murder investigation, even if the vast majority are resolved quickly and result in no harm being suffered (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000).

The literature base on missing children is also extremely broad, examining all kinds of issues and reasons why a child or young person might go missing. Children might simply get lost or lose their direction (Young, 2007); children may run away (Biehal, Mitchell & Wade, 2003); they may become homeless (Stein, Rees & Frost, 1994; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999); they might abscond from secure accommodation or in the course of obtaining asylum (Breuil, 2008); they may be suffering from exploitation (Barnardos, 2011); they may become internationally (Bokhari, 2008) or internally trafficked (Butler, 2011; Cockbain, Brayley & Laycock, 2011); they might be abducted by a family member (Hoff, 2007; Johnson, Girdner & Sagatun-Edwards, 1999), an acquaintance (Smallbone & Wortley, 2008), or a stranger.

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3ACPO was replaced by the National Police Chief’s Council (NPCC) as of April 2015.
(Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak, 2002; Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Every one of these is a complex, multi-faceted issue that involves not only multiple agencies, but also multiple overlapping fields of study, with each one being so distinct so as to deserve to be studied as its own topic. For this reason, it is necessary to specialize the focus of this thesis.

1.5 Child Abduction

The issue of missing children was initially studied very broadly, with little structured research on the topic. Over time, practitioners came to notice that there were general types of missing persons case involving children. This led to usage of the terms Missing Children, Abducted Children, Runaways and Throwaways (e.g., Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1992; Hammer, Finkelhor & Sedlak, 2002).

Eventually, a structured study was commissioned in the USA to examine the prevalence of these various types of missing children’s case. It was called the National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Throwaway Children, which became known by its abbreviated name, NISMART (Finkelhor et al., 1992). Part of the rationale for carrying out this study was to address growing national anxiety associated with the idea that there was an epidemic of children being targeted by malicious strangers. This followed a series of high profile murders and unsolved missing incidents featuring young children that occurred in the USA, most notably the disappearance of Etan Patz in 1979, and the abduction-murders of Adam Walsh in 1981, Polly Klaas in 1993, and Amber Hagerman in 1996 (see Best, 1988).
NISMART was carried out by examining police records, FBI reports, and by using a household survey asking parents about their experiences of various types of abduction incident. Their key finding in relation to stranger child abduction was that there were very few successful cases of non-family abduction (3200-4200 per year), but a potentially huge volume of attempted cases facilitated using lures (up to 144,600 per year).

Despite some flaws (which will be discussed in the following chapter), NISMART usefully helped to carve a distinction that would become extremely important in studying child abduction from then on. Namely, it created types based on victim-offender relationship, distinguishing between family child abductions and non-family child abductions. The researchers also utilized the very extreme and specific type of “stereotypical kidnap”, which was defined as being carried out by a determined offender motivated by sexual desire or for the purposes of ransom. This was something of a loaded term meant to represent the publicly constructed image of a child abduction, with their study being aimed at assessing the prevalence of that behaviour. As one might expect with the gift of hindsight, it was found that these stereotypical kidnappings occurred with extremely low incidence.

Studies subsequent to NISMART, most notably Asdigian, Finkelhor and Sedlak (1995), scrutinized these types and found that distinguishing child abduction based on victim-offender relationship, as had been done by NISMART, was the a valuable approach, but that the term “non-family” was not useful and covered too many types of behaviour. Asdigian et al. (1995) concluded that non-family abduction could be separated out by being split into the further types of Acquaintance Abduction, and Stranger Abduction. It was recommended by Asdigian et al. (1995) that these be the terms utilized from that point on, a recommendation that has mostly been followed.
This is how the formal label of “stranger child abduction” was initially applied in academic study, and it has been used since. Further discussion of the use of this term will be made when defining stranger child abduction in Chapter 2; however, this brief overview serves to explain how academia arrived at this specific label.

1.5.1 Stranger Child Abduction: Types Within Types

By this point, it may seem as though use of “stranger child abduction” as a type is sufficiently specific and exacting. However, this is not entirely the case. There have emerged types of behaviour that could be defined under the heading of stranger child abduction that have become areas of study in their own right. These relate to motive and rationale, as opposed to relationship. It is necessary to outline these here in order to ensure that the current study does not become confused by dealing with what ought to be kept as separate types of stranger child abduction. It is also important to identify which type of offender motivation is being examined by the current project.

1.5.1a Maternal Desire Although most types of abduction predominantly feature male offenders, with this thesis featuring an entirely male sample of perpetrators, a strong trend has been observed: that abductions featuring very young, infant victims tend to be perpetrated largely by female offenders (Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1998). Further study has indicated that when a female stranger abducts a child, the rationale behind the abduction is most often out of desire to possess the child, rather than a desire for money or for sexual purposes (Ankrom & Lent, 1995). This type of offending is associated with various approaches to taking a child, including disguising oneself as a nurse in a hospital, posing as a babysitter, grabbing children, and, in the most extreme cases, murdering the child’s parents(s) in order to gain access, with some instances even featuring the offender performing a caesarean section.
on the mother in order to abduct the unborn child (Dalley, 2003; Baker, Buress, Rabun & Nahirny, 2003). Reasons for wishing to possess a child include depression, obsession with maternity, distress after losing one’s own child or being unable to reproduce, preoccupation with the notion that having a child will save a valued relationship, or to corroborate a story the offender has told about being pregnant (Burgess, Baker, Nahirny & Rabun, 2002).

1.5.1b Abduction for Monetary Gain encompasses cases driven by a desire to gain money. The most common examples are abduction for ransom and abduction with the purpose of enforcing a drug debt (Noor-Mohammed, 2013).

1.5.1c Abduction for Trafficking/Abduction to Order Abductions may also be carried out for the purposes of trafficking the victim. This overlaps with abduction for monetary gain as such activities are predominantly engaged in for profit, however, the enterprise is treated separately as the methods used are so distinct, and because there can also be sexual motives for such offences. Although such abductions are often facilitated using a grooming approach (see Butler, 2011), it is possible for victims to be snatched and forced into servitude of various kinds (e.g., sexual, domestic and drug farming). Although less prevalent in the Western world, children in Asia are often abducted for the purposes of being put up for adoption. Similarly, there is evidence that children may be abducted due to an order having been placed for a specific type of child by a third party (Baker, Burgess, Rabun & Nahirny, 2002; National Police Chief’s Council, 2014). Trafficking operations can come in all sizes, and vary from commercial enterprises to rings of abusers who trade children (Cockbain, Brayley & Laycock, 2011).
1.5.1d Abduction Occurring in the Course of a Separate Offence It has been recognized that, in rare circumstances, abduction can occur inadvertently during the course of another offence. The example most commonly used is that of a car hijacker taking a car that has children in the vehicle, not realizing until the offence is underway or not caring (Asdigian, Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1995). As it occurs with such low incidence, this type of abduction is discussed extremely rarely. The creation of this abduction type appears to have been made simply for the sake of completeness, in recognition that abduction can occur inadvertently in specific circumstances.

1.5.1c Abduction by a Stranger in Revenge or as Part of a Dispute occurs when a child is abducted following an argument of some kind, or as a result of a grievance (Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999; Newiss & Fairbrother, 2006; Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Such cases tend to involve older children who are targeted by a party with whom they have a dispute, although younger children may be targeted in order to exact revenge against their parents, relatives or friends. Typical examples include gang activity (Asdigian, Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1995), however these cases could potentially include any abduction event motivated by a dispute, i.e., if someone were to detain a child who has thrown stones at his window.

1.5.2: Beyond Stranger, Towards Motive

The above discussion shows that stranger child abductions can potentially refer to a wide variety of offences, with a variety of distinct motivations. However, the types of stranger child abduction noted above almost always are referred to by their respective labels, e.g., infant abduction. When the term “stranger child abduction” is used on its own, it normally appears to refer to yet another type, albeit without adding an additional label.
The type of stranger child abduction this study refers to can be considered the “mainstream” or “typical” form of stranger child abduction. In this context, “mainstream” alludes to the fact that it is this type of child abduction that appears to being referred to when an author or practitioner uses the unqualified phrase stranger child abduction—normally, they are referring to sexually motivated or violent forms of stranger child abduction when the unqualified phrase “stranger child abduction” is used. A large proportion of studies dealing with stranger child abduction generally appear to be dealing with sexual or aggressive offending, where the end-goal of the offender is either to carry out a sexual assault or otherwise cause harm to the victim (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). Newiss & Traynor (2013) point this out in their study of police data, noting that there is an assumption to this end even in the absence of clear evidence of motive.

Conversely, studies referring to these other sub-types of stranger child abduction tend to say so, either referring to the motive element (i.e., monetary gain) or the victim age element (i.e., infant abduction) in their title (i.e., Ankrom & Lent, 1995; Baker et al 2001).

1.5.3 The Current Focus: Sexually and Violently Motivated Stranger Child Abduction, or “Typical” Stranger child abduction

It can be concluded that the aforementioned sub-types of stranger child abductions can be considered as representing their own, independent types of offending that refer to a very particular type of behaviour and motivation. However, when the term “stranger child abduction” is normally used, it tends to refer to a specific type of behaviour. Namely, there is a largely unspoken, underlying assumption that stranger child abduction, Newiss and Traynor (2013) refers to a male offender taking a child, for either sexual purposes or for violent
purposes. The weight of research dealing with stranger child abduction, which uses the unmodified term “stranger child abduction”, appears to be referring to this type of offence. Hereinafter, references to stranger child abduction are made with regard to this particular type of offence. This type of behaviour is the focus of the present inquiry, and will be discussed in greater depth in the Literature Review section of the thesis, which appears in Chapter 3.

1.6 The Rationale for this Thesis

Relative to missing persons incidents overall, stranger child abduction is very rare, with only 247 cases being reported to police in 2012 (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). This figure is very small when compared to the 327,000 missing person reports received each year. However, the potential risk faced by children in these scenarios is very high, with each case representing the precursor to a potential serious crime and major incident, such as that seen in 2012 with the murder of April Jones. Tarling and Burrows (2004) explain that such cases represent large resource costs for police, in addition to posing serious reputational damage if cases are mishandled. Given the relative lack of information available to police, government authorities and researchers on this topic, it is important to understand as best as possible the features of this type of offence, and the best ways in which to mitigate the harm faced by children in the circumstances these incidents present.

Such taking of a child by a stranger is among the most universally feared events faced by any society (Best, 1988; Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson, 2008). Such incidents capture the public imagination, dominating news media when they occur. They have the potential to overwhelm police resources. Schools, parents and other interest groups are constantly focusing on new ways to teach children about the risks they face from would-be
abductors and how to protect themselves (Newiss, 2014). Indeed, most articles and papers discussing the issue begin with a statement recognizing the fear associated with such incidents (e.g., Finkelhor, Hotaling & Asdigian, 1995; Hanfland, Keppel & Weis, 1997, etc.). Yet, despite this pre-occupation, stranger child abduction remains a relatively poorly understood phenomenon. In particular, there has been a failure to adequately examine cases that are “attempts” only. This is perplexing given the repeated findings that such cases are very common compared to completed cases (Finkelhor et al., 1992; Newiss & Traynor, 2013), and given that Gallagher et al. (2008) specifically point out that examining such cases could potentially enhance our understanding of these rare, yet eminently harmful, completed cases. This thesis is aimed at addressing this gap, and seeks to inquire whether comparing attempted and completed cases can enhance our understanding of this offending behaviour.

Having sufficiently narrowed the focus of this inquiry, the following work consists of a series of studies focusing on the “typical” form of stranger child abduction. Their direction is informed by and intended to follow up on important recent findings relating to this type of offence that are identified in Chapter 3, and to thereby develop current knowledge and address significant gaps in research into this important subject. Each individual study focuses on a selection of factors relating to this offence type in an effort to understand their role in the offence and their relationship with offence outcomes. The findings gathered will be contrasted with expectations of what stranger child abduction ought to involve based on findings from related domain offences, from materials aimed at protecting children, and from public opinion on the matter.

The knowledge gaps informing this design are as follows:
First, it has been found that a majority of stranger child abduction cases are *attempts*, where the victims are not, in fact, taken (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). However, factors differentiating *attempted* and *completed* cases of abduction have yet to be explored in any real detail, in spite of recommendations to treat these as distinct offence types (Gallagher, 2008). The present author sought to bridge some of this knowledge gap by examining and differentiating between both completed and attempted cases, and ascertain whether these categories would constitute workable, useful types with which to frame stranger child abduction going forward.

Second, an ongoing problem in stranger child abduction research lies in their relative specificity, with most studies representing one of two extremes. The first of these extremes is that some studies examine types of stranger abduction so specific that their findings become difficult to generalize. This is the case with the series of studies that examines only stranger child abductions that end in homicide (e.g., Hanfland, Keppel & Weis, 1997; Beyer & Beasley, 2004). In practice, the vast majority of cases do not end in this manner (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). Such specific research is useful in its context and important in assisting investigation and establishing risk factors (Bourdreaux et al., 1998). However, from the perspective of enhancing understanding of the stranger child abduction phenomenon, it is limiting to take such an overly focused view. At the other extreme, studies examine child abduction in an overly broad manner, either neglecting to differentiate between abduction types, or attempting to discuss so many types at once that it becomes difficult to engage with the data (e.g., Bourdreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999; Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak, 2002). In either case, important findings are lost because they are either inappropriately collated by combining types, or because only a tiny number of variables can be examined as a result of attempting to make comparisons on too many points. It should be reiterated that this should
not necessarily be seen as an indictment of this pre-existing work. Indeed, much of it is still very useful and many studies were not necessarily originally intended to focus specifically on unravelling stranger abduction. However, it can be reasonably stated that existing approaches to research on stranger child abduction are underdeveloped.

And **thirdly**, the present research aims to ascertain the extent to which preconceived ideas regarding stranger child abduction are valid, which will be achieved by comparing the present findings to literature, policy and other materials aimed educating children and the public about stranger child abduction and child safety. This will be especially useful in verifying, challenging and improving existing ways in which children and caregivers are taught about stranger child abduction. The key assumptions to be tested and explored are: the profile of stranger child abductions, with reference to offender, victim and offence characteristics; the utility of victim resistance strategies in preventing stranger child abductions; the extent to which the presence of guardians and other external sources of protection prevent or dissuade offending; the presence and ubiquity of offender approaches to crime, and the appropriateness of categorizing offenders under the headings of “lure” and “blitz”. The justifications for exploring these assumptions will be explained in the literature review, and iterated in the relevant individual chapters.

1.7: Aims and Objectives

Based on the preceding discussion, the overall aims of this PhD are to:

- Assess whether distinguishing attempted and completed cases is a useful way in which to analyse stranger child abduction.
To identify behaviours and circumstances that determine case outcome and may offer investigative value.

In order to achieve these aims, and in recognition of the existing literature and perspectives on the topic, the study has the following objectives:

- To critically discuss definitional issues relating to stranger child abduction, and to establish a workable definition of stranger child abduction in recognition of the inconsistent use of terms and need for coherent descriptors going forward. This will ensure consistency across the study, and is intended to avoid issues of clarity that have arisen in existing works on stranger child abduction.

- To compare completed cases of stranger child abduction with attempted cases, with a view towards identifying factors with a relationship to case outcome. This will help to examine whether there are any key differences between attempted and completed cases.

- To conduct this comparison in several contexts that can be used to test the relevance of stranger child abduction to topics relating to criminology, psychology and social policy. This will additionally enable investigation of whether issues relating to stranger child abduction are of value to criminology and other academic fields.
To analyse, for the first time, a series of cases of stranger child abduction that have occurred in the UK specifically and which have received a conviction. This will also be necessary to ensure that only the target behaviour is being examined.

1.8 Thesis Structure

The thesis will be split into a total of 9 chapters. Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 are used to introduce the topic, literature, and overall methodology used in the thesis, as well as to establish key definitions. Chapters 5 through 8 detail the studies carried out and represent the main body of the thesis. Each of these chapters is represented by a standalone but related piece of work with its own introduction, literature review, method section and conclusion. These will be connected by the preceding and proceeding chapters.

Chapter 1 is the present chapter, introducing the concept of stranger child abductions, rationale for thesis, and the place of the current work in the wider context of research into missing persons.

Chapter 2 critically evaluates the ways in which the offence has been defined, with a view to coming to an agreeable definition for use in this study. This includes examination of relevant legal provisions and their use, as well as the definitions used in academic work.

Chapter 3 will be an extended literature review, critically discussing existing work on stranger child abduction and how it developed. This section will include critical discussion of
theories from other schools of thought, e.g., criminology and psychology, that have direct relevance to the understanding of stranger child abduction.

Chapter 4 details the methodology of the project overall, highlighting processes and difficulties encountered throughout.

Chapter 5 contains the first study carried out. This is an examination of the demographic features of stranger child abduction cases, with detailed examination of how these factors interact with one another. The chapter examines:

- the rates of attempted and completed cases; victim sex; victim age; offender age; offender’s criminal history; location of the offence and timing of the offence.

Chapter 6 details the study into victim resistance and any subsequent victim-offender interaction during stranger child abduction. The results of this study are compared directly to materials outlining the expected results of various types of victim resistance in order to test their assumptions.

Chapter 7 examines the effects of surveillance, oversight and guardianship in preventing stranger child abduction, with specific attention paid to the role of victim accompaniment.

Chapter 8 examines offender behaviour during stranger child abduction, focusing on the modus operandi of offenders guilty of carrying out stranger child abduction offences. By examining a greater number of factors relevant to modus operandi, including elements of
offender behaviour that change over time, this chapter challenges the use of “lure” and “blitz” types to describe the modus operandi of abductors. It demonstrates that the modus operandi utilized by offenders in attempted cases is distinct from those used in completed cases.

Chapter 9 provides an overview of the project, highlighting key findings, making recommendations. It ends by providing conclusions based on the work as a whole, and makes recommendations for future research and for practice based on the results of the studies.

1.9 Presentation of the Thesis

The structure of this piece of work is not typical for a thesis in criminology. This thesis presents four individual studies deriving from the same dataset relating to stranger child abduction, each intended to showcase and assess an alternative means by which attempted and completed cases can be compared. Each of these four studies is presented in the style of an academic journal article. This approach is similar to that used by science departments, and most notably is standard practice at the University of Portsmouth for PhDs in psychology (e.g., Oxburgh, 2011; Richards, 2015).

Advice was taken from within the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies and from the Department of Psychology that such a structure would be suitable for this thesis. The reasons for utilizing this structure are as follows. The thesis has been designed to approach the comparison of stranger child abduction from several perspectives. Despite using a single dataset, each study utilizes approaches that are distinct from the others, i.e., the method for inquiry in each study uses an alternative set of variables and analyses that requires individual explanation. In effect, then, each study plays the role of a separate inquiry on the same topic, and are best presented individually before being discussed together in a final conclusion. It is
felt that this structure, which allows for each relevant chapter to have its own discussion of the methods used rather than requiring a single, all-encompassing methods chapter, is the best way to offer cohesion and clarity while still being able to usefully compare attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction using multiple analyses.

It is additionally argued that this thesis, its topics and its methods significantly overlap with psychology, with the result that it makes sense to adopt the techniques and structures used by that department when constructing the thesis. It would not be controversial to suggest that criminology, criminal justice and psychology overlap significantly. This is illustrated in Chapter 1 with stranger child abduction and topics relating to it being relevant to a variety of fields. The thesis deals with issues such as victim resistance, offender decision making and modus operandi, which are just as relevant to criminal and forensic psychology as they are to criminology. As such, each individual study draws from a different literature set and uses a distinct framework for inquiry, with a common theme of examining attempted and completed stranger child abduction. Again, these are best dealt with as small, separate studies, rather than as one, large study.

Finally, this model is useful as it allows each constituent study of this thesis to be submitted for publication with recognized academic journals, and to consequently undergo a process of rigorous peer-review. The comments received can be utilized to improve the content of the thesis, while publication ensures research is disseminated to a relevant audience.
Chapter 2: Defining Key Terms

Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter is to provide definitions of key terms that can be utilized consistently throughout the remainder of this project and, ideally, can be adopted by future researchers. To arrive at acceptable definitions, important sources that provide guidance on this matter are consulted and critically analysed.

Firstly, a review of the law in the England & Wales, Scotland, as well as the USA, is carried out in order to establish the core components of stranger child abduction. It is argued that a core element of abduction is the element of “control”, with other physical and temporal aspects being secondary to this.

Secondly, a meta-review of existing studies that deal with stranger child abduction is carried out. This review reveals that a significant proportion of existing studies on the topic have not directed their resources to constructing clear definitions of the term stranger child abduction, and that there is a lack of consistency in the use of terminology between studies. It argues that there have been two key ways of defining stranger, with one being inclusive and the other being narrow. It is further argued that the narrow definition is preferable and should be adopted.

Additional important terms to this study are also analysed, including establishing what makes an offence attempted or completed. The role of offender motivation, which is sometimes used as part of the definition of stranger child abduction in the form of a sub-type, is also discussed. The chapter concludes by presenting a list of the terms agreed upon as a result of the review. Future references to those terms in this thesis utilize those definitions unless otherwise stated.
Each constituent word of the term of “stranger child abduction” is surrounded by definitional issues (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). This is complicated further as it is necessary to also define the key terms “attempted” and “completed”. As established in the previous chapter, the field of stranger child abduction has been held back by a lack of consistency in terminology and practice. In order to conduct a successful study, it is necessary to establish exactly what is meant when referring to stranger child abduction, and to use these terms consistently.

To achieve this, two approaches will be utilized. The first will be to examine the laws of the UK in order to ascertain whether a meaningful definition of stranger child abduction can be identified juristically. Secondly, a critical examination of previous studies relating to stranger child abduction or any related issues will be carried out, with a view to picking out key trends in definitions. This is desirable not only for comparative purposes, but in order to establish consistency and continuity between studies carried out on this topic; any similarities or differences in terminology between studies ought to be at the very least acknowledged, and ideally reconciled. This exercise will enable identification of an acceptable definition for use in this study that acknowledges and builds on existing perspectives and practice.

2.1: The Law

2.1.1: The Law in the England & Wales

If one looks for “stranger child abduction” in the law of England & Wales, or in any part of the UK, no specific provisions will be found, as stranger child abduction is not a
standalone offence in this country. There are, however, offences of Child Abduction and of Kidnap⁴.

In England and Wales, abduction was previously defined in the common law [law which comes about as the result of judicial precedent] in the case of R v D (1984), where Lord Brandon defined it as “the taking or carrying away of persons without their consent, by force or fraud, and without lawful excuse.” (Noor-Mohammed, 2013). However, this definition has been superseded in relation to children by legislation.

The relevant legislation covering child abduction is the Child Abduction Act 1984. This Act created two distinct child abduction offences, which have their own provisions in the Act. By the terms of the legislation, Section 1 describes the "offence of abduction of a child by a parent". This is also known as parental abduction (e.g., Newiss, 2016), and specifically refers to the taking of a child under the age of 16 years out of the United Kingdom without appropriate consent. Although there exist other legal instruments that have relevance to child abduction in an indirect manner, the Child Abduction Act 1984 is the main instrument police use to categorize and code Child Abductions, and it is most likely to be used by Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute offences (Home Office Crime Categorization Codes, 2014). As such, this chapter will focus on this piece of legislation.

The relationship between offender and child need not strictly be parental- the 1984 Act defines the offender as "a person connected with [the] child", which can include their parents, a person believing they are the parent, the child’s guardian, or a person with custody of the child. As one might expect, this would exclude anyone who could reasonably be called a

⁴There are other relevant offences, however these are rarely utilized common law offences present in Scots law (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). To conserve space, this paper will focus on the law of England and Wales, so these additional terms are not discussed in any depth here, except to say that these offences are largely anachronistic common law holdovers that characterize children as property that can be stolen (Green, 2002; Noor-Mohammed, 2013).
stranger from carrying out this specific offence. As such, this offence is not relevant for the current inquiry.

The "offence of abduction of a child by other persons", is detailed in Section 2 of the 1984 Act. This offence is commonly referred to as Non-Family child abduction (see Newiss & Collie, 2015; Erikson & Friendship, 2002).

The most relevant provision reads as follows:

“[Section] 2. Offence of abduction of child by other persons.
S2(1)Subject to subsection (3) below, a person, other than one mentioned in subsection (2) below commits an offence if, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, he takes or detains a child under the age of sixteen—
(a) so as to remove him from the lawful control of any person having lawful control of the child; or
(b) so as to keep him out of the lawful control of any person entitled to lawful control of the child.”

The 1984 Act goes on to define what is meant by the persons from whose control the child is to be removed for the offence to take place.

“S2(2)The persons are—
(a) where the father and mother of the child in question were married to each other at the time of his birth, the child’s father and mother;
(b) where the father and mother of the child in question were not married to each other at the time of his birth, the child’s mother; and
(c) any other person mentioned in section 1(2)(c) to (e) above [anyone having legal custody of the child].”

The section concludes by listing possible legal defences that can excuse and offender and thus remove culpability. These are:

\( S2(3) \text{In proceedings against any person for an offence under this section, it shall be a defence for that person to prove—} \)

\( (a) \text{where the father and mother of the child in question were not married to each other at the time of his birth—} \)

\( (i) \text{that he is the child’s father; or} \)

\( (ii) \text{that, at the time of the alleged offence, he believed, on reasonable grounds, that he was the child’s father; or} \)

\( (b) \text{that, at the time of the alleged offence, he believed that the child had attained the age of sixteen.} \)

There are a number of points to be made about this piece of legislation, and what it tells us about the nature of stranger child abduction.

2.1.1a: Control is Central to Abduction

First, the offence described is not particularly the taking, movement or detention of the child, but rather removal from the custody of the parents. The taking or detention of the child
refers to the means by which this is achieved. This is highlighted since much of the discussion surrounding the parameters of what constitutes abduction centres around the extent to which temporal and spatial elements must be present, i.e., how far must the child have been moved, and over what length of time, for the offence to be committed (e.g., Baker et al., 2003).

By a prima facie reading of this legislation, it would not matter how far the child moved, if at all, during the event. It specifies that the child can be taken or detained. Being taken implies a degree of movement, whereas detainment implies a lack of movement. As such, the level of movement seems to be irrelevant, with the key matter being whether said taking or detention removes the child from the custody of their legal guardian. Another way of putting this could be to suggest that abduction’s key component in law is not about movement, but rather about exerting control.

By the same token, no time limit is specified. However, one is implied. For the offence to be completed, the child must be taken from the custody of the legal guardian. This indicates that there will be at least some discernible period during which he child is not under that control. Similarly, in order to successfully take or detain a child, at least some very small amount of time would have to pass in order for the action to occur.

As such, there seems to be little spatial requirement, but there exists a limited temporal requirement. However, said temporal requirement seems to constitute a very low threshold.

2.1.1b: Age Limitations: Who is a child?

The 1984 Act applies only to children under the age of 16 years. When an offence occurs against someone over 16 years, the offence that would be prosecuted is the common law crime of kidnap. This is despite the fact that individuals aged 16 years and 17 years are
often viewed as children in the UK, particularly from a policy and child protection standpoint (e.g., Jago et al., 2011). This will be discussed below in greater detail.

2.1.1c: Agency of the Victim

The agency of the child is not referenced at all in the 1984 Act. From this, it can be taken that their cooperation, complicity or resistance is irrelevant for the commission of this offence. In other words, the child could be a willing participant in events or be oblivious to them, and still the offence of child abduction would occur.

2.1.1d: Reasonable Excuse as an Exception to the rule

The only exceptions to the legislation involve the person taking/detaining the child having lawful authority or reasonable excuse to do so. Lawful authority is likely present in order to ensure that any court or other legal order or provision allowing a child to be removed from the custody of their legal guardian to be properly enacted. It also would allow emergency services, under certain circumstances, to remove the child from the custody of a legal guardian.

What constitutes a “reasonable excuse” is more difficult to discern. It is likely (but not certain) that this is a common sense provision intended to give judges some discretion with cases where an apparent offender had a legitimately good reason for taking possession of a child or if there were unusual mitigating circumstances, or to deal with innocuous occurrences that technically meet the provisions of the 1984 Act but would not be in the public interest to prosecute. It is likely that such instances would have to be quite clear cases of good intention.
2.1.1e: Defences

Defences include a reasonable belief that the person carrying out the alleged offence is the child's father, which is of little immediate concern to this inquiry. The other defence is the belief that the child had attained the age of 16. This would excuse anyone who believed that they were taking a child aged 16 or over from committing this particular offence, likely resulting in them being tried for kidnap instead. This is worthy of note as the legislation places no threshold put on this belief. It is unclear, then, what standard is required for this defence to be accepted. The 1984 Act does not explain whether the belief has to be a reasonable belief, or if an unreasonable belief could form an acceptable defence. It is also unclear whether there has to be evidence that the offender believed this, or if the burden of evidence is on the state to disprove such a belief as it normally is in criminal cases (see, e.g., Horder, 2016). Presumably these matters are left to the judge’s discretion in each case.

2.1.1f: Negative Relationship

Rather than specify who can be guilty of the offence, the 1984 Act instead makes negative exceptions, i.e., anyone not belonging to a particular group of people is eligible to be charged for the offence. The list of those who cannot commit this offence are as follows, from 1(3)(a):

“(i) The child’s mother;

(ii) the child’s father, if he has parental responsibility for him;

(iii) any guardian of the child;
(iv) any person in whose favour a residence order is in force with respect to the child;

(v) any person who has custody of the child."

Anyone else taking the child is considered to be "non-parental", and thus can carry out the Section 2 offence.

Bearing in mind the present inquiry specifically deals with strangers, there is nothing in this legislation indicating that strangers are different from other non-parental child abductors. The term “stranger” is not used. The non-parental spectrum given here is very broad, and as such it will be necessary to direct attention elsewhere to gain an understanding of what constitutes a stranger, even if the legal analysis gives us sufficient information to synthesize some definition of abduction.

Hence, the 1984 Act gives us a fairly clear picture of what constitutes an abduction; taking or detaining a child so as to remove them from control of their legal guardian. However, these provisions enter into little to no discussion as to what constitutes a stranger. This does not seem to be of great issue for the law. To ascertain who constitutes a stranger, additional sources must be consulted.

2.1.2: Sentencing Guidelines

To add further detail to the understanding of domestic legal provisions, one can examine officially endorsed sentencing guidelines. There are intended to assist judges when disposing of cases of this nature (see Crown Prosecution Service, 2015).

One particular passage stands out in these guidelines. In the summary of each of the two primary sections of the 1984 Act, Section 1 is listed as "by parent", whilst Section 2 is
listed as "by stranger". This is unusual since, as established above, the term stranger appears nowhere in the Act. This mention of “stranger” illuminates the way in which these cases are being dealt with in practice, i.e., that cases being tried using this legislation involve stranger offenders (Crown Prosecution Service, 2015). Indeed, the guidance goes on to provide some example cases, and all of those referred to in the examples section deal with genuine stranger cases, with no acquaintance cases present. Thus there is a discrepancy between written terms of the Child Abduction Act 1984 and how those terms are being utilized by legal practitioners.

2.1.3: Kidnap

As mentioned, there are circumstances where the offence of kidnap, found in the common law of England and Wales as opposed to in statute, could apply to children. Kidnap is defined as having four constituent elements: taking of one person by another; by force or fraud; without consent of person; without lawful authority (see Newiss & Traynor, 2013). The requirement that there be no consent from the person taken, and that force or fraud be the means used to take the victim, are additional to the requirements seen in the Child Abduction Act 1984.

The legal definition has been criticised by the Law Commission (2014). It was seen as simultaneously over-inclusive and under-inclusive. It was over-inclusive as it technically criminalizes very trivial behaviours, i.e., one person inducing a person taking a few steps and then to return, and as such meaningful prosecution relied on judicial discretion. It was under-inclusive as the dual requirements for lack of consent in addition to fraud meant that potentially serious incidents might fail to meet these criteria, either by way of victim acquiescence or by lack of fraudulent means. The Law Commission concluded that the offence had too many constituent parts, and should be simplified.
Although the common law offence of kidnap is worth bearing in mind, this study agrees with the Law Commission and considers the extra requirements imposed by the definition of kidnap to be superfluous. This study therefore adheres to the legislative definition that does not require the offence to be conducted using any specific means, and which specifies that the offence occurs regardless of the victim’s consent.

Furthermore, the definition of kidnap provides even less information about the victim-offender relationship than the legal provisions on child abduction. Kidnap can be carried out regardless of relationship, so provides no guidance as to how to define “stranger”.

3.1.4 Summary of legal terms

The UK legal provisions tell us very little about the term stranger, but do provide assistance with the other two terms. Children in law appear to include anyone under the age of 16 years. However, in practice and policy, this age is increased to 18 years. Abduction, at its core, appears to be about control. Movement or taking of a victim is not necessary, and the victim’s acquiescence is irrelevant. It is now possible to proceed to examine the terminology used in the academic literature and by practitioners.

2.2: Defining “Stranger”: A Review of Previous Definitions

So far, this review of legal provisions has left us with a relatively clear definition of “child” and of “abduction”, but with very little texture on what constitutes a “stranger”. As such, a review of how the term has been defined in pre-existing research can be carried out to assist with establishing who a “stranger” is. References in those studies as to what constitutes
an abduction and child will be noted as well, and can be used to develop the final definition of stranger child abduction.

A review of previous studies that have discussed stranger child abduction reveals that, problematically, very few studies take time to define their terms. A particularly problematic example occurs in a study by Finkelhor and Ormrod (2000), where stranger is defined tautologically as “stranger to the victim (ibid, 2002, p. 2).

However, a close reading of the studies available and their explicit terms (directly stated definitions) and implicit terms (the definition that can be implied based on how the study treats and discusses strangers) indicates that most researchers have adopted one of two stances on how to determine what constitutes a “stranger”. On the one hand, there is what can be called an “inclusive definition” that allows not just pure strangers, but also people with whom a child has very limited familiarity, to be defined as a stranger. On the other hand, there is a far stricter definition that requires that there be no previous familiarity at all between the victim and the offender.

2.2.1 The Inclusive Definition

The more inclusive definition of stranger child abduction first appeared in the original NISSMART study (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1992). Although their study mostly compared family and non-family abductions, not referring to strangers specifically, these authors created a category of the “stereotypical kidnapping”, which was defined as occurring at the hands of a stranger for either sexual reasons or for ransom. This was meant to capture the fears of the public at the time, making this a somewhat caricatured definition (Best, 1988). However, the authors did specify that, to be called a stranger, the offender could be unknown or be a slight acquaintance. By this definition, then, a stranger need not be a pure stranger.
NISMART (1992) was a very influential study, and its terminology has been tacitly accepted by other studies. Baker, Burgess, Rabun and Nahirny (2002), who conducted an examination of infant abductions, specifically refer to the definition proposed in NISMART (1992). However, as their research was focused on infant abduction, they immediately begin to discuss issues relating to that type of behaviour. They provided no additional definitions of victim-offender relationship, meaning the term “stranger” remained unexplored.

Heide, Beauregard and Myers (2009) carried out a meta-review of literature dealing with sexually motivated child abduction homicides, and also appeared to adopt the NISMART (1992) approach. While not entering into a detailed discussion of the definition of stranger child abduction, they note stranger has been taken to mean someone the child had not previously known or not met before the day of the abduction, directly referencing the stereotypical kidnaps referred to in NISMART (1992). The authors themselves go on to mention the “unknown stranger”, with no further discussion. This would imply that being completely unknown is a particular type of stranger, indicating that their definition takes a wider view. Therefore, it seems that these authors tacitly adopt the definition of stranger as it was used in the original NISMART (1992) study, i.e., that the offender could be either completely unknown or could be a slight acquaintance.

The follow-up to NISMART, by Finkelhor, Hammer and Sedlak (2002) utilized very similar terminology to the original study, although did spend some time defining what is meant by a slight acquaintance. They define a stranger as “a perpetrator whom the child or family do not know, or a perpetrator of unknown identity” (ibid, p. 2) and a slight acquaintance as “a nonfamily perpetrator whose name is unknown to the child or family prior to the abduction and whom the child or family did not know well enough to speak to, or a recent acquaintance who the child or family have known for less than 6 months, or someone the family or child have known for longer than 6 months but seen less than once a month.”
(ibid, p. 2). However, this study goes on to compare family and non-family offences rather than family, acquaintance and stranger offences, which would indicate that, in practice, a very broad definition of stranger is taken by these authors.

By far the most inclusive use of the term “stranger” can be seen in a study by Dalley (2003). Dalley’s definition of “Stranger”, utilizing the police terminology circa 2000 in Canada, is very inclusive compared to the definitions discussed so far, and included individuals known to the victim, including relatives such as aunts, uncles, grandparents and other relatives and close friends. This inclusive definition goes against conceptualisations in other studies, particularly those that demonstrate strong evidence that abductions involving such close associations are substantively different from ones where the level of familiarity is lessened, such as those by Asdigian, Finkelhor and Hotaling (1995) and by Finkelhor and Ormrod (2000).

Although a broader definition of stranger can be useful, in that it allows a greater number of offences to be analysed, such inclusiveness can be attributed to a number of issues with stranger child abduction research. There has been a tendency among researchers to treat cases of stranger child abduction and cases of acquaintance abduction interchangeably, which, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, has led to serious problems with data becoming contaminated and has made it difficult for the results of those studies to be attributed to stranger offences specifically. This drawback is so severe that this inclusive definition cannot be recommended.

Additionally, there is overwhelming evidence that acquaintance abductions are distinct from stranger abductions (Asdigian, Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1995). It therefore seems contradictory to allow for a definition of stranger that potentially includes people known to the victim, i.e., people they are acquainted with. The extremely broad definition used by
Dalley (2003) can be dismissed as an outlier, with no other authors suggesting that a relationship as close as that of grandparent should be categorized as that of a stranger.

2.2.2 The Narrow Definition

The strict definition of stranger child abduction demands that only cases where there is no previous relationship between the victim and offender be categorized as stranger offences. The clearest proponents of this stance are Newiss and Traynor (2013). Newiss and Traynor (2013) define stranger abduction as a situation when there is no familiarity between victim and offender, and when they do not recognize one another- specifically they used the phrase “offender was not known or recognised (ibid, p. 30)”.

These authors separately analysed abductions where the offender was “Known, not related”, which essentially included anyone who was neither a relative nor a complete stranger. This includes incidents where the offender was a friend, boy/girlfriend, mother’s friend or ex-partner, acquaintance, colleague, associate, neighbour, or was simply known by sight (ibid, p. 30). This final category [known by sight] is important, as it implies that even this slight familiarity precludes the offender from being considered a stranger.

This distinction is one of the most recent and most elegant conceptualizations of stranger in relation to abduction, and reflects the rather large spectrum that had traditionally been included- but arguably not well captured- under the heading of “acquaintance” abduction. Known, Not Related better reflects the range of relationships that come in between familial and complete stranger.

As mentioned, there has been a tendency for studies not to explicitly define their terms. This problem arose in Gallagher, Bradford and Pease’s (2008) study, which does not provide a specific definition of stranger, simply using the term at face value throughout their paper.
Their survey did, however, differentiate between “people I know”, “people I had seen before” and “stranger” when asking children to categorize offenders who had victimized them. These simple definitions were used as the study was directly surveying children as young as 9 years. This falls in line with Newiss and Traynor’s (2013) conceptualization of stranger that there ought to be no familiarity whatsoever between offender and victim, with people who had merely been seen before being treated, in this case, as being distinct from a stranger.

Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999) utilize a similarly strict definition of stranger, however, they permit the term to be used flexibly by allowing the term stranger to refer to the relationship preceding the offence, i.e., the offender does not become an acquaintance during the course of an offence sequence that involves multiple contacts. These authors defined strangers as “having no known contact with the victim prior to the onset of the offence” (ibid, p. 540). This was contrasted with acquaintances, who were defined as any non-family member who had any familiarity with the child. This approach also makes it very clear that any kind of previous familiarity with the child makes the offender an acquaintance.

This definition of Stranger is additionally useful in that it refers to “onset of the offence”. This means that it is possible for the stranger to have multiple contacts with the child during the offence sequence and still remain a stranger. This recognizes that abductions can take place over an extended period with multiple crime movements or multiple efforts to abduct. Given this review, the next section will identify which stance will be adopted in this thesis.

2.3.3: Defining Stranger Child Abduction

2.3.1: Stranger
The key point of contention, then, appears to revolve around the relationship element of the offence, i.e., the extent to which the victim and offender know one another for the offence to be a *stranger* child abduction. Various definitions used across existing studies are presented in Table 2.1.

Only very few studies took an open approach. Those studies utilizing the “non-family” definition, or who were especially inclusive in their definition of stranger (Dalley, 2003), appeared to be adopting operational definitions rather than academic definitions. This is understandable— it is desired for this area of work to be as actionable as possible, so utilizing policing terms makes sense— however it is felt that this is not appropriate given the mounted evidence indicating that offence types are best distinguished by relationship in child abduction.

There were two primary schools of thought. Some authors preferred to only allow the conceptualization of stranger to be made strictly in situations where there was no prior familiarity between victim and offender, while others preferred to allow slight acquaintances to be considered strangers as well. There was a roughly even split between authors as to how strict they were with this definition, although there seemed to be a slight skew towards the more strict non-familiarity approach.

Finkelhor, Hammer and Sedlak’s (2002) take on stranger as including slight acquaintances has much merit. Limiting the study of stranger child abduction to pure stranger may arbitrarily exclude some people’s experiences and certain geographies where pure strangers are likely to be less common. Also, given the uncertainty as to between what constitutes a stranger and acquaintance, a non-familiarity approach may mean that slight acquaintances are unlikely to ever actually be formally studied as they straddle both groups.
Table 2.1: Definitions of "Stranger" Presented or Used in Existing Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finkelhor, Hotaling and Sedlak</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Differentiate between legal-definition abductions that involve a family or non-family abductor, and stereotypical kidnaps involving a stranger and requires the child to be gone overnight, killed, ransomed, transported over 50 miles, or to be abducted with the intention of being kept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asdigian, Finkelhor and Hotaling</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Differentiates strangers from acquaintances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanfland, Keppel and Weis</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Did not define stranger directly. Contrasted stranger with friends and acquaintances, implying a difference between these and strangers (e.g., p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>having no known contact with the victim prior to the onset of the offense. (p. 540)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finkelhor and Ormrod</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>&quot;Stranger to the victim&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker, Burgess, Rabun and Nahirny</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Referred to Finkelhor, Hotaling &amp; Sedlak's (1992) definition (p. 1219)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finkelhor, Hammer and Sedlak</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>“a perpetrator whom the child or family do not know, or a perpetrator of unknown identity” <em>(ibid, p. 2)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalley</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>the Canadian law enforcement definition of a stranger not only refers to someone totally unknown to the child victim but also refers to relatives, friends, and acquaintances. (p. 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newiss and Fairbrother</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>&quot;...an offender not known to the victim (i.e., a stranger)&quot;. (p. 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallagher, Bradford and Pease</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Did not define stranger directly. Surveyed school-aged children using phrases such as &quot;people I know&quot;, &quot;people I had seen before&quot; and &quot;stranger&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen and Wilson</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Did not define stranger directly. Stress the need to examine strangers and acquaintances separately (p. 529).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heide, Beauregard and Myers</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Meta Review, appearing to adopt Finkelhor, Hotaling &amp; Sedlak's definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newiss and Traynor</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Stranger: offender was not known or recognized (p. 30). Distinguished from &quot;an offender known (but not related) to the victim&quot; (p. 31).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, despite these advantages, the more inclusive approach can be said to muddy a concept that is best kept as clear as possible. Including any acquaintances in analyses of stranger child abduction has been found to complicate findings, and may even make them unusable by subsequent research due to lack of conceptual clarity (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000).

On balance, although there is a temptation and some legitimate advantages to taking a more inclusive approach to the definition of stranger, this study will adopt the narrow definition of stranger. The victim and offender should have had no contact prior to the offence. However, there will be one concession, in that offenders who engage a victim briefly before attempting to abduct them can still be considered strangers, so long as said engagement is identifiable as part of the ongoing, contiguous abduction event. This caveat, made by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999), recognizes the ongoing nature of stranger child abductions by preventing offenders who began their offence sequence as a stranger to the child being inappropriately categorized as a non-stranger due only to crime-phase contact, and ought to be accepted.

2.3.2: Child

“Child” is the simplest element of stranger child abduction to define. The term “child” commonly refers to the legal age of childhood in the jurisdiction in which the offence occurs (e.g., Boudreaux, et al., 1999). It would seem, then, that one ought to simply utilize the age of under 16 years that appears in the Child Abduction Act 1984. However, broader definitions of childhood that appear in the UK go beyond 16 years. 16 years is the age of consent, not the age of majority which is achieved at 18 years. Most policy materials in the UK (Home Office, 2010; CEOP, 2010), operational guides (e.g., Eales, 2016) and other studies examining children in the UK (e.g., Barnardos, 2010) use the age of majority to define children. International treaties also tend to use the age of 18 to define childhood (e.g., United Nations
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; European Commission, 2013). The current study will follow suit. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a child is anyone not having achieved the age of 18.

However, for the purposes of this study, children under the age of 24 months will be excluded from analysis. This is because the abduction of infant children has been identified as a further distinct type of stranger child abduction, and as such ought to be studied on its own (e.g., Ankrom & Lent, 1995: Baker, Burgess, Rabun and Nahirny, 2002).

2.3.3: Abduction

The main discussion surrounding the nature of abduction to appear in academic literature revolves around the distance and time necessary to take a child for there to have been an abduction. However, most such discussion pertain to US law, e.g., Boudreaux et al’s. (1999) study utilized the FBI’s definition of abduction as “the coerced, unauthorized, or otherwise illegal movement of a child for the purpose of a criminal act”. Other US definitions also refer to movement. In Californian law, kidnapping is defined very broadly as “any unlawful movement”. It was famously cited by a judge that “It is not the distance; it is the fact of the movement”. This means that any criminal who moves their victim any distance, in order to perpetrate any crime upon them, would also be charged with kidnapping in addition to that other crime (Bourdeaux, Lord & Etter, 2000). Baker, Burgess, Rabun and Nahirny (2002), following considerations of various definitions of abduction to use in their research, opted to follow the definition proposed in NISMART (1992):

“Nonfamily abduction...is defined as the coerced and unauthorized taking of a child into a building, a vehicle, or a distance of more than 20 feet; the detention of a child for more than 1 hour; or the luring of a child for the purpose of committing a crime.”
Since this study refers to UK cases of stranger child abduction, a definition utilizing concepts and values from the UK is required. From the above analysis of UK law, it was possible to establish that it was not necessary for there to be any actual movement of the victim, and that the time requirement was minimal. Any time requirement would be merely implied, as some slight passage of time would be necessary for detention to occur. Control of the victim was the most central element, with other requirements being superfluous. The UK legislation on abduction specifically ignores any such extra requirements that had been required by the common law offence of kidnap.

Some definitions from other jurisdictions require evidence of further ill intent, or require that certain other actions, such as concealing the child’s whereabouts (Finkelhor, et al. 2002). The law of the UK and its sentencing guidelines specifically reject such requirements. This author supports such a rejection. These additional requirements only serve to add confusion, and tend to be so broad that they do not meaningfully exclude any instances that could be construed as abduction, making them somewhat superfluous.

The essence of abduction, then, is that offender takes or attempts to take control of the victim, regardless of the circumstances. Control can be achieved by any means. A child cannot legally acquiesce or consent to control, so therefore any agreement on their part, whether implied or explicit, is irrelevant. The only exception would be if the abductor has clear lawful authority to exert control over the child. A child’s inability to acquiesce to abduction is supported by both law and by practitioners (i.e, Finkelhor, et al., 2002). See section 2.4.2 below for additional discussion as to what constitutes “control”.

2.4: Additional Terms

2.4.1: “Attempted” and “Completed”

The focal point of the current study is the difference between an attempted abduction of a child by a stranger, and a completed one. In addition to establishing what is meant by stranger child abduction, it is also important to establish what is meant by the terms “attempted” and “completed.

The Oxford Dictionary definition of an attempt is “to make an effort to achieve or complete [a task]”. By this definition, all child abductions would be attempted abductions unless they were accidental, since all of them involve an effort to abduct a child. The real focus of the term “attempt”, in this context, therefore appears to be the fact that there is a lack of completion of the task, that a child is not abducted as a result of an effort to abduct them.

Most definitions used by researchers are similar in this regard. Newiss and Fairbrother (2004, p. 1) define an attempt as any time an abduction is not completed. Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigan (1995) use a similar definition, stating that any behaviour that would have resulted in a child being abducted had it been successful ought to be considered an attempted abduction. From these definitions, it can be inferred that an attempt occurs when a stranger appears to have taken some active steps towards abduction of a child, but either they were interrupted, they aborted their efforts, the child did not go with them, or some other circumstance occurred that prevented the child from actually going missing (e.g., Newiss & Fairbrother, 2004). An attempt will occur if positive effort is taken to carry out an abduction, and will still occur regardless of the way in which the offence is stopped or prevented, i.e., an offence occurs whether the offender is interrupted or fail, or if they unilaterally give up and abandon the offence.
The most difficult issue to address is the question of when does an attempt begin and end, when does legal behaviour become a criminal attempt, and when does an attempt transform into a completed crime. The idea of an attempt seems to imply that there can be a discrete point at which an attempt begins and is in progress, and when it ends. Indeed, this seems to be the implication in a number of studies, particularly ones that focus on abduction specifically (e.g., Proulx, 1999; Newiss and Fairbrother, 2004).

There are some scenarios where it may be very difficult to discern when an attempt begins and ends. Abductions might not be quite so straightforward as to occur simply at the exact moment when a child is taken, and could include a long, drawn out process of manipulation until the point that the child is essentially the emotional slave of their abductor (Baker, 2010), or could involve a long process of deception where all seems legitimate until it becomes apparent the child has been trafficked or has entered a situation of exploitation and abuse (Pease, 2013). Children victimized in these circumstances could be conceptualized as victims of stranger child abduction. If that is the case, then it must be answered at what point an abduction begins and at what point it ends. Legally speaking, criminal events tend to require Actus Reus, and Mens Rea- action and intent (see, e.g., Horder, 2016; Elliott & Quinn, 2016). The exception is when legislation stipulates only that a certain action is prohibited, which makes intent a moot point. Attempted crimes are normally where the action part is not quite complete, but usually requires more than simply the formation of intent, as this is overly subjective. As such, some action tends to be required to say a criminal attempt has been made.

There is also the issue of the different types of failure that can occur in an attempt. The offender might simply cease enactment of the abduction, or they may be influenced to stop based on a change in situation as a result of guardianship appearing, or because the child offers resistance that they deem to be too much to deal with. This raises the question of
whether an aborted attempt, where effort was withdrawn, is the same as a failed attempt in which effort was not withdrawn but where the end result was not abduction.

For the purpose of this study, the author is of the opinion that the simplest definition of attempt is the most useful. Adopting the definitions used by Newiss and Fairbrother (2004, p. 1), and by Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian (1995), an attempted abduction will occur when there is any effort made by an offender to take control of a victim that does not result in the victim actually being so controlled. A completed abduction occurs when the victim is so controlled. The manner in which the offence is discontinued, be it by failure, interruption or unilateral abortion, is considered irrelevant so long as there was a sufficient level of positive action that, if followed, would have resulted in control of the child being taken.

2.4.2 Control

As highlighted above, the concept of “control” is central to the definition of abduction used in this study. According to the Child Abduction Act 1984, to be abducted a child must be removed from the control of their legal guardian. For the purposes of this study, an offender takes control over a child if they intentionally exert influence over the child’s actions. This definition can be utilized as, in terms of policy and law, a person has control over a child if they have the ability to make decisions on behalf of a child and to be responsible for their welfare (HM Government, 2016). Typically, this refers to control emanating from the child’s parent or from their current legal guardian (Children’s Act 1989). As soon as another party exerts influence over a child’s actions, it follows that they have superseded the authority of the person normally so responsible. Parents or guardians can relinquish control to other parties, such as the child’s grandparents, temporarily; in such instances, removing the child from this temporary control would be an act of abduction.
A strict use of this definition could lead to non-criminogenic behaviours being inappropriately criminalized, i.e., a sports coach telling a child to move to a certain position. The provisions of the Child Abduction Act 1984 allow for control over a child to be exerted should there be lawful authority or reasonable excuse to do so. As such, the sports coach would not be usurping the guardian’s legal control, as the guardian will have acquiesced to such influence being exerted. Such a person would therefore have lawful authority to exert some level of control over a child, or would have reasonable belief that such acquiescence has been given. Similarly, if a person takes control of a child in order to rescue them, i.e., a member of the emergency services saving a child from a fire, then there is a reasonable, and therefore lawful, excuse to do so.

Where there is no lawful authority or reasonable excuse, however, this study will still take a strict definition of control. A stranger who instructs a child to move a few paces will have attempted to exert control over a child, thus removing them from the lawful care of their guardian, and will therefore be guilty of abduction. A stranger who incites a child to perform sexual acts upon them, regardless of whether they move, will be in control of the child for the duration of any such acts and therefore be guilty of abduction in addition to child sexual abuse. Such a perspective on abduction is utilized in US studies, and seems reasonable to adopt here as well. With regards to attempted cases, a person who asks a child whether they want a lift and then drives off would be construed as having attempted to take control of a child. As mentioned, there are no specific requirements for time and movement, however, they may become relevant in fringe cases. A stranger whose influence over a child is actively resisted by the child would be considered as attempting an abduction, but has not completed it as they have not successfully gained control over the child; however, this would transition to a completed abduction if there was a prolonged struggle where the offender prevents the
victim from moving, if the offender physically moves the child, or they otherwise go on to force or facilitate the child’s acquiescence with their will.

It is fully accepted that these hypothetical scenarios constitute grey areas in terms of whether an abduction has occurred. Similarly, this author agrees with the Law Commission’s (2014) perspective that trivial, benign behaviour ought not to be unduly criminalized. A level of common sense is required to exclude certain behaviours from being construed as abduction, such as someone asking a child to check their watch. Nevertheless, this study will take a strict definition of control and abduction, with low thresholds for necessary movement and timeframe. This approach is felt justified since, as will be described in Chapter 4, the research has taken several precautions to ensure that genuine cases of abduction have been sampled. In particular, only individual who go on to receive a conviction are included. As a result, trivial instances of abduction will be naturally excluded, as will cases where there is no evidence of further malicious intent as these will not have been tried.

2.5: Summary: Final Definitions

Thus, the final definitions to be used throughout this study:

Stranger: There was no pre-existing relationship between the victim and offender prior to the offence. There will be no evidence that victim has had any previous contact with or knowledge of the offender.

Child: Anyone under the age of 18, but over the age of 24 months so as to exclude infant abductions.
**Abduction:** Taking control of a child for any amount of time. Movement is not required\(^5\).

**Control:** Intentional exertion of influence over a child’s actions.

**Attempt:** Any effort to facilitate abduction. An attempt occurs regardless of how the offence was ultimately prevented or discontinued, so long as a positive effort occurred that, should it have been followed, would have resulted in a successful abduction.

**Complete:** The offender exerts control over the child, and thus completes a child abduction in law. For the purposes of this study, the same standard of behaviour is applied to all children, including those aged between 16 and 18.

**Sexual or Violent Motivation:** As discussed in Chapter 1, the abductions being referred to in this study feature sexual or violent motivation. Such motive is assumed in absence of evidence to the contrary. It is necessary to highlight motive as this can greatly alter the nature of the offence in question.

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\(^5\) For example, a case in the sample used in this study featured an offender who approached a girl, who was playing on a scooter, and held her in place by the arms. The offender did not move the girl, but exerted control over her such that she was unable to move until her father heard her screaming and intervened.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

Chapter Summary

This Chapter conducts a critical review of the existing literature on the topic of stranger child abduction. A review of the historical evolution of this body of work is carried out in order to identify useful themes, perspectives and arguments, as well as to highlight key gaps in the knowledge base that can be explored by this thesis. It is argued that there are several key implications of the literature that should be used to inform the direction of this thesis. Most importantly, it is argued that the most useful way to bring forward current understanding of stranger child abduction, and the best way to make research in this area more practical, is to compare attempted cases of stranger child abduction with completed cases.

To facilitate this, it is argued that the literature has made reference to a number of important factors, which have been routinely recorded by other studies, and that can be compared to one another in this thesis in order to ascertain whether the attempted-completed distinction is useful. These important factors include the offence characteristics of victim age, victim sex, offender age, offender background, and the situational characteristics of victim resistance, guardianship over victims, and the Modus Operandi used by offenders. The efficacy of utilizing these particular factors to analyse stranger child abduction is argued. The factors identified in the course of this review form the basis for the core studies that are carried out in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Finally, two important premises and assumptions in the literature that are relevant for this thesis are raised. Firstly, the applicability of criminological theory, most notably Routine Activity Theory, is highlighted. Secondly, the perspective that stranger child abduction should be considered as a variety of sex offending, and the implications of this, are
explored. These points form the basis for further analysis, particularly in Chapters 7 and 8.

The chapter concludes by identifying the final premises for the four studies that make up the main part of this thesis.
3.1 Introduction

The following chapter comprises an examination of the literature pertaining to stranger child abduction, with a specific view towards establishing the reasons why this is a suitable topic for study, and makes an argument for examining attempted and completed cases specifically. It should be noted that this standalone literature review is complemented by a number of shorter literature reviews accompanying the individual studies that comprise the thesis. These shorter reviews are used to discuss the literature specifically applicable to that study. This literature review is concerned with identifying the key shortcomings present in stranger child abduction literature, and to act as justification for the overall direction of this thesis and its main arguments.

3.2 Attempted and Completed Cases: Justifying the Comparison

The most important premise of this thesis is that stranger child abduction ought to be analysed by comparing cases that are attempted and those that are completed. This part of the literature review undertakes a deeper examination of attempted and completed cases, further presenting the case for a comparison between these types of stranger child abduction. The potential impact of this comparison, and its value as a primary avenue of research, will be explored. It will be shown how early efforts to discuss attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction were abandoned in the mid-1990s, and how a set of recent findings appear to suggest that this was a mistake. These recent findings have begun to point towards significant differences between attempted and completed cases. The purpose of this thesis is to continue this modern trend and test the efficacy of distinguishing attempted and completed cases.
3.2.1 Early findings and the Abandonment of Attempted and Completed Cases

Prior stranger child abduction was studied formally and empirically, Best (1988), in his tracing of the attempts to generate figures on child abduction, pointed out that the matter of attempts became a problem when national crime rates were used to estimate incidence. Attempts and completed abductions were treated together, obfuscating the rate at which children were being taken. Even at this time, it was thought that around 4 in 5 abductions were attempts. This figure appears to have been fairly consistent over time considering recent studies (Newiss & Traynor, 2013).

As early as the first NISMART study (1992), which was the first formal study of child abduction, it was noted that in addition to the 3200-4600 reported legally-defined nonfamily abductions in 1988, that there were also at least 370-430 attempted legally-defined nonfamily abductions that the police were aware of but did not actually include in their counts. However, based on the phone survey aspect of NISMART, it was possible to estimate that a far higher 114,600 children had experienced an attempted abduction, and that among these the vast majority was carried out by a stranger in a passing car (Finkelhor et al., 1992). Rodriguez, Nahiry, Burgess and Bugress (1998) would go on to re-analyse the findings from NISMART. Their analysis enabled the conclusion that although only a few thousand cases of nonfamily abduction were reported to police, that this only accounted for 5.00% of actual cases. This led to the extrapolation that around 100,000 attempted abductions by nonfamily members would have occurred in the USA in the year of the NISMART-1 study.

Such findings gave rise to one of the only studies that focused entirely attempted abduction was carried out by Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian (1995). This study was conducted in recognition that the high estimate that 100,000 attempted non-family abductions
(non-family still being used at the time) occurred annually had not been analysed in great depth (Finkelhor et al 1995). This study took the form of a telephone survey of 10,367 randomly selected American households. They asked screening questions about presence of children in the household, and the occurrence of any kind of abduction incident. If such an incident had occurred, a full interview occurred seeking demographic information, and noting recent stressors and issues the child might have had in the lead up to the incident. The demographic portion also occurred with a random sample of calls acting as control.

The findings were that, unlike completed non-family child abductions that tended to occur against older teenaged female victims, the most common victim group of attempted abductions were children aged 4-11, comprising 70.00% of all attempt victims, with little differentiation according to sex with 44.00% male and 56.00% female victims.

Of particular interest was that, in these attempted cases, 100% of them involved luring by non-forceful means, and they all involved strangers, i.e., people not known to the child at all, and not people like neighbours who could be categorized as acquaintances. Most of these were found, as in NISMART, to involve a stranger trying to lure a child into their vehicle. It was only found that only a very small percentage (3.00%) of victims in these cases suffered physical injury, although a third of the sample reported psychological harm and distress.

This study is notable in that it made the first attempt to compare the profiles of attempted cases with the profiles of completed cases that was found in NISMART (1992). The authors made note that the demographic information did not particularly differentiate attempted abductees from the control group, with no differences in terms of income, urban living or minority representation. Household education level was also similar, although families with no high school diploma (the lowest measure) were underrepresented, which
went against the author’s implied expectations (Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian, 1995). They only found a slight skew towards higher-income Caucasian families. The only key difference was that attempted abductees tended to come from homes that were unbroken, i.e., where their parents were not separated and were both living. These findings were interesting as they appeared to indicate, at an early stage in the life cycle of research into stranger child abduction, that the utility of comparing attempted and completed cases was quite limited. It is very likely that these initial negative findings are the reason why very few studies, until recently, have compared attempted and completed cases.

The only positive associations found by Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian’s study (1995) was to do with family dynamics in the homes of victims. High household stress had a positive correlation with attempted abduction. Parents who had been abused or gone missing themselves as children were also more likely to have a child of theirs be a victim of attempted abduction.

Children coming from high stress households were also more likely to be victims of attempted abductions. This was the only factor found to have a statistically significant relationship with abduction. It was suggested that high household stress reduces levels of parental supervision, giving rise to circumstances where a child is vulnerable to being targeted by a stranger child abductor. However, further analysis of this found the reverse to be true. High stress households and attempted abduction victims tended to have higher hours of parent to child supervision throughout the day than the lower stress and non-abduction groups.

Ultimately, the authors concluded that these factors did not actually have links to increased victimization, but rather to an increase in the reporting of suspicious activity, which
in turn meant more offences were recorded as having occurred against these groups. For instance, it was suggested that the previous victimization by family members caused them to become guarded and interpret more possible scenarios as an attempted abduction incident, and to report it, than parents who had not previously been victimized. It was further suggested this kind of guardedness and increased vigilance could increase due to times of stress \textit{(ibid, 1995, p. 954)}.

These conclusions meant that, in the end, distinguishing between attempted and completed cases was not seen as useful, and those factors that were identified as having an association with attempted cases were explained as being merely to do with increased reporting, i.e., that any true difference in the profiles of attempted cases compared to completed ones was illusory. The authors went so far as to comment that the motives of offenders and the likely outcomes of attempted cases should they have been completed were unknowable (p. 956). The issue of attempted stranger child abduction became dormant. It is argued by this thesis that this was a problematic development and that the abandonment of this distinction, although understandable, was premature.

\textbf{3.2.1 Resurgence of Interest in Attempted and Completed Cases}

The matter of attempted abduction has not been raised specifically again as a topic of interest until very recently. The work of Newiss (2004; 2013), analysing missing persons rates in the UK, following a 2004 study with Fairbrother and culminating in a 2013 study alongside Traynor focusing on child abduction, found that attempted abductions by strangers were in fact very common, relative to completed abductions. This body of work also refuted the findings made by Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian (1995) that there were no notable
differences between attempted cases and completed cases, and provides evidence that there are notable distinction between the two that can be used to aid in analysis.

Newiss and Fairbrother (2004) examined and explained the statistics that had been recorded by UK police in the 2002/3 period. Based on this analysis, it was found that over half (56.00%) of abductions recorded by police involved a stranger as abductor. Of interest, 47.00% of all abductions, consisting of 128 offences, involved an attempted abduction by a stranger involving very little or even no actual contact between the offender themselves and the victim. Only 9.00% of offences were successful stranger abductions. This remains one of only very few studies to focus on attempted versus completed stranger child abductions, and began to shed light on the relative incidence of attempted abductions in relation to completed abductions. The most common attempts involved a male offender attempting to incite a child to enter a car, followed by a male attempting to physically drag a child from a public space. It is unclear why these abductions were unsuccessful, i.e., whether the offender changed their mind, were they interrupted, or felt that the child was putting up too much resistance.

It also pointed out how little is known about these attempted cases. In the vast majority (96.00%), the motive for the offence could not be established, so was coded as “not known”. In the 4.00% where motivation was known, it was noted to be sexual. Even in the completed abductions, only 19.00% of cases had enough information to allow for coding of motive, and of these 100% were sexually motivated. The authors posited that the actual incidence of sexual motivation was much higher than the positively identified figures, with Newiss reiterating this point again in a 2013 study with Traynor (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Again, this serves to support the connection that has been made between stranger child abduction and sex crime.
It was also noted that suspect identification rates in attempted abduction cases were extremely low, at only around 13.00%. Even in completed abductions, the detection rate was relatively low only 37.00%, compared to 54.00% detection rate for all violent offences. This should be kept in mind in the present study of offenders; even if the researchers interviewed every incarcerated offender and analysed every convicted case, this may not be reflective of the true phenomenon if 87.00% of attempted offences and 63.00% of completed offences go unresolved. Given that many cases may also go unreported, even this estimate could be considered optimistic.

One of the most important studies carried out in the UK was a study by Gallagher, Bradford and Pease (2008). In the absence of much research on the topic of stranger child abduction, and in acknowledgement that the available figures were incomplete, this study undertook the task of generating prevalence figures. It innovatively did so by survey, asking a sample of 2,916 of the UK’s child population - not unlike the NISMART approach of phone surveying US household - in order to ask them about their victimization levels, examining both abduction and sexual assault by a stranger.

Their comprehensive literature analysis appeared to show that completed stranger abductions of strangers were very uncommon, and that a vast majority of cases were unsuccessful. This backs up the findings of Newiss and Fairbrother (2004) and, later, of Newiss and Traynor (2013).

A key finding was that it appeared sexual motives for stranger abductions, while still significant, were also relatively unusual. The authors pointed out that Finkelhor et al found only 46.00% of victims to have suffered sexual assault. This is somewhat at odds with what had been posited by some authors, however, it provides a useful estimate of what the actual,
relative prevalence of sexually motivated stranger child abduction might be, particularly considering that previous existing information in the UK had been unable to establish motive in the vast majority of these cases (Newiss & Fairbrother, 2004).

Gallagher et al. (2008) gathered information about abduction experiences by surveying children, and appeared to show that abduction is actually far more common than the still-disordered official statistics indicate, and that many instances go either unreported or otherwise get lost in the figures. Their findings suggest that up to 1 in 59 children will experience at least an attempted abduction event perpetrated by a stranger.

461 members, or 19.00%, of the original sample had been subjected to completed or attempted abduction by any offender type, with 161 of these reporting the offender being a stranger, which made up 6.70% of the original sample.

The most common offence group was that of indecent exposure, where a stranger would approach children or ask them to approach him and then expose their genitals. Next most common was the offender touching the child (26.00%). Least common was actual abduction; either attempted or completed (23.00%). Some instances involved more than one offence type (10.00%), meaning the numbers for each of these could be slightly higher.

Evident from this review, there appears to be clear indicators that there are likely to be strong distinctions between stranger child abductions that are attempted and those that are completed. However, due to limited number of studies on the topic, the extent to which attempted and completed cases truly varies remains unexplored. It is the aim of this thesis to undertake such an exploration, and to establish the types of variance that exist between attempted and completed cases.
3.3 Stranger Child Abduction Literature

It has now been established that it is important to compare attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction. However, to facilitate this comparison, it will be necessary to identify which factors relating to stranger child abduction can be usefully analysed in order to ascertain whether utilizing a distinction between attempted and completed cases has any impact.

Stranger child abduction is a potentially very complex offence, with each case having a huge range of factors that could potentially have relevance for that case’s outcome. In order to narrow the field of potential factors to analyse, this part of the literature review conducts a chronological, historical review of studies on stranger child abduction and related offences, with a view to identify those factors that have either been most routinely recorded, or which have been identified as most useful and determinative in defining stranger child abduction. This exercise will also allow for identification of the difficulties, gaps and shortcomings that have been encountered by previous authors, and to ascertain what lessons to take from their efforts.

3.3.1 Early Formal Studies on Child Abduction

Studies into child abduction formally began in the late 1980s, in response to growing public fears of murderous strangers abducting and murdering young children in the USA (see Best, 1988) and due to a general cultural and media fixation with “dangerous strangers” (Young, 1986, p. 12). This led to a series of studies that focused on illuminating the prevalence of child abduction in the USA, and to uncover the true nature of such abductions.
The first such study was carried out by David Finkelhor and colleagues, and was dubbed the National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children, or “NISMART” (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1992). NISMART was used to show that the much feared “stereotypical kidnap” by a stranger, where the child was taken a long way and either ransomed or killed, was incredibly rare. From their study of 21 US counties, using a combination of household surveys, survey of police records, and finer analysis of FBI homicide reports, NISMART found that 3200-4600 legally-defined nonfamily abductions occurred annually. Of these, 200-300 could be considered “stereotypical kidnappings”, and around 43-147 of these (estimated as an average) ended in homicide. Compared to the 163,200-354,100 estimated family abductions, this was an early indication that stranger child abductions, particularly fatal outcome cases, were relatively rare.

This study marked the beginning of a process of examining the phenomenon of child abduction according to increasingly specific categories, and with progressively more demographic information about the offenders in each of these categories. NISMART (1992) began with “family” and “nonfamily” types of abduction. These could be considered the first officially recognized child abductor types.

As important as this initial distinction was, it should be noted that NISMART (1992) was extremely focused on incidence of crime, with little emphasis on the features of the differences between family and nonfamily abductions. Asdigan, Finkelhor and Hotaling (1995) followed this thread left by NISMART (1992) and produced demographic profiles of the offenders most likely to carry out different types of abduction. Their study made a number of interesting findings, such as that the motivation behind the offence appeared to differentiate between what happened in the offence and in the demographics of the offender.
However, the most important finding for present purposes, by far, was that the offences committed by strangers and acquaintances were so different, in terms of mode and offender demographics, that they should be treated as completely separate offence types, and not conflated as “nonfamily”.

“We examined the group of serious abductions perpetrated by nonstrangers…and found that they did not possess many of the salient and stereotypical features of serious abductions perpetrated by strangers”.


Asdigian et al. (1995) also noted practical difficulties that came with the effort to analyse child abduction cases. Due to various actions and crimes that might cover abduction, they reported that police records were extremely disparate, and featured very different levels of detail. These varying levels of detail and use of conflicting definitions was so severe that the researchers had to hand-organize the data in many cases. This caused the scope of their study to be greatly reduced.

Taking note of the practical issues encountered by Asdigian et al. (1995), and because fatal outcome cases were still capturing public attention, subsequent key studies focused on fatal outcome cases. The most important of these was carried out by Hanfland, Keppel and Weis (1997), and represents one of the most detailed studies from this period. Although constrained and limited by focusing exclusively on fatal outcome cases, this study was among the first to discuss a number of issues that would become key to the understanding of stranger child abduction. In particular, three key items were of significance.
The first of these was that, among its most interesting findings, this study showed that, in fatal cases of non-family child abduction, the level of familiarity between the victim and the murderer appeared to have a relationship to the sex and age of the child:

“The youngest females, 1-5 years old, tend to be killed by friends of acquaintances (64%), while the oldest females, 16-17 years old, tend to be killed by strangers (also 64%). The relationship between the killer and victim is different for the male victims. The youngest male victims (1-5 years old) are most likely to be killed by strangers (also 64%), as are the teenage males (13-15 years old, 60% and 16-17 years old, 58%).”

This finding appears to support what was found by Asdigian et al. (1995), showing not only that stranger and acquaintance cases of child abduction are distinct, but also that older female children were much more likely to be targeted by a stranger, and that this was likely to have a sexual context. This strongly suggested that characteristics of the offence seemed to greatly influence the profiles of offenders, and also appeared to change their likely motivations for offending.

Related to this, the authors found further evidence of the centrality of sexual offending to stranger child abduction. The past offending behaviours of stranger child abductors was compared to that of all murderers. Only 3.00% of all murderers have sexual problems, but a far larger 42.00% of child abduction murders did. Child abduction murderers were also more likely to have drug or mental problems, at 27.00% and 23.00% respectively compared to
14.00% and 13.00% among all murderers. Hanfland et al. (1997) also found that the prevalence of pre-existing substance abuse and mental health issues are also important, as well as the increased likelihood of the offender being socially marginal, suggesting that a range of issues in the offender’s life may serve to prompt or enable sexually violent offending against children.

The reaffirmation that stranger child abduction appears to have a close relationship to sexual offending has been a key finding in the development of the understanding of stranger child abduction, as this helps researchers to situate this type of offending alongside domain specific literature (see Newiss & Traynor, 2013). The implications of this will be discussed in greater detail below.

Additionally, and importantly, these findings indicate that factors relating to the victim’s profile can meaningfully interact with the outcome of the case itself. The significance of this point cannot be overemphasized, and forms the basis for much of this thesis: identifying and controlling for key offence features, such as victim sex in this example, can drastically impact the profile of stranger child abduction cases and be used for analysis.

The second significant finding came from analysing the movements of offenders before and after the abduction and murder events. Hanfland et al. (1997) found that in 66.00% of cases, the offender was in the vicinity of the child for a legitimate reason, i.e., because they lived near to the abduction site, and that most victims were selected based on opportunity, with only 14.00% of cases featuring a child who had been kidnapped based on their possession of certain physical traits. Most offenders then went on to conceal the body (52.00%), although 9.00% took steps to display the body in such a way it was sure to be
discovered. The authors made special focus on the spatial movement of killers who did hide the body, finding distinct patterns-

“The initial contact site is within ¼ mile of the victim’s last known location in 80% of cases. Conversely, the distance between the initial contact site and the murder site increases to distances greater than 1/4 mile (54%). The distance from the murder site to the body recovery site again decreases, to less than 200 feet in 72 percent of cases.” (Hanfland, Keppel & Weis, p. 2).

This is another highly important finding, although its significance went unappreciated at the time. As will be shown, the finding that stranger child abductions tend to occur in the context of an offender’s regular routine, being less likely to be meticulously planned or predatory, is central to current understandings of the offence. This acts as an early basis for applying concepts such as Routine Activity Theory to stranger child abduction, which will be done in this thesis to explore the effectiveness of guardianship as a preventive feature.

The third significant point is not a finding from a study as such, but rather an observation about the typical methodology that had arisen for examining stranger child abduction cases. This methodology for understanding stranger child abduction is important to note, and is well illustrated by the above passages. It is common for researchers examining stranger child abduction to control for one key factor, such as victim-offender relationship in the example above, in order to see if this produces distinct changes in the profile of cases featuring that factor compared to those that do not. Normally, quite simple case features are compared, such as victim age and sex are utilized, however, as shall be demonstrated in the
following review, additional factors were identified as being useful to examine in the context of stranger child abduction. As stated, a primary objective of this review is to identify key factors in stranger child abduction cases that can be usefully applied to compare attempted and completed cases. This should be kept in mind throughout this review, and for the remainder of this thesis.

As one can see, the Hanfland et al.’s (1997) study was nothing short of extremely detailed, densely packed with information about offences and offenders, able to produce highly interesting findings on various aspects of the offence. It is most significant in that it was among the first studies on child abduction to consider the relevance of a wide range of factors, such as personal background, and offender movements before and during an offence. Hanfland et al.’s (1997) study also represents the first time that theoretical integration with the facts and figures from criminological sources, such as speculation about routine activity theory, was attempted thanks to the study having produced the necessary level of detail to allow this. Such a level of scrutiny, however, was only possible thanks to exhaustive case information available in homicide case files, and unfortunately only offers direct insight into an extremely small segment of stranger child abduction behaviour. Later studies (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000) would find that less than 1.00% of nonfamily child abductions would result in homicide, with Hanfland et al. (1997) themselves estimating that only around 1 in every 10,000 (0.01%) missing child reports represented a homicide. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates the utility of analysing a wide range of factors in relation to understanding child abduction.

A similar but less detailed study than that of Hanfland at al. (1997) was carried out the following year by Rodriguez, Nahirny, Burgess and Burgess (1998), examining missing children found dead in the USA. Broadly, this study again affirmed the findings made by
Hanfland et al. (1997), finding a link between sexual offending and stranger child abduction, especially in cases involving older female victims, and stranger, as well as highlighting that such offences were almost exclusively carried out by males. A particularly interesting finding was that the mode of homicide in stranger child abduction cases was likely to be manual strangulation was the most common cause of death, a finding that had also been made by Hanfland et al. (1997). Taken together, these findings appear to show a trend of stranger child abduction offences containing elements of unplanned violence, given that later studies (e.g., Hazelwood & Warren) associate manual strangling with a lack of planned aggression. This study also pointed towards another extremely important revelation, namely that an offender’s approach to the offence can have a high level of impact on the profile of the offence and the offender. This feature of stranger child abduction is the subject of Chapter 8.

3.3.2 Recent Studies from the USA

From the early 2000s, research pertaining to stranger child abduction continued at a slow but steady pace. Although of interest the outputs from these studies, in terms of enhancing understanding of stranger child abduction, were less dramatic than the pieces of research mentioned above, although they were able to better distinguish between stranger cases and other types of abduction.

A follow-up to the original NISMART study, known simply as NISMART-2 (2002), was carried out in, utilizing a similar survey based methodology to the earlier study (Hammer, Finkelhor & Sedlak, 2002). As before, this study was largely concerned with incidence, and was constrained as it once again did not distinguish between acquaintance and stranger cases. The key finding of their survey was that the level of reporting of non-family abduction cases, including stranger cases, was extremely low. Only around 1 in 3 suspected
incidents of abduction were reported to police, the rest being either dismissed after being resolved, dealt with privately, or not being recognized as an abduction incident except in retrospect. This represents evidence for the proposition that non-family abduction, including stranger child abduction, is likely significantly more prevalent than official figures would suggest, and was also an early indication of the prevalence and importance of less serious attempted cases.

US researchers Miller, Kurlychech, Hansen and Wilson (2008) made an up to date, expanded study of a number of the factors previously identified by Finkelhor et al (1992), this time with the advantage of differentiating between family, stranger and acquaintance abduction. Specifically, they examined offence the factors of where offences occur, day of the week, time of day, weapon presence, victim factors of sex, age and race, and offender characteristics of race and sex. Of interest among their findings was that stranger abduction had no pattern in relation to the race of the offender, that they were not particularly likely to target females over males, and that the likelihood of stranger abduction had positive correlation with age of the victim, i.e., older victims were more likely to be targeted by a stranger abductors relative to family and acquaintance offenders.

Other papers written during this time include studies by Beasley, Hayne, Beyer, Cramer, Berson, Muirhead and Warren (2009), and by Beyer and Beasley (2003). Although failing to distinguish acquaintance and stranger child abductions, these pieces of work made an important contribution to the field of knowledge on such offences. Beasley et al. (2009) examined the offending histories of those responsible for fatal and non-fatal non-family child abductions. Rather, the majority of offenders (75.00%) had diverse offending backgrounds. 14.00% had been previously arrested for kidnapping. 33.00% for forcible sex crime. 40.00% for larceny. 41.00% for assault, 15.00% for robbery, 35.00% robbery or breaking and
entering, and 17.00% for motor vehicle offences. Furthermore, 25.00% of offenders had no prior offending history at all. Very few were specialized offenders who focused only on children. These findings suggest that there is “criminal diversity among child abductors” (ibid, p. 273), and they are not always specialized child sex offenders, but rather the offenders are in the “midst of a chronic criminal career characterised by property and violent offending” (ibid, p. 278). As such, their findings showed that such offenders come from a variety of offending backgrounds, which defies the stereotype that all abductors are chronic child sex offenders.

Heide, Beauregard and Myers (2009) carried out a meta-review of child abduction murders. They made a particularly interesting finding, one which echoes a passage seen in the work of Hanfland, Keppel and Weis (1997). It was found that episodes where an abduction took place tended to be triggered by some other event. The most common of these triggers were caused by a relationship with an adult woman (46.00%), or a by legal problem (36.00%). This study also reinforces the connection made by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1998) regarding the connection between stranger child abduction and routine activity theory. This study found that, in most cases, the victim is selected based on opportunity and availability, rather than for appearance (14.00% of the time) or motivation (13.00%). This provides further justification for examining stranger child abduction alongside routine activity theory, as well as examining simple demographic features.

In one of the most recent studies on the topic, Tillyer, Tillyer and Kelsay (2015) reaffirmed that the relationship between victim and offender is central to abduction by using FBI data. They found that stranger kidnappers were very likely to have a sexual motive for offending. It was also found that stranger abductors, although seemingly the least common type of abductor, were the least likely to be identified and arrested. This means that there is
likely to be the smallest amount of information available on this type offender. Lack of detection means that reports cannot be made and subsequently studied. Despite accumulation of a greater volume of detail than most existing studies, the variables studied still did not go beyond examining the type of weapon used and the offence location, nor did it address the matter of offender modus operandi. Furthermore, given how difficult it is to gather such detail on attempted cases from police databases, their results are very likely skewed towards completed instances of stranger child abduction.

3.3.3 Studies from the UK

While a large amount of stranger child abduction literature originated in the USA, a small body of work emerged in the UK as well. Although more modest in scope than their counterparts from across the Atlantic, the UK studies made a number of imperative connections that had only been alluded to previously. Of particular note is the overt recognition of the centrality of sexual motivations, and a focus on attempted cases to completed cases, which, as will be discussed below, was a largely abandoned thread of research from the US perspective.

The first notable study from the UK was carried out by Erikson and Friendship (2002). This piece of research largely focused on offender types, paying particular attention to motivation. Unfortunately, these authors fell into the trap of considering acquaintance and stranger cases under the single heading of non-family abduction, making it difficult to apply most of their findings, such as those to do with offender age or offending history, to stranger abduction specifically. Nevertheless, the authors made two very important findings. Firstly, they noted a distinct similarity between their own findings and those made by US studies, indicating that the nature of the offence of child abduction did not vary significantly
depending on jurisdiction. This lends support for applying US and UK findings to their respective counterparts. Secondly, and most significantly, it was found that an overwhelming majority of non-family abductions, whether carried out by a stranger or an acquaintance, involved sexual motivation. This finding provides evidence indicating the significance of the relationship between stranger child abduction and sexual offending. This latter finding is key as it offers support for the application of theories of sex offending to stranger child abduction.

The remaining UK studies focusing on stranger child abduction all made important contributions. Their most important was their discussion of how attempted and completed cases might be distinct from one another. These are outlined in order to provide support for the continuation of this line of thought in the present study.

The first study to mention this connection was carried out by Newiss and Fairbother (2004). Their very small section on the topic, situated in a study of child abductions more broadly, is of great significance. Based on this analysis, it was found that over half (56.00%) of abductions recorded by police involved a stranger as abductor. Of interest, 47.00% of all abductions, consisting of 128 offences, involved an attempted abduction by a stranger involving very little or even no actual contact between the offender themselves and the victim. Only 9.00% of offences were successful stranger abductions. This was one of the first studies to single out attempted versus completed stranger child abductions, and began to shed light on the relative incidence of attempted abductions in relation to completed ones.

The next landmark study that has come to change the way in which stranger child abduction is thought about, was carried out in the UK by Gallagher, Bradford and Pease (2008). In the absence of much research on the topic of stranger child abduction, and in acknowledgement that the available official figures were incomplete and inconsistently
recorded this study undertook the task of generating prevalence figures. It innovatively did so by surveying school children themselves, asking a sample of 2,916 of the child population in Northwest England, asking them about their victimization levels, examining both abduction and sexual assault by a stranger.

Their comprehensive literature analysis appeared to show that completed stranger abductions of strangers were very uncommon, and that a vast majority of cases were unsuccessful. This backs up the findings of Newiss and Fairbrother (2004) and, later, of Newiss and Traynor (2013), and provides further credence for attempted analysis of what causes an offence to be abandoned or what brings about desistance during an apparent attempted abduction.

Gallagher et al. (2008)’s survey appeared to show that abduction occurs at a much higher incidence than the still-disordered official statistics indicate, and that many instances go either unreported or otherwise get lost in the figures. Their findings suggest that up to 1 in 59 children will experience at least an attempted abduction event perpetrated by a stranger. Of the abduction group, there were 41 incidents. Only 4 of these were completed. Again, this follows the emergent findings seen in Newiss and Fairbrother’s (2004) study that there is a distinct divide between attempted and completed cases, and that a majority of offences are attempted.

Gallagher et al.’s (2008) study made a number of additional findings that inform current knowledge of stranger child abduction and its nature overall. Demographically with regards to the offender it was found, as with previous studies that the majority of perpetrators were adult males (84.00%). There were a small number of outlying cases involving younger
offenders, as well as a small number of cases where a male perpetrator was assisted by a female.

For victims, it was found that there was no significant difference for sex of victim in abductions. For age, it was found that older children (13-16 years) were more likely to have suffered an abduction attempt than younger children (9-12 years). The authors acknowledged this could be in part due to those children, by simple virtue of living longer, having been exposed to the risk of abduction for longer since they were reporting lifetime incidents.

Newiss and Traynor (2013) was able to take forward some of the points made previously by Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian’s 1995 study, albeit in the context of the UK rather than the USA. In particular, Newiss and Traynor (2013) were able, based on intervening work that had found high proportions of sexual offenders being involved in child abduction, that it is reasonable to suggest that a large majority or attempted abductions by strangers have a sexual motivation for their offending. Previous findings such as Hanfland, Keppel and Weis (1997) found that around 70% of fatal-outcome stranger child abductions involved sexual motivation. Therefore this extrapolation, although perhaps losing some information in translation (a lesson that should be learned from the problematic combining of incompatible figures and crime types that has plagued this field of research) at least appears tentatively viable. Of great significance, Newiss and Traynor (2013) found that 75.00% of stranger child abduction cases reported to police were attempted, rather than completed.

A recent strand of research from the UK was carried out by Newiss and Collie that aimed to enhance understanding of abduction incidence in different regions of the country (Newiss & Collie, 2015; Newiss, 2016). These authors found that the rates of child abduction and kidnap cases reported to police, including non-family abduction, has increased
dramatically since 2012. It is unclear whether these increased rates can be attributed simply to differences in reporting or recording practices, but regardless, these studies lend credence to the increasing significance of the child abduction in the UK and underline the importance of continuing to advance knowledge on the topic.

This collection of findings is relevant as it demonstrates that it can be useful to compare attempted cases to completed cases, and, furthermore, this comparison can be facilitated by referring to fairly straightforward offence features. This thesis aims to build on these findings by making more in-depth examination of the key factors identified in this review.

It should additionally be noted that the present thesis will be useful in that it will allow the testing of whether findings from USA based studies can be generalized to the UK. Studies from the USA will have sample types distinct from any UK study, including the sample used for this thesis. Comparison between USA and UK results can be drawn in order to ascertain whether there are any notable differences between those two jurisdictions.

### 3.3.4 Important Factors in Stranger Child Abduction

At this point, it becomes clear that a number of features relating to stranger child abduction have occurred frequently across studies. This is important to note, as this thesis can utilize these factors to assist in ascertaining the effectiveness of measures that can prevent stranger child abduction.

The most commonly mentioned case features, as can be seen from the review above, include victim age, victim sex, and offender background. A range of other factors, including offence location and timing are also relevant. Chapter 5 is dedicated to further exploring
these offence characteristics, and ascertaining the extent to which they can be used to examine offence outcomes.

Among the most influential and most frequently cited of these features is that of victim age. As mentioned, many studies had made findings indicating that victim age appeared to have a strong connection to the character of abduction cases, resulting in very different offender profiles and offence characteristics. This was best illustrated by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1998), who also separated abductions according to the age of victims. These authors were able to apply the findings like those in the fatal outcome studies to stranger child abduction more generally. They split victims into seven age groups, and, consistent with studies on both infant abduction and fatal abduction, found that young children were almost never targeted by strangers, or for sexual purposes, whereas older children became increasingly likely to be targeted by strangers for sexual purposes. Importantly, this appeared to coincide with onset of school, i.e., with enhanced freedom and decreased guardianship. This enabled the important implication that there were important elements of accessibility, and routine activity processes (victims being more likely to meet motivated offenders while unguarded) at play. Additionally, work was carried out examining abductions against very young children, referred to as infant abduction (Ankrom & Lent, 1995; Baker, Burgess, Rabun & Nahiry, 2002). This line of research showed that cases featuring very young victims were distinct from those featuring children even just a few years older, with such cases being characterised by female offenders who desired to possess a child.

This level of variation is important to note as it illustrates the importance of identifying key features of stranger child abduction that can be controlled for in order to assess the level to which they influence the profile of cases. For the purpose of this thesis, they are doubly important as they can be used to ascertain whether controlling for whether an abduction is
attempted or completed is allowing for the identification of any statistically significant variations between abduction cases.

With this in mind, this chapter proceeds to review more recent studies on stranger child abduction, with a view to identifying any other notable characteristics or key gaps in knowledge that ought to be addressed.

### 3.3.5 Other Sources of Literature on Stranger Child Abduction

The majority of the studies mentioned until this point are very much concerned with establishing how often stranger child abduction occurs in relation to other types of crime, and to establishing the key features of stranger child abduction. However, this has not been the only area of concern for those writing about stranger child abduction.

Another body of literature has emerged that is concerned with the prevention of stranger child abduction. This body of work emanates not only from academic, peer reviewed sources, with other organizations such as charities and governmental organizations authoring advice for children, their carers and teachers as to how best to prevent stranger child abduction.

All kinds of organizations in both the UK and USA are concerned with child safety, and many have written guides and designed lesson plans to help prevent child abduction (e.g., NCMEC, N. D; Netmums, 2014; Go Safe Scotland, N. D.). Many of these lessons teach children to carry out certain strategies should they be faced with an abduction. These commonly tell children to say “no” to strangers, to run away, and to call for help from safe adults (see Newiss, 2014). They may also include practical lessons on self-defence.
Children are also taught that they should always be accompanied by a trusted adult, or at least that they ought to travel in groups (NCMEC, N. D.). If fleeing from an attacker, children are taught to seek out safe adults or head towards populated or crowded areas (Netmums, 2014). This focus on being supervised can be seen in the early studies on child abduction, particularly in Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian (1995), who frequently cited lack of supervision by highly stressed parents as contributing to the creation of abduction opportunities. These basic lessons imply that accompaniment by adults and by child peers is likely to prevent offending, and that third parties such as members of the public are likely to act to stop an attacker. However, these effects are largely assumed, with little to no empirical information to verify the effectiveness of these claims.

The most notable strain of academic literature on the topic is concerned with teaching children behavioural skills that can prevent them from being successfully taken by a would-be abductor (e.g., Miltenberger & Olson, 1996; Moran et al., 1997; Johnson et al., 2005). Although far more scientific than the other child safety literature, this body of work also has the issue that the practical effectiveness of the resistance strategies being taught are not verified. The studies are almost exclusively concerned with how well children retain lessons and display desired behaviours following training than they are with how effective the proposed training is at mitigating harm in a practical setting.

Far more detail regarding the specific content of these lessons are provided in Chapters 6 and 7, which deal with the effectiveness of victim resistance and of guardianship respectively. For the moment, it is sufficient to make the point that these behaviours and offence features are being purported as effective ways to prevent or mitigate abduction, but do so with little scientific basis. As a result, this thesis presents an excellent opportunity to simultaneously test their effectiveness whilst also ascertaining the utility of comparing attempted and completed cases.
3.3.6 Key Shortcomings in the Child Abduction Literature

Before proceeding to identify the core themes and trends present in the stranger child abduction literature, a number of key shortcomings in the way in which this body of research has developed and been conducted must be highlighted.

There are two key historical shortcomings in the literature. The first is that there have been marked differences in the definitions used by authors, which has led to inconsistency. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The second problem is that there has not been a uniform approach to categorizing the various types of abduction incidents that occur. This means that crimes that involve abduction might be recorded in different ways in different jurisdictions, if they are recorded at all. As Beasley et al. (2009) point out, it may also be that, if the child is found deceased, then there is perceived to be little purpose in creating a missing persons or an abduction report in addition to the more pertinent murder inquiry. This is regrettable, but does make sense considering how priorities would shift in such a situation towards resolving a murder case. Whatever the reason might be, this relative lack of consistency makes finding evidence and gathering data very difficult. It also casts some doubt over the transferability of findings between studies.

Bennion (2009) also points out that it can be difficult extracting information from children and other vulnerable victims, and that their informational deficits often relate to what they know about offenders. At the risk of being somewhat crass, such an observation could cast some doubt on the reliability of studies that use the accounts of younger victims. This is compounded by the fact that victims of abduction (Beasley et al., 2009) and trafficking (Sally, 2009) are often intimidated into silence by the offender, and trafficking victims are often fearful or distrusting of law enforcement in the first place (Bernat & Zhilina, 2010), or
alternatively (or additionally) may have been traumatized by the event should they realize its gravity. This means these children are not simply witnesses, and may be subject to some memory deficits that other groups might not experience. That said, it is likely better simply to bear this in mind rather than discount such information, especially since current prevailing views in witness reliability literature point towards children, especially as they get older, can be just as reliable as adults in terms of recall (e.g, Brackmann, Orgaar, Saureland & Jelicic, 2016).

The findings from these studies suggest that analysis of police documentation alone, or gathering data from the police perspective, is likely to give an incomplete picture of offending. Similarly, speaking to child victims, as was done by Gallagher et al (2008), and in the NISMART studies (1992;2002), is likely to bring with it imperfect recall. It could be suggested that supplementing this data with accounts from offenders of their experiences could bring additional detail, although with the extremely large caveat that there is no guarantee of their willingness to cooperate or be truthful.

This leads to a further issue with the stranger child abduction literature, namely that the results from various studies have been inconsistent. Findings regarding incidence of abduction events, victim characteristics, and offender characteristics have been inconsistent, an issue that has been highlighted and illustrated recently and convincingly by Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen and Wilson (2008). In fact, some of these findings can contradict one another, and make it difficult to draw conclusions from the literature as a whole. For instance, Hanfland et al. (1997) reported that 53.00% of child abduction murderers had previous offences specifically against children, while Beasley et al (2009) later found that child abduction murderers had diverse criminal careers that were rarely specified towards children.
Assessing the degree of specialisation that occurs within this group is difficult as different studies have produced varying results. Differences such as this appear to arise not only from the way these various studies retrieve their figures, and from where, but also because each study tends to attempt to analyse a specific, niche aspect of stranger child abduction. In other words, it is uncommon for pure follow-up studies using the same methodologies to study the same phenomena to be conducted in the area, with even NISMART-2 failing to meet this criteria (albeit out of necessity) due to methodology having moved on in the interim between NISMART and NISMART-2.

This process of iteration, where future studies use those that came before to slowly move a field forward, is normal in academic study. It may be unfortunate in this context given the difference in speed between development of methods, theories and policing procedures compared to the speed at which studies are carried out. The figures from previous studies and the way they were gathered mean they may be out of date by the time subsequent studies have to rely on them.

It should be mentioned that a significant gap exists regarding how stranger child abductors behave, particularly with regard to how they facilitate their offences. There is only limited information, largely from Hanfland et al.’s. (1997) study, as to how offenders organize themselves, with lure and blitz offending archetypes being identified. This gap will be addressed in Chapter 8. However, for now it bears emphasizing that current understanding of this matter has been explored by only a handful of authors (Hanfland et al., 1997; Tedisco & Paludi, 1996), having since been assumed to involve lure type behaviour (i.e., by Moran et al, 1996). The particular strategies employed by offenders, and their effectiveness in facilitating abduction, remains unexplored.
As a result of these shortcomings and inconsistencies, it becomes somewhat risky to
draw inferences about the behaviours of offenders, incidence of crime outcomes and
characteristics of offenders from a mixture of these studies. Some later papers used both
NISMART, NISMART-2 and NIBRS inspired studies to make claims about, i.e., how likely
children are to be victimized and for what reason (e.g., Lord, Bourdeaux, Jarvies, Waldvogel
& Weeks, 2002) without noting that the figures come from somewhat disparate sources. Then
again, in lieu of properly systematic studies on child abduction, figures such as these
represent the best information currently available, and are what must be used albeit with these
caveats in mind.

3.4 Core Factors Relating to Stranger Child Abduction

This literature review has enabled the identification of four key areas relating to
stranger child abduction that have repeatedly discussed by previous studies, and are used as
the basis for the four studies that make up the bulk of this thesis. Given the above, these
factors are to be analysed in light of whether they have any statistical association with
whether an offence is completed or attempted. First, though, it is necessary to identify these
four areas, and to explain why they can be considered core issues for examination.

3.4.1 General features of the offence: Victim, Offender and Offence Characteristics

Almost universal to studies relating to stranger child abduction is some effort to
record basic features of the offence. These include examining victim sex (e.g. in particular
Finkelhor, Hotaling & Asdigian, 1995; Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000), victim age (e.g.,
Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999), offence location and timing (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000;
Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson, 2008), offender characteristics (Baker, Burgess,
Rabun & Nahirny, 2002; Finkelhor et al., 2002), offender background (Beyer & Beasley, 2003), among many others offender, victim and offence, with Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen and Wilson (2008) providing a good overview. The ubiquity of detailing these features points towards a desire to understand the factors that tend to be present in stranger child abduction cases, and an implicit indication that these features may have some interactions with one another, e.g., Hanfland, Keppel and Weis’ (1997) examination of victim sex differentiators, or with case outcome. That said, only very few studies have made any effort to compare even the most basic of these features between attempted and completed cases (e.g., Newiss & Fairbrother, 2004). This has left a very large gap in knowledge with regards to offence features.

Furthermore, as discussed above, the emphasis on examining incidence, and the lack of consistency in terms that has led to conflation of stranger and acquaintance cases, has led to mixed findings among those studies that purport to describe the demographic profile of stranger child abduction. This has resulted in a number of competing perspectives, and a lack of clarity as to what a typical case of stranger child abduction even looks like, let alone the extent to which any of these variables interact with whether a case becomes completed or not.

The most common data recorded pertains to victim age and to victim sex. Some studies have shown the gender split to be largely even (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Asdigian, 1995; Gallagher, Bradford & Pease, 2008), whereas others have found females to be over-represented at rates ranging from the 60-65% (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Rodreguez, Nahirny, Burgess and Burgess, 1998; Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson, 2008) to 81% (Asdigian, Finkelhor & Hotaling).

Some studies have found that stranger child abduction is most strongly associated with older victims, with reports indicating peaks of victimization between 13 years and 16
years (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Gallagher, Bradford & Pease, 2008; Miller et al., 2008; Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak, 2002). Other studies, however, indicate that younger victims, aged 10-11 years, are most at risk (Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999; Gregoire, 2010; Newiss & Fairbrother, 2004). The study by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999) goes some way to explaining why there are differences in age and gender. They show that offenders are likely to prefer school aged victims, particularly around the age of 10 years, as they are the least well guarded. Victims at other ages are more likely to either defend themselves or to be guarded by other actors, such as parents.

Offender characteristics are recorded less often, although findings tend to be more consistent than those dealing with victims. It has been consistently and overwhelmingly sown that males are vastly over-represented as offenders in stranger abduction cases (Gallagher et al., 2008; Finkelhor et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2008; Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999). Reports range from 86% of stranger child abductors being male (Finkelhor, et al 2002) to 98% (Boudreaux et al., 1999). A sub-type of stranger child abduction, involving maternal desire, is dominated by female victims (Ankrom& Lent, 1995; Baker et al., 2003), however this is distinct from the current topic of study. Similarly, studies examining the age of offers found that, although stranger child abductors can be of any age, the majority of offenders are aged in their mid to late 20s (Finkehlor et al, 2002; Gallagher, et al., 2008; Gregoire, 2010; Bourdreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1996). That said, as of yet, no study has analysed how an offender’s age influences the properties of stranger child abduction cases.

There have been particularly interesting findings relating to offender background. Stereotypes of stranger child abductors would suggest that all such offenders are predatory paedophiles with specialised offending interest in children. However, it has been found that stranger child abductors tend to have either a diverse criminal, with a majority (75%) of child abducting offenders and other similar offenders (Liu, Francis & Soothill, 2007) having
perpetrated a range of offence types, and a smaller number (25%) having no offence history at all (Beasley, et al., 2009; Langevin, 2006; Gregoire, 2010). These findings suggest extremely low levels of specialisation among child abductors. As with offender age, the effect of such background on case outcome remains un-researched.

From this, a tentative profile of stranger child abduction can be drawn. However, little to no further analysis utilizing demographic information such as this has been carried out in existing studies. It is unclear the extent to which, e.g., that an offender’s background influences other features of their offences. Additionally, very little work has been done to examine how these features differ between attempted and completed cases. A detailed inquiry towards addressing this gap is the focus of Chapter 5.

3.4.2 Victim Resistance

Although not present in every academic study relating to stranger child abduction, one of the most commonly discussed issues surrounding this type of offence is what can be done to protect children from abduction, and, more specifically, how we can teach them to protect themselves and resist attackers. Historically delivered by various means in various venues, the main source of abduction prevention information children have available is delivered in schools (Best, 1987; Moran et. Al, 1997; Warden at. Al, 1997). This comes as part of the “Child Safety” curriculum, although until very recently such education was far more identifiable with the term “Stranger Danger”. The stranger danger message and image first appeared in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, achieving high levels of cultural penetration (Gentry, 1988), still conjuring vivid images when raised.

Although having eliminated some of the confusing messages featured in Stranger Danger lessons- principally ones suggesting that only strangers are a risk (NCMEC, 2011)- the main principles found in the advice given to children have remained more or less the same over the years. Unfortunately, there is no uniform child safety curriculum, with lessons being implemented on a
school-by-school or interest group by interest group basis (Newiss, 2014). However, there are some common themes present in these lessons (NCMEC, 2011). Considering Child Safety education in greater detail points towards the factors being taught to children as effective ways to resist abduction. The fact they are being taught also implies that there is a belief that these factors should result in a greater rate of successful. We can compare these expectations to the findings from real world cases.

As such, a review of more up-to-date information from modern “Child Safety” literature was carried out, examining the broad types of lessons and messages being communicated regarding what types of factors are being taught as protective factors that are likely to promote safety or to stop an attempted abduction from becoming a completed one. The main sources have been education materials from the UK and USA, a recent UK study into the way such lessons are given (Newiss, 2014), and various academic articles discussing the efficacy of various child safety education techniques from both the UK, USA, Canada and Australia— the messages from these Westernised areas appear to be consistent. In addition to classroom based lessons for schools, in the modern day a significant amount of information is available online and is intended to be taught to children directly by parents (e.g., Kidscape, 2013), or even to be consumed directly by children when they are online (e.g., UKCCIS, 2009)— hence the term “curriculum” implies more structure than is currently present.

Most literature and lessons that aim to teach children how to avoid an abduction feature lessons outlining multiple preventative actions that children can take. The most common lesson is the ability to say “no” (Tarasenko et. Al, 2010). This is sometimes coupled with lessons regarding bodily integrity, especially in more modern curriculum where methods protecting against child abduction and child abuse are taught together under the Child Safety umbrella (Kidspot Australia, 2013; Leclerc, Wortley & Smallbone, 2011). Furthermore, children are generally also taught to be assertive (Newiss, 2014), implying that a strong, direct, immediate response is preferred over indirect verbal resistance strategies.

Further to saying no, children are also often taught to run away from the would-be offender, usually towards a crowd, towards lights, or towards safe adults (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). At the very
least, they are told move away if they feel uncomfortable (Kidscape, 2013). Moving away from potential offenders has been described as “critical abduction avoidance behaviour” (Holcombe et. Al., 1995). Children are also usually encouraged to shout for help, with the aim of attracting attention of nearby authority figures or adults who can intervene or call for further help themselves (ibid, 1998). It is also sometimes recommended that children, when calling for help, also yell that the person targeting them is not their parent, in order to dissuade the assumption often made that an adult with a child is a trusted caregiver, even if said child appears to be having a tantrum (WCOT, 2009).

Children are generally encouraged to employ a composite of these actions, often under the catch-phrase-like heading of “Run-Yell-Tell”, a mnemonic device that is aimed to enable the child to encourage initiation of all three behaviours (Newiss, 2014; Tarasenko et. Al., 2010; Go Safe Scotland). This embodies the idea that children ought to use as many protective measures as they can, with the understanding that this will further reduce the risk of harm. Additionally, some curriculum teaches physical self-defence to children, including simple lessons on how to block and strike (Leclerc, Wortley & Smallbone, 2011; WCOT, 2009), or at least recommend children take self-defence classes (i.e., Netmums, 2014). This comes with the implied message that such means could repel abduction.

It also bears mentioning that children are also taught to employ these defensive means right away. As soon as they are unsure or uncomfortable, they are taught to enact protective behaviours assertively, even if it means not being polite (Tarasenko, et Al 2010). This has been identified as a difficult thing to communicate, with children tending to defer to adult authority by default (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). In the analysis below, this has generated a sub-heading of “immediate reaction” in order to measure whether victims implemented resistance measures right away or not. The impact of victim resistance throughout an offence has been subject to academic study, albeit in various contexts besides child abduction. This includes robbery (Cook, 1986; Kleck & DeLone, 1993), carjacking (e.g., Copes, Hochstetler & Cherbonneau, 2012), and violent assaults (e.g., Fritzon & Ridgway, 2001). The most widely studied area involves rape and sexual assault (e.g., Kleck & Sayles, 1990; Woodhams, Hollin, Bull & Cooke, 2011).
A number of findings from wider literature run counter to the assumptions present in Child Safety lessons that resistance prevents crime. For instance, some studies found that victim resistance is actually more likely to cause the offender to become more aggressive- Cusson (1998) refers to the process of “negative reciprocity”, where resistance only leads to heightened aggression or control.

Verbal resistance in particular has been identified as having a tendency to increase offender aggression in stranger rapes (Ullman & Knight, 1993). This runs very much counter to the logic of Child Safety lessons, where saying “no” is encouraged. However, on a more careful reading, the verbal resistance being referred to in the rape resistance study was employed as the rape was underway, and involved pleading and crying—behaviours that do not overlap directly with child abduction. This highlights how the literature on rape and sexual assault of adults, even by strangers, may have limited transferability to discussions of stranger child abduction.

Not all studies relating to stranger rape found that resistance had negative outcomes. Bachman and Carmody (1994) found that both physical and verbal resistance resulted in lessened risk of injury compared to not resisting in stranger assaults; however they made things worse when the victim knew the offender. The only exception was where the offender brandished a weapon. Quinsey and Upfold (1985) found that screaming and calling for help was strongly associated with avoiding being raped when victimized by strangers at outdoor locations, a finding far more in line with Child Safety messages on stranger abductions, which tend to deal with offences occurring outside and promote calling for aid.

It can only be stressed again here that the overlap between the present study and the experiences of adult rape victims is imperfect. The primary issue is that most studies have dealt with adult victims, and only a small number examine stranger offences specifically. Still, the point can be made that findings as to the effect of resistance have been somewhat mixed in terms of how it impacts on offender behaviour and likelihood that the victim can avoid harm.

This present thesis represents an opportunity to more closely examine the relationship between victim resistance and offence outcome, in order to assess the extent to which such
lessons and target behaviours are viable, and whether any of the findings indicating that resistance could put children at greater risk can be replicated. Chapter 6 conducts this examination.

3.4.3 Protecting Victims: Guardians, Surveillance, and Third Party Intervention

Victim resistance may be the most common message arising from child safety literature, but it is not the only one. The second key message in Child Safety involves teaching children that they ought not to travel alone when possible. Young children especially should be accompanied by trusted adults at all times, and older children ought to travel with peers. This assumes that the presence of multiple actors deters offenders from targeting a child. In terms of criminological literature, this is a form of target hardening that increases an offender’s risk to reward calculations, or prevents them from viewing the target as a suitable one (Smallbone & Wortley, 2008). In addition, it is assumed that an adult will be better able to take positive, effective action and protect the children under their care. Types of guardianship besides direct accompaniment are also cited as being potentially useful. Members of the public, or “safe adults”, are mentioned as a source of protection that children can turn to or seek out when they are being victimized (Newiss, 2014). To borrow Felson’s terminology (1998), these safe adults would be “general” guardians.

There have been recent developments in research that point towards accompaniment as potentially being of a great deal of interest for examination. One of the most interesting findings regarding child accompaniment was found as part of a victimization survey carried out by Gallagher, Bradford and Pease (2008) of school children in North-East UK. They found that 2 in every 3 children who had been a victim of stranger child abduction- attempted or completed- were accompanied at the time of the offence, usually by other children but also
sometimes (10% of cases) by adults as well. Recent survey findings pertaining to victim accompaniment and robbery of children on the journey to school (Hayden & Dlugosz, 2012) showed that children held a general perception that being accompanied led to greater security, yet in practice almost twice as many children became victims of robbery whilst being accompanied by similarly aged peers. These findings refute the commonly communicated message that being accompanied by children and adults is a very strong means by which to reduce abduction victimisation.

Due to the dearth of research on stranger child abduction specifically, it becomes necessary to examine research from related offending domains in order to ascertain how guardianship operates in dissuading offending against children. Findings from existing studies relating to childhood victimization have reported varying effects of guardianship features, resulting in mixed messages regarding which types of guardianship ought to be considered capable.

Gallagher, Bradford and Pease (2008) found that 2 in every 3 children who had been a victim of stranger child abduction (attempted or completed) were accompanied at the time of the offence, usually by other children but also sometimes (10.00% of cases) by adults as well. In spite of children being subject to a higher level of guardianship than ever due to a combination of the ubiquity of surveillance technology and an ever-growing parental fear of abduction resulting in near constant monitoring and accompaniment (Dixie, 1999; Foster et al, 2015; Sweeney & Von-Hagen, 2016), children do not seem to be at any less risk of abduction than in the past (Mackett, 2011), and are perhaps even more at risk (Newiss, 2016).

It has also been pointed out that a notable proportion of child sexual abuse, which is in some ways mechanically similar to child abduction, (see, e.g., Boudreaux, Lord & Etter, 2000) occurs in settings where there are ostensibly high levels of supervision, with even well
trained staff directly responsible for children’s welfare failing to prevent the circumstances in which abuse can occur (Smallbone, Marshall & Wortley, 2013, p. 202). Abuse is also often perpetrated by offenders who themselves would normally be considered as sources of effective guardianship, i.e., coaches, pastors, and so on (Leclerc, Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). Findings such as these seem to indicate that accompaniment and surveillance are of limited use in certain circumstances. This perspective is supported by research showing that, in the context of robbery, children do little to defend their peers when they are approached by an offender (Hayden & Dlugosz, 2012). Given that stranger child abduction tends to occur in similar circumstances with an offender approaching children, (e.g., Boudreaux et al., 1999), such a finding gives plausible reason to believe that being accompanied by other children may offer only limited protection to victims facing abduction, despite such accompaniment being taught as a means to reduce victimization.

Conversely, several studies examining child sexual abuse have found that guardianship, particularly in the form of accompaniment, dissuades offending (Elliott, Browne & Kilcoyne 1995; Leclerc, Wortley & Smallbone, 2011). Interviews with perpetrators of child sexual abuse found that it was desirable to offenders for their victim to be alone (Elliott et al, 1995). In particular, offenders specified victims alone in bathrooms and alone while walking to school as particularly desirable, but if necessary they would utilize strategies intended to isolate a child, even temporarily, from any peers or guardians (Elliot et al, 1995). In fact, the offenders themselves recommended that children be accompanied or perform activities in groups if possible. In particular it was recommended that children never walk alone to school as this was cited by offenders as an ideal circumstance in which to target a victim. These findings imply that guardianship can be very effective in preventing abduction.
As can be seen, there is disparity among findings as to which types of guardianship have a real, tangible association with preventing stranger child abduction, and which have simply been assumed to do so. This is further complicated by the lack of research examining stranger child abduction specifically. This gap in research necessitates urgent assessment of the types of guardianship that could help to protect children, which is carried out in Chapter 7.

3.4.4 Offender Behaviour, Approach to Crime, and Modus Operandi

The literature pertaining to modus operandi present in stranger child abduction is very limited and, as mentioned, deals only with an offender’s approach to crime, rather than MO as a whole, even when purporting to discuss MO overall. Lanning and Burgess’ (1995) is one of the only papers containing a discussion of MOs utilized by abducting offenders. Lanning discuss the various MOs of types of child molesters who abduct children. Preferential offenders are those who have a genuine sexual preference for children, normally with accompanying preference for age and gender. When they offend, they tend to have a particular type of victim in mind. They are less likely to follow a prescribed MO, and more likely to have a preference for non-coercive means of offending in order to maintain the fantasy of consent. Conversely, situational offenders are those who do not have a particular preference for children but will victimize them in certain circumstances or due to a child’s relative availability and vulnerability. They are considered to be more thought-driven than preferential offenders, and will follow a prescribed MO only to a point, being better able to adapt should problems, resistance or unexpected circumstances arise (Lanning & Burgess, 1995; Lanning, 2010). Unfortunately, their treatment of the issue is fairly brief. Few other
studies enter into structured discussion regarding MO in stranger child abduction, with those doing so examining only methods of approach. Nevertheless, these factors pertaining to approach are relevant to MO, and as such we can analyse these findings for clues as to the nature these offences.

Finkelhor, Hammer and Sedlak (2002), whose findings pertain to all non-family cases, not just child abduction, gather limited information related to MO, by examining the means by which the child was moved. They found that 37% were carried away by the offender, 28% were moved by vehicle, and 35% walked beside the offender. Carrying implies coercion, whereas walking is likely to be more associated with a victim being lured away, although it is also possible for a victim to be threatened into compliance.

One of the few pieces of work dealing with stranger child abduction that made specific mention of Modus Operandi was carried out by Tedisco & Paludi (1996). They identified two key trends in particular regarding how stranger offenders approach their victims, and, citing the work of Burgess and Holmstrom (1979), label these as blitz attacks and the confidence approach (see also Holmstrom & Burgess, 1980).

These two typologies will be familiar to those with knowledge of modus operandi in cases of rape, with these being commonly cited approaches to that offence. Use of these typologies is backed up by the far more detailed- yet incredibly specific- study by Hanfland, Keppel and Weis (1997) who examined child abductions ending in homicide. They discussed ways in which the offender establishes control over the victim as part of their work, finding that a majority of cases involved what they refer to as a “blitz” interaction. Blitz refers to a sudden, highly coercive approach to gaining control over the victim. They found that a majority of their sample utilized such means, with 62% of simply assaulting the victim, with a further 3% gaining control by way of threat (the threat being of assaulting the victim).
Conversely, they found that the remainder of offenders used more subtle means to gain control. 17% used a deception of some kind. The authors cited examples from their sample of offenders commonly offering some incentive or requesting help, for instance, offering the victim to come and see their puppies in order to get the victim into their vehicle. They also found that approach coincided with more vulnerable victims, particularly when the victim was younger.

Although far from overwhelming, this review shows some consistent statistical support for the typologies of “blitz” and “lure” as the key overarching approaches present in stranger child abduction cases. The evidence from other studies and sources regarding MO in stranger child abduction is, unfortunately, based mostly on assumption. Chapter 8 is dedicated to examining the role of offender behaviour in stranger child abduction by conducting a more detailed inquiry into the components of these existing archetypes associated with stranger child abduction, and then analysing the database of stranger child abduction cases in order ascertain the extent to which the behaviours exhibited in practice conform to these archetypes and the extent to which particular approaches are or are not statistically associated with case outcome.

### 3.5 Criminological Theory, Sex Offending, and Stranger Child Abduction

This short section briefly discusses the potential relevance of criminological theory to stranger child abduction.

#### 3.5.1: Routine Activity Theory
The theory that links most directly to stranger child abduction, and which has been cited as a likely mechanism, by which such offences occur, is routine activity theory. Routine Activity Theory (RAT) is the theory, developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), that the co-occurrence of three factors is highly likely to instigate a crime: a motivated and capable offender; a suitable target; and a lack of guardianship over that target. Routine activity theory had generally been applied to crimes against objects, such as theft and property crime. It was felt that violent crimes would be “too spontaneous” to apply RAT since such conflicts are often borne out of arguments. The theory was later adapted, however, to include violent crime that could happen during certain routine activities, for instance, young men whose routine activities intersect on a night out could fulfil the RAT requirements and result in an altercation (Kennedy & Forde, 1990). It was consistently found that offenders in these circumstances would select targets they perceived as weak. In the stranger child abduction context, such an observation is interesting since, as noted by Beyer et al (2009), one of the key motivations (the other being sexual interest in children) for child abduction includes the relative vulnerability of the child victims. Smallbone and Wortley (2006) also report stranger child molesters looking for characteristics such as compliance, naiveté and a trusting nature in potential victims.

Routine activity theory was directly mentioned alongside stranger child abduction by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1998), who recognized that children at the age of 10 were most likely to be successfully abducted by a stranger. It is thought that this occurs due to the overlap between a child being granted increased autonomy, allowing them to be out in the world unsupervised, while also remaining somewhat naïve and less able to defend themselves. As such, children of this age make a desirable target for a motivated offender, who can capitalize on the offending opportunity due to the lack of guardianship provided by absence of oversight.

This connection was reiterated again in 2009 by Heide, Beauregard and Pease, who hypothesized routine activity theory was an essential means by which to understand stranger child abduction and the means by which to prevent it.
Routine Activity Theory has been used to effectively analyse other offences that share conceptual features with stranger child abduction, most notably the grooming of children (Leclerc et al., 2010), but also offences against adults such as stalking (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999) and sexual offending (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). Such a theory can also be used to explain how useful various features of the environment might be to differentiating attempted and completed cases, i.e., the presence of bystanders (Banyard, 2011), environmental layout of buildings (Hollis-Peel, Reynald & Welsh, 2012) and the presence of other children (Hayden & Dlugosz, 2012, in the context of robbery and assault against children).

Given the apparent relevance of Routine Activity Theory to stranger child abduction, and the utility of this theory for analysing similar offences, this thesis will apply it to evaluate the effectiveness of factors that could potentially be instrumental in distinguishing attempted and completed cases. Specifically, routine activity theory will be used in Chapter 7 to ascertain the utility of guardianship, accompaniment and surveillance.

3.5.2: Sex Offending and Stranger Child Abduction

It should be noted that there is evidence that stranger child abduction is, by and large, a sexual domain offence that shares common features with other sex offences. Asdigan, Finkelhor and Sedlak (1995) made this connection very early in the development of stranger child abduction literature, finding that although abduction could occur for a variety of reasons, sexual motivation was the typical reason for such offences taking place. This perspective, which has been assumed by subsequent studies (e.g., Hanfland et al., 1997), was recently reaffirmed by Newiss and Traynor (2013) who found that a majority of stranger child abductors appear to have an underlying sexual motivation for their offending, and by Tillyer, Tillyer and Kelsay (2015) who found that stranger kidnappers were more likely than
other kidnappers to have a sexual motive for offending. For this reason, this thesis will similarly assume that stranger child abduction can be considered a sexual domain offence, unless there is evidence that a given offence has an alternative motive.

3.5.7 Key Features of the Stranger Child Abduction Literature

Having conducted a chronological, critical review of the literature on stranger child abduction, and gone on to examine key themes in the child abduction literature and broader literature, it is possible to identify a number of key threads of thinking that ought to be pursued in this thesis, to highlight notable gaps that ought to be addressed, and take on board important lessons learned by previous studies.

Firstly, and most importantly, the potential significance of comparing attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction has been raised by a number of recent studies. Newiss and Fairbrother (2006) showed how even a simple comparison can produce substantial variance in victim profiles, whilst Gallagher et al (2008) have called for future studies to examine stranger child abduction cases according to outcome. This comparison is the fulcrum point on which this thesis rests, and will be discussed in great detail in subsequent pages.

Secondly, and supplemental to the first point, a number of factors commonly discussed in relation to stranger child abduction are identified. In order to adequately differentiate attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction, it is necessary to identify key case features that can be compared to one another. This thesis argues that key features for comparison include the situational characteristics of victim resistance and guardianship over victims. These have been identified as key messages being communicated to children and their caregivers as being effective means by which to prevent or mitigate abduction, and
that do so with little regard for empirical basis to support the notion that are indeed preventative.

Thirdly, as Boudreaux et al (1999) showed, there appears to be a significant relationship between onset of school attendance, and victimization by stranger for sexual purposes in child abduction. This highlights the importance of routine activities and opportunism in this offence, with the concept of capable guardianship being central to understanding why certain cases are attempted while others are completed. This also reiterates the importance of demographic features of the victim in determining case features.

Fourthly, the features of an offender’s criminal background appears to be important in determining the nature of abduction. Beyer et al. (2003) found that offenders responsible for child abduction tend to have a range of offending backgrounds, with generalized offenders, non-offenders and chronic specialized offenders all being represented. This background appears to have a significant impact on the way in which these offenders behave, how they select victims, and how they approach offending. This also highlights the need to examine why offenders offend in the first place, or why they offend in a certain instance.

Fifthly, the strategies used by offenders to facilitate abduction remains a conspicuous gap. Research suggests that offenders can be largely categorized as lure offenders or blitz offenders (see, e.g., Hanfland et al., 1997 above), however, the practical methods utilized by these offenders have largely been established via anecdote and remain poorly understood. This thesis attempts to illuminate the approaches offenders use to carry out stranger child abduction.

Sixthly, although not all offenders have specialized sex offending backgrounds, there does appear to be a strong connection between stranger child abduction and sex
offending. This connection has been acknowledged by multiple authors (Newiss & Traynor, 2013; Knight et al., 1998). The motivations and cognitive processes underlying stranger child abduction, therefore, can be reasonably assumed to overlap with existing literature on sexual offending. This thesis will follow this line of thought, and will conceptualize stranger child abduction as being in the same offending domain as sex offences.

Finally, the importance of examining stranger child abduction in light of existing criminological and psychological theory is clear. Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999) were able to make very useful observations of the relationship between victim age and child abduction trends by referring to routine activity theory. This approach was verified by Heide et al. (2008) as having been a very successful route via which to consider such offending. This thesis will consider the extent to which there are any ways in which theoretical criminology perspectives can reflect on and explain stranger child abduction, that can go on to be tested in the main body of this thesis. Particular reference will be made to routine activity theory, given previous success. This exercise will enable the author to answer whether further application of theory can be useful for developing understanding of stranger child abduction, and, furthermore, whether such application can in any way move forward theoretical perspectives.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has critically analysed the existing landscape of research on and related to stranger child abduction, with a view to identifying important features of the literature, as well as to highlight key gaps in knowledge, that can be usefully expanded on in this thesis. From this review, three key positions that exist in relation to stranger child abduction can be identified that form the basis for this thesis.
The first position is that stranger child abduction ought to be analysed according to whether offences are attempted or completed. It is argued that doing so will allow for work in this field to become more pragmatic, and that there is evidence indicating that this is the next, most logical and most useful evolution of stranger child abduction type. The first section of this chapter, then, is dedicated to outlining and defending this position.

The second position is that, historically, a number of features of stranger child abduction have been highlighted as being important to understanding the offence. These include factors that have been useful in developing existing types of stranger child abduction, or have been presented as desirable features of stranger child abduction that ought to be understood in order to aide in prevention. It is argued that these features ought to be studied utilizing the attempted-completed distinction, which can usefully develop understanding of the role of these factors in determining the outcome of stranger child abduction cases. However, the evolution of current understanding of stranger child abduction has been complex. In order to identify which features of the literature are most pertinent and ought to be utilized to facilitate the comparison of attempted and completed cases, it is necessary to embark on a chronological, historical account of the literature, in order to critically assess which points ought to be pursued.

The third position is that there are criminological and other academic theories and perspectives that can usefully be applied to stranger child abduction. The most relevant of these are identified for use in this thesis in order to test whether the attempted-completed distinction can be elevated beyond purely descriptive use, and to ascertain whether it also has explanatory power.

In order to adhere to this third position, this review offers a number of pertinent avenues for research that can facilitate a thorough examination of how attempted and
completed cases of stranger child abduction differ. These avenues are the basis for the four studies that make up the main body of this thesis. The first and most obvious is to **compare demographic features of victims and offenders** involved in such incidents. The second is to analyse situational variables that can be hypothesized to strongly correlate offence outcome, particularly **victim resistance**, as well as the presence of **guardianship features in the environment**. A separate study will be carried out on each of these. The study on victim resistance will be linked with perspectives on teaching children to be safe. Given the connection between guardianship and routine activity theory, this section will make an in-depth consideration of the applicability of theory to stranger child abduction, and use concepts from routine activity theory to assess the success of protective factors in preventing stranger child abduction. The final perspective is to examine features of the **offender’s approach to crime**, in order to assess which approaches allow offenders to complete their offences. After having analysed each of these areas, it will become possible to answer whether the attempted-completed distinction is a useful way to analyse stranger child abduction, and to address how such a distinction affects such incidents. It will additionally be possible to assess the efficacy of categorizing stranger child abductions under the headings of “blitz” and “lures”, and to suggest an alternative framework if appropriate.

### 3.6.1 Main Arguments

Based on this literature review, the key arguments for this thesis are as follows:

- Stranger child abduction is best analysed according to whether the case was an attempted child abduction, or a completed child abduction.
- The most important factors relating to stranger child abduction and its prevention are:
  - Victim, Offender and Offence Characteristics
The presence of victim resistance

The presence of guardianship and surveillance during the offence

The offender’s modus operandi.

- Testing these four key factors according to whether the offence was completed or attempted has the dual benefits on testing the efficacy of using the attempted-completed distinction in the first place, as well as testing the extent to which each of the factors influence case outcome and can therefore be useful for prediction or prevention.

This results in the research questions:

1. Do attempted cases of stranger child abduction have a distinct profile from that of completed cases of stranger child abduction?

2. Does comparing attempted cases of stranger child abduction with completed cases of stranger child abduction enable the identification of any distinct patterns that can be used to inform existing knowledge and/or practice?

This chapter aims to provide support for examining these positions, arguing that there exist either notable gaps or promising trends in existing literature indicating towards these as a suitable way in which to study stranger child abduction.

It has been strongly established that the distinction between attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction is an unexplored avenue for analysis with significant explanatory potential. The remainder of this thesis is dedicated to exploring this emergent type and assessing its utility. This literature review also identified a number of relevant key issues relating to stranger child abduction. It has traced the history of the offence of stranger child abduction, explaining how it became a distinct type of offending, and drawing attention to key debates, developments and disputes regarding the constitution of the offence. It has
highlighted how stranger child abduction has faced a number of issues since its inception, mostly regarding a lack of consistency, with authors having frequently failed to distinguish acquaintance and stranger child abductions, resulting in them being inappropriately conflated. The chapter has established key features of stranger child abduction that are important for further analysis. It has been shown that features of the offence, such as victim age, can have a strong impact on the profile of the offender, their crime scene behaviour, and their offending motivation. This finding provides further impetus for examining factors that affect case outcomes.
Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

Chapter Summary

This chapter will outline the methodology underlying this research project, as well as giving an account of the methods utilized to carry out the study, offering justification for their use over the alternatives available. It should be stated at the outset that this project has undergone several key changes throughout its duration that have ultimately necessitated a shift in the underlying rationale. For this reason, a candid and detailed explanation of the original outline and the transition to the current format will be included.

The section begins by discussing the central role of methodology in research. It presents key arguments in favour of a positivistic approach and an interpretivstic approach in order to establish which approach best favours this thesis. The practical methods utilized to carry out the main body of the project are then outlined, with information on sample selection and measures taken to ensure validity and ethical practice detailed. Additionally, practical issues faced in accessing data, and the problems that arose from this, are highlighted.

When detailing one's methods and methodologies, it is important, foremost, to keep in mind what it is that the research wishes to discover. The primary research question is to ascertain which factors, if any, differentiate cases of stranger child abduction which are attempted from those that are completed.
4.1: Methodology

Silverman (2005) defines methodology as “a general approach to studying research topics”. One’s methodology can be thought of as the overall philosophy and reasoning behind why certain research methods, which can be described as practical research techniques, are used. If the methodology is the framework, then the research design is the blueprint and the methods are the tools. Methodology explains why certain approaches were used when the material could have been examined in several ways, and why one data type was used when other varieties could also have been used to answer the same or a similar research question. This decision should be justified based on the aims and goals of the individual project in question (Patton, 1990).

As Silverman (2005) explains, most data sets could potentially be gathered or analysed in multiple ways, each with its own merits and downsides. Similarly, Patton explains that every approach features some kind of trade-off that the researcher must consider and justify (Patton, 1990). The researcher has the responsibility of selecting the approach that seems most appropriate, and to explain why the method or methods selected were utilized in favour of other potentially viable techniques. It is not necessary to prove that one method is conclusively better or superior, but rather to explain the usefulness and utility of the chosen approach in the context of the project in question.

This section will first examine the various methodological frameworks available that could be relevant to the current study and from this set out to consider which methods are most suitable for the project. It will refer back to the main project and its aims frequently to provide commentary and context for the eventual reasoning behind the methodology and methods selected. Ultimately, this projected addressed its research questions using a mostly
quantitative design. Cases of stranger child abduction were identified using publically available media reports and legal case reports. These were coded to identify key features of each incident, and to distinguish attempted and completed cases. Chapters 5 to 8 denote the studies that arose from this examination, as it was possible to identify clear thematic issues for comparison. This chapter explains how and why this approach was used and which alternatives were considered.

4.1.2: Broad Considerations- Philosophical Frameworks and Answering the Research Question

Methodology, given its status as an underlying philosophy for action, relies to a large extent on one’s view of the world (Morgan, 2007). In the social science sphere, there has been much discussion among academics and researchers as to which methodological view is most appropriate. This discussion has gone back and forth over the last few decades. To put this debate in simple terms, argument has broadly centred around the merits of the school of positivism on one hand, and the school of interpretivism on the other. These could be considered the two “extremes” of methodological reasoning, with many solutions arising in between the two, and some other creative methodological outlooks arising that attempt to address or re-direct the concerns of both schools.

4.1.2a: Positivism

The school of positivism is strongly associated with the scientific method and scientific inquiry. This outlook rests on the idea that the world and its phenomena are independent of the interference, outlook or interpretations of humans; it is an objective method of examination (Lapan, 2003). There is assumed to be a single real world governed by a set of predictable laws, with these laws being explainable via research (Rolfe, 2006).
Positivism is valued in that it assists in viewing the world with a degree of predictability (Howe, 1988). This scientific approach is about finding constant and repeatable patterns and interactions between variables. Positivism rests on the idea that objective reality is just that, objective, existing independently of the researcher and anyone else, and that data gathered about reality is a true reflection of said reality, i.e., is universally true (Reason & Torbert, 2001). This lends itself towards fulfilling the important research requirements of validity, that researchers are actually measuring what they think they are, and reliability, that research findings can be replicated in a predictable fashion should the same steps be taken again (Weber, 2004).

Given that it assumes consistency and universality, positivism is focused on measuring things, and observing objective phenomenon with a view to uncovering correlations and relationships between variables. As a result of this, studies based in the positivistic paradigm are highly likely to use quantitative methods, with the terms sometimes even being used interchangeably (i.e., Morgan, 2007). The quantitative methods of inquiry are highly concerned with having control over the study, and following a process. Control over variables is paramount in quantitative research. Researchers should be able to clearly demonstrate which is their dependant variable and independent variable, and their quantities should be known (Neuman, 2005). Changes made by the researcher to the independent variable are very controlled, and from these changes one observes what effect this has on the dependant variable, also known as the outcome variable. Sampling is also very important to quantitative research, with it being very important to include participants who reflect the overall population under examination (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013). Such research also places a large emphasis on the importance of validity and reliability. These are seen as
the cornerstones of scientific inquiry, with research being required to demonstrate these before being considered trustworthy (Hagan, 1997).

4.1.2b: Interpretivism

Interpretivism is generally depicted as being opposed to positivism (Schwandt, 1994). The interpretivistic outlook supports the opinion that reality is not objective, and that any understanding of it is actually filtered through the interpretations of individual people (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This conception of reality does not lend itself well to empirical measurement as it is subject to change based on the underlying thoughts, perceptions and biases of individuals and groups (Willis, 1995). Unlike positivists, who would view this perceptive element as highly biasing and try to eliminate it, interpretivism embraces this aspect of human understanding, with the focus of their inquiry on uncovering how these different understandings come about. Each understanding is seen as an acceptable and equally valid interpretation of reality, such as it is, and the process by which each outlook is arrived at becomes a subject of inquiry itself (Tuli, 2011). Interpretivism is strongly associated with qualitative methods of inquiry, particularly in-depth interviews, open questionnaires, and ethnographies, which have the aim not of counting or measuring phenomena, but rather uncovering hidden meanings, themes and trends among the words and actions of the subjects under examination.

Saying interpretivism is the opposite of positivism (which is something of a generalization in the first place) is not to say that those things that are important to positivist inquiry are not also relevant to interpretivistic studies. For instance, although the same methods might not be used, effort should still be made to make the study representative, and barriers to representativeness should be highlighted (Lin, 1998; Williams, 2000).
As Morehouse (2011) explains, interpretivism rests on the principles of *hermeneutics* and *phenomenology*. Hermeneutics is defined as initial consideration of a “big picture”, followed by examination of how the smaller, individual parts of the whole make up and interact with the overall item. This causes the researchers to re-evaluate the whole, which in turn allows identification of additional relevant component parts. This process of evaluation can be repeated to the point of extreme refinement. Phenomenology is a term describing the examination of “an experience as lived”, i.e., examining an event from the point of view of the individuals or groups who went through or are going through it (Moorhouse, 2011).

### 4.1.3: Answering the Research Question

As established in the literature review, the research questions for this thesis are as follows:

1. Do attempted cases of stranger child abduction have a district profile from that of completed cases of stranger child abduction?
2. Does comparing attempted cases of stranger child abduction with completed cases of stranger child abduction enable the identification of any distinct patterns that can be used to inform existing knowledge and/or practice?

Ascertaining where the current project is situated in terms of the methodological outlooks available depends on the kind of information the research question demands. As established, the research question for this project necessitates that there a comparison be made between attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction.
There appear to be two clear options to achieve this, each requiring a different methodological focus. The first option would be to gather statistical information on a set of stranger child abduction cases, comparing these objectively based on whether they were attempted or completed, and ascertaining which factors were statistically associated with outcome. This approach will require an objective outlook reliant on numbers, and presumes some level of predictability. As such, this approach would be positivistic.

The second option would be to speak directly to offenders who have perpetrated stranger child abduction offences, and inquire with them as to their experiences and opinions of factors that had an impact on their ability to abduct. This option is far more reliant on the personal, subjective feelings and constructions of individual offenders, which would make this approach far more interpretivistic.

From this choice, the required method would become clear. The choice of method flows from what the researcher wishes to uncover (Seale, 1998). In the positivistic option would demand a set of quantitative data, meaning it would be necessary to analyse a series of cases of stranger child abduction, quantifying their characteristics and comparing the sample using statistical analyses. The interpretivistic option would necessitate use of qualitative data, which would be best retrieved from as direct a source as possible, which, in this instance, would be best retrieved from offender’s themselves via in-depth interview.

4.1.3a Situating the Project

Deciding on an agreeable outlook depends, to a large extent, on what the research is wishing to uncover and what each outlook will allow us to uncover. In other words, asking what it is the researcher wishes to know is key in ascertaining how to methodologically
situate a project. Lin (1998) explains that these respective methods of analysis examine somewhat different phenomenon: positivism is about examining causal relations, whereas interpretivism is about examining causal mechanisms. Causal relations refer to factors that appear to be consistently related to one another in a cause and effect relationship. These emphasise consistency and prevalence, i.e., how often do these things appear together and result in predictable outcomes? On the other hand, causal mechanisms are about the actual reasons why these things are related to one another, and the other factors that drive these relationships, and how individuals justify, reconcile and think about these relationships.

For the present purposes, there was a strong case to be made for either outlook. Given the research question, the inquiry does appear to be about causal relationships, i.e., which factors directly impact on the outcome of stranger child abduction cases, however, examining causal mechanisms can provide insight into why these relationships exist is in the first place, and would also be extremely useful. Particularly when examining a type of behaviour so distinct and socially problematic as stranger child abduction, knowledge of underling reasoning can be extremely useful, with first-hand information being more able to address this than claims made by observing objective trends in a dataset. In other words, it was initially decided that each approach was equally valid and of equal academic interest.

The researcher came to the conclusion that either method for examining stranger child abduction would be equally valid. As a result, the plan for carrying out this project incorporated both approaches, making for a mixed-methods approach. The initial plan was to gather quantitative data that would be used to examine statistical trends, and also to interview offenders in order to gather information on the perspectives of stranger child abductors regarding their own behaviour and decision making. This approach was thought to be advantageous as it was acknowledged at the outset of initiating this project that there may be
difficulties in accessing either type of information: offenders may be difficult to access, while records featuring quantitative information access would likely be kept by gatekeepers and, as noted in the literature review, may not be sufficiently organized to allow for proper analysis.

As such, the project was designed to account for both approaches with the view of ensuring the greatest possible chance of uncovering a sufficient amount of data to analyse.

The only possible, ethically viable way to interview offenders would to access offenders currently in prison. This would have to be done through the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). It was not possible to consider any alternative to this approach, as it would not have been ethically appropriate to, i.e., interview offenders who had been released from prison, as part of a PGR project. Advice was taken from the University ethics, the Faculty Ethics Committee, and from the supervision team that interviews with offenders outside of incarceration would have difficulty receiving ethical approval as they would present a heightened personal risk to the researcher, due to the requirement to presume that participants would be vulnerable in nature, and due to the risk of such an interview potentially interfering with post-release therapy.

With regards to gathering quantitative information, a number of contingencies were in place. It was felt that gathering data from all sources available would be the best approach, with these being useful to triangulate one another. The most obvious avenue for gathering such data was to request police records, however, it quickly became apparent that such an approach was untenable due to the way in which police records were organized. Recording was such that abductions could not be differentiated from other types of crime and it was also impossible to discern either the victim-offender relationship or whether the abduction element of the offence was attempted or completed. The next option was to utilize sources available from legal sources. This proved to be a useful approach, however, since not all
cases that go to trial are transcribed, additional material was required. It has become increasingly commonplace and desirable for studies to utilized publicly available materials such as media sources, with this approach being used to build quantitative databases to help analyse topics such as terrorism (LaFree & Dugan, 2007; LaFree, 2010). This archival approach is also being used to study other issues regarding missing people where direct access to official records is challenging; Newiss (publication pending) is conducting a study of people who go missing following a night out by utilizing media articles that refer to coroner reports. As such, it was deemed appropriate to also utilize media sources, with this having the additional advantage of being the first study to use such sources to analyse stranger child abduction, or indeed any type of child abduction.

Hence, it was felt that utilizing quantitative information or qualitative information were equally viable. As expected, given the aforementioned difficulties that were seen as likely to occur, the decision on which direction to take was made by external factors. The option to take a more interpretivistic approach relied on the availability of participants for interview. As will be discussed in additional below, it was not possible to carry out such research in the timeframe available. This made the positivistic, quantitative option the most viable. As such, it was necessary to shift the project fully towards the gathering and analysis of quantitative data. It was possible to somewhat acknowledge the original design of the project, as the media and court records contained some measure of qualitative information which was used to briefly analyse offender verbiage (see Chapter 8).

On further reflection, it is felt that this direction is, in fact, the most logical. Despite its shortcomings, a quantitative design would seem to be a suitable fit given the aims of the current project. The primary research question, asking which factors differentiate attempted from completed cases, provides a clear set of outcome variables to examine, and demands
that researchers methodically compare various input factors to ascertain their effect. Testing for the effects of various factors present in attempted cases compared to completed cases, logically, would be best achieved using quantitative methods, and would be reliant on having positivistic underpinnings to assume some level of predictability. Particularly, being able to produce statistically significant results is immensely desirable, particularly given the fledgling nature of knowledge in this field as discussed in the literature review. Even finding that assumed interactions are not significant would constitute interesting findings.

Ultimately, because such a small amount of research has been done on stranger child abduction and because it remains a relatively new topic for study, a positivistic approach intended to uncover some measure of the objective, testable reality of this type offending, is highly desirable. It would be most useful to uncover causal relations in advance of discussing causal mechanisms. It would be most helpful to carry out quantitative, largely positivistic research in advance of pursuing more in-depth qualitative research at a later point. It should be reiterated that this is not seen as a drawback, as all options available for analysing stranger child abduction are viewed by this author as both valuable and novel.

4.2 Initial Development of the Thesis

Having decided on the broad methodological outlook, and settled on the way in which stranger child abduction cases ought to be compared, attention can now be turned to the research design and choice of methods.

It has been mentioned above that positivism tends to be associated with quantitative designs and methods, whereas interpretivism tends to be associated with qualitative methods. Asking how these methods are being used in each paradigm can be a useful way of
understanding what exactly each outlook hopes to achieve, or rather, what they aim to uncover.

As the name suggests, quantitative methods focus on reporting phenomena in numerical terms, i.e., it attempts to quantify. It is strongly associated with measuring data, and favours material that can be objectively observed in some manner. In particular, experimental design is considered to be highly positivistic, placing an emphasis on control of variables above other considerations, and with a focus on rigour and repeatability.

However, these methods can cross-over to a great extent. In particular, qualitative methods can be used to quantify something, i.e., one can code items in an interview in such a way that they tell us about prevalence (Lin, 1998).

“The differences in interpretivist and positivist qualitative work thus are differences in the questions one asks of the data and the types of conclusions one wishes to draw. Both forms of qualitative work look for details about preferences, motivations and actions that are not easily made numeric. Positivist work, however, seeks to identify those details with propositions that then can be tested or identified in other cases, while interpretive work seeks to combine those details into systems of belief whose manifestations are specific to a case. While both in the end can comment about general principles or relationships, positivist work does so by identifying general patterns, while interpretivist work does so by showing how the general pattern looks in practice.” (Lin, 1998, p. 163).
As such, even in a largely quantitative piece of work, there can be a place for qualitative methods. With this in mind, the remainder of this section considers the possible practical methods available to enable the analysis of attempted and completed stranger child abduction offences.

4.2.1: Original Design and Transition

As outlined, the method eventually used in this study was determined by a series of external events and time constraints. The following section details how the original plan for the project was developed, and traces how this plan changed and transitioned into the eventual design that was followed. It is important to keep in mind that this is not conceived as a shortcoming of the research, and that both the original and modified design are considered to be of significant academic interest and were both deemed to be suitable for the study of this topic. See Figure 4.1 for the timeline of these events.

The original design of the thesis was to take a dual approach, gathering both qualitative and quantitative information on offenders. Offenders currently incarcerated in the UK would be interviewed, while at the same time records from all available sources, including from police, from legal sources and from media sources, would be analysed to produce quantitative information pertaining to each subject being interviewed, as well as to procure general information on stranger child abduction in the UK.

However, given that reaching such offenders would be difficult in the timeframe of most studies, it was decided to pursue this as the primary means of inquiry. This was done as, with this design, quantitative records from the police, media and from legal cases would naturally be utilized to identify offenders suitable for interview in the first place, and,
following access, it was expected that supplementary information pertaining to each offender would be made available, and could subsequently be utilized for additional quantitative analysis. As such, by the time interviews had been conducted, a wealth of quantitative materials would have been available.
October 2013- May 2014
- Commencement of PhD Project
- Identification of research questions
- Original study design devised and materials created
- Ethical approval sought in April 2014

June 2014- October 2014
- Ethical approval received from University on June 25th 2014.
- Ethical application sent to NOMS by end of June 2014
- NOMS reject application on 10th September. Revised application resubmitted September 24th 2014.
- In the meantime, coding work is carried out using media and legal

November 2014- March 2015
- Ethical approval granted, subject to amendments, in December 2014. Amendments made in 2 days and resubmitted.
- No further word until February 2015.
- Decision taken as of December 2016 to fully transition the project to quantitative design

April 2015- October 2016
- Full quantitative coding carried out. Additional cases included in analysis.
  - Initial analysis and writing of individual studies (Chapters 5-8).
  - From October 2015 to September 2016, writing up of the thesis and completion of studies took place.

Figure 4.1: Key Dates Timeline Diagram
As a result, the original plan was to identify a number of offenders guilty of stranger child abduction offences, as defined in Chapter 2 and with reference to the inclusion and exclusion criteria below, and then to gain access to facilities where these individuals were being held. In-depth, quantitative interviews would then have been conducted with these individuals, with a focus on chronologically re-creating the offence and ascertaining which factors, if any, impacted how the offender made decisions before, during and after the offence. This would result in the creation of narrative, exploratory accounts of stranger child abductions and the decision making of offenders, that was intended to produce a spring board for future research and could be used to interpret this behaviour alongside existing theories of offending. The quantitative information gathered a supplemental role in this design of the thesis, being used to help describe the sample and the offences under examination, and to ascertain whether the narrative counts reflected statistical trends.

The rationale for this approach was not because the qualitative approach was deemed more valuable intellectually, but because such data is normally difficult to gather. Most projects simply do not have the time to conduct interviews with vulnerable offenders, who can be difficult to access. It was felt that a PhD timeframe was the best opportunity to attempt such an approach, and ought to be capitalized on should access be granted. Due to this anticipated difficulty in gaining access to the intended participants, the project was designed in such a manner that secondary data would also be gathered that could be utilized for analysis. It was anticipated that either access would be granted quickly or would be denied altogether by the relevant governmental institution, namely The National Offender Management Service (NOMS). In actuality, although access to institutions was eventually granted, the process of gaining additional consent from numerous gatekeepers and from
participants themselves became too drawn out to allow completion of the PhD project within the allotted time, necessitating use of the quantitative approach.

In order to conduct a thorough analysis, a target of 30 semi-structured interviews was set. 55 potential participants, believed to currently be incarcerated in the UK, were identified via secondary sources, with additional access records held by NOMS requested in order to identify more. It was felt that identifying as many participants as possible was valuable since similar studies have reported inconsistent rates of agreement of participants to be involved in studies, with some reporting response rates as low as 20.00% (Cowburn, 2005) and others as high as 80.00% (Beauregard, Proulx, Rossmo, Leclerc & Allaire, 2007). This process also enabled the secondary sources to be used to create a quantitative database of offence features. This database was compiled and factors coded as offenders were identified.

The University of Portsmouth granted ethical approval for this approach, after ensuring that a series of measures were in place to ensure that participants were suitably protected. In particular, materials were amended so that they complied fully with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, since it was considered likely that a number of participants would have mental health issues, including learning disabilities. This involved ensuring that the interview schedule was simple and straightforward, and that all information delivered to participants was clearly written in plain English. All materials were written so as to be comprehensible to a person possessed of an 8-year-old reading level. Although there is no specific empirical evidence stating that stranger child abductors generally possess such mental issues, it is considered good practice to assume that incarcerated offenders, particularly violent or sexual offenders, may possess disorders that necessitated such measures to be taken (Cowburn, 2005). Advice from the University of Portsmouth ethics committee supported this view, and required that the project conform to the 2005 Act.
The PhD program during which this project was to be conducted commenced on 1st October 2013 as part of a fully funded bursary. Such programs last 3 years, meaning the deadline for completion of the entire project in the end of September 2016. Given the perceived potential difficulties in accessing incarcerated subjects, all possible means were taken to expedite the ethics process. Application for ethical approval from the University of Portsmouth was made at the earliest possible opportunity. Due to the need to identify research questions, design research instruments, and account for ethical issues in dealing with potentially vulnerable subjects, which are normal steps in a PhD project (Turner, 2003), it was not possible to apply for ethical approval until April 2014, i.e., 10 months into the 36 month project.

Ethical Approval from the University was granted on 26th June 2014 (see Appendix B). Application was immediately made to the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) following this approval from the University. NOMS is a government agency that acts as gate-keeper for the prison service. Any research pertaining to prisons must receive additional approval from them, regardless of and in addition to any positive approval by any other institution, including academic establishments such as the University. The initial application to NOMS was denied on September 10th 2014, around 3 months following initial submission. Opportunity was granted to make amendments to the proposal, which were made within 2 weeks and resubmitted. Further word was not heard until December 2014, where a request for clarification was received on a few minor points. This was addressed and re-submitted within 2 working days. Further word was received in February 2015 that the application was successful.

Unfortunately, this delay of almost 9 months between applying for NOMS approval necessitated a change in design to the project. In the interim between receiving permission to
proceed, it was necessary to continue carrying out work on the PhD project. During this time, the researcher proceeded to work with the data originally used to identify participants, gathering additional materials related to each case, and coding these known convicted cases involving stranger child abduction in the UK, initially using quantitative methods before also treating the documentary data qualitatively as well.

The details of database creation will be discussed below, however, for the moment, it suffices to say that a database of offenders was created in the SPSS program, coding for over 250 variables relating to stranger child abductions that had been identified as being potentially relevant following extensive literature review. Initially intended to supplement the interview material, this data proved to be robust and extensive, providing suitably substantial results to proceed with meaningful analysis. It was also possible to include additional cases at this time. Originally, the database only contained information pertaining to prospective participants, who had to be incarcerated. The increasing likelihood that the prison design could not be carried out meant that cases previously excluded due to the offender's prison term being over could also be included. These were initially kept separate but were fully integrated into the dataset after the prison design was rejected.

Given that around 7-8 months of a 36 month program had been dedicated to this quantitative approach, it was decided by the researcher and their supervisory team that this could not be discarded in favour of proceeding with an entirely qualitative design. Consideration was made to the possibility of conducting a smaller number of interviews than originally intended, with a provisional new target of 10 being proposed. This was with a view to using these in a supplemental fashion to compliment the quantitative data, with the interviews being used as case studies. This is a somewhat mirrored reversal of the previous qualitative design, where primary qualitative data would be supplemented by secondary data.
that had been quantitatively processed. A request to carry out this scope of work was made to NOMS at the end of February 2015.

NOMS did not reply again. As of May 2015, the decision was made by the researcher and their supervisory team that it would no longer be possible to proceed with the interviews. The study would now be based entirely on the database created from secondary sources. This data had already been used to begin writing four separate, in-depth studies on topics relating to stranger child abduction that are intended for inclusion within the final thesis.

This decision was made in recognition of the fact that, firstly, over half of the time allotted for PhD completion had been passed at this stage, and that gaining approval from NOMS is actually only the first stage in the approval process; gaining access to the participants would require further steps of identifying where each participant was, contacting the governors for each individual institution, contacting the inmates in order to explain the project and gain consent. To conform to the Mental Capacity Act 2005, it would also be necessary to arrange involvement of a third party; it was an ethical requirement to involve each participant's therapist or equivalent in order to ensure any rehabilitative treatment was not disturbed by the research. Finally, it would be necessary to arrange the interviews on dates that were suitable for the participant, institution staff and the researcher. All in all, it would be unlikely that interviews would be able to proceed for a further several months at least after gaining consent from NOMS, leaving only around a further 12 months to both analyse that data and write up the thesis by the most generously optimistic estimate- likely far less time would actually be left.

Although unfortunate in terms of losing (for the time being) an opportunity to reach difficult-to-access sources of data, this setback is not an issue since, as mentioned, the
quantitative study had been considered from the outset to be of equal interest. Due to contingency planning, minimal time was lost in the transition as work had been carried out with the express purpose of allowing either design to proceed should the prison approach prove untenable. The author intends to carry out the prison interviews at a later date as part of a post-doctoral study, should the current thesis find success. In fact, confirmation from NOMS was given in August 2016 that the qualitative interview project can go ahead in 2017.

Hence, the current project focuses mostly on causal relations in stranger child abduction, using statistical means to establish significant effects that differentiate attempted from completed cases utilizing quantitative, numerical data derived from analysing a series of cases.

4.2.2: Procedure

4.2.2a: Original Approach- Identifying Participants for Interviews and Profile Creation

A detailed explanation of the methods initially used to gather data on offenders will be provided, as this eventually became the main dataset for the study. Due to the change mentioned above, this exercise was originally intended to identify potential participants to be approached for interview. Details regarding offenders and their offence were gathered from freely available documentary sources, most notably newspaper articles and legal cases. In a few (three) instances, TV documentaries had been made about the offender and their crimes. Please note that it was not possible to references these fully, as it would mean naming the subjects of study; even though all sources were publicly available, ethical concerns precludes identification of individuals regardless of their role in the offences in question.
Profiles were created for each offender identified. Demographic information pertaining to the offender was gathered, as well as details regarding their specific conviction, the date of offence, the length of their sentence, and any information pertaining to previous offences. Each profile contained a narrative synopsis of the offence or offences under examination. This was made as detailed as possible depending on the information available, and normally presented in chronological order. Part of the reason for doing this was because the initial plan for the study was to take a chronological, multi-phase approach to the offender's decision making. Questions relating to the offender's experiences in the lead-up to the offence, during the offence, and the period following the offence were to be asked. This was designed to emulate successful studies carried out by the researcher Eric Beauregard and his colleagues on similar domain offences (E.g., Beauregard, Stone, Proulx & Michaud, 2008). This approach made having a narrative account available beforehand useful, and such accounts were deemed to be one of the advantages of having a qualitative design over a quantitative one.

In defence of this approach of utilizing almost any case that can be retrieved that fits the inclusion criteria, it should be mentioned that several of the very few similar pieces of research that have examined child abduction used a similar strategy, albeit with police cases. Most notably, Miller et al. (2008) and Boudreaux et al. (1999), whose studies both carried out detailed descriptive and multivariate analyses of factors present in abduction scenarios, both utilized this approach. Miller referred to it as a longitudinal design, noting that examining cases from a longer time-frame was necessary in the context of studying an offence such as this to retrieve and adequate sample. It is argued that this is doubly true in the present study, which fractures the possible population by focusing on a specialised offence, and doubly so since a conviction is required in addition to mere reporting.
As of around September 2014, it had become clear that the project would to utilize the quantitative design option. Some preliminary coding and low level analysis had already occurred, with the data being roughly coded. In October 2014, extensive structured treatment of the already gathered data, both in the form of profiles and also from the original sources from which the profiles were synthesised, was initiated.

At this stage, there were many possible avenues for investigation. The amount of data gathered had been unexpectedly substantial, and the possible areas for investigation, based on the literature review, were broad. As such, preliminary coding and extremely broad analysis was carried out in order to ascertain which broad findings might be relevant. Initial analyses attempted to analyse the relationships between a large number of variables. However, these failed to produce useful results. Several cycles of coding the data were carried out, with each pass indicating patterns in the data that could be utilized for study, and allowing further refinement of the codes utilized. It became clear that the study would have to focus its field of inquiry into 4 or 5 discrete studies. The most useful studies to pursue emerged as being on the topics of: Comparative study of offence features and demographics; Modus Operandi; Victim Resistance; and a Thematic Study of Offender’s Post-Crime Statements.

4.3 Method

This section outlines the method that was ultimately used by the thesis. The overall approach to identifying the offender database is outlined, and the particular methods of analysis utilised in each of the four study chapters is delineated.

This is a UK based study and all cases referred to took place in the UK. All data was gathered from publicly available sources. The primary types of data-source used were: legal records, including transcripts of court cases and legal decisions; and media sources, including
mostly newspaper reports and documentaries, reporting on offences and their related court trials. In the UK, the transcripts of most legal hearings are not made available unless they alter legal precedent. Although somewhat indirect, this makes media reporting on legal proceedings the most direct data available for the majority of trials. An attempt was made to gain access to police records as well; however, the recording practices in the database used made it impossible to differentiate stranger and acquaintance cases.

The use of media archives and newspaper reports has been used to facilitate other studies. Newiss (N.D.) utilized media reports from tabloid and broadsheet outlets to conduct a study of adults who go missing on a night out. The newspaper reports were coded to map the journey taken by these adults, to establish where their body was found, and to gather evidence with regard to their activities on the night of their disappearance and following any other sightings.

The current study similarly utilizes media reports (additionally supplemented by legal reports) to establish offender movement, activity and behaviour. LaFree & Dugan (2007) utilized an approach very similar to the current study, where media reports were used to create an offender database. They explain how the use of secondary data sources, particularly from newspaper reports, has become an invaluable resource for carrying out research on terrorism. Newspaper reports, from outlets of all types and in various languages, were used to create the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), a database of information that can be coded by researchers to examine terror patterns, and had previously been used to create the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Services (PGIS) database. Similar to the present study, the reports used to create the GTD were gathered using database searches in Lexis Nexis. This approach has been useful as data on terror cases from official sources tends to be limited.
This situation is strongly reflected for stranger child abduction, where official data is inconsistently coded, if it is recorded and coded at all. The researchers in the current study were granted access to a police database, but found only 2 cases categorized under the heading of “stranger child abduction”, and, on further analysis, had to reject these as they contained evidence of familiarity. On this matter, Lafree and Dugan (2007, p. 182) additionally make the point that police and other official databases, which are the traditional source of data for such studies, are subject to biases of their own, i.e., they might reflect police operational priorities and therefore selectively report information (LaFree & Dugan, 2007, p. 182).

Legal cases were gathered by searching the legal databases Westlaw and Lexis using various combinations of the terms ‘Stranger’, ‘Child’, ‘Abduction’, ‘Sexual’, ‘Assault’ and ‘Kidnap’. Media reports were gathered by searching the specialised database Lexis, as well as the open resource search engines Google and Yahoo. The same key words Stranger’, ‘Child’, ‘Abduction’, ‘Sexual’, ‘Assault’, ‘Kidnap’ were used, with the additional terms “Charged”, ‘Guilty’, and ‘Convicted’ being utilized. The terms “Sexual” and “Assault” were utilized due to UK rules of primacy mean that cases of abduction that go on to feature another type of offence will be recorded as that more serious case (see Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Using these terms made it possible to review a wider range of reports in order to examine whether an abduction had occurred as part of their commission. 53 national and local media outlets in the UK were ultimately used. These sources included a combination of tabloid and broadsheet sources. In order to assure quality as far as possible, only established media outlets were utilized.

Measures were taken to assist in ensuring as much validity as possible when using secondary information such as this. Firstly, only cases involving a confirmed conviction were analysed. The conviction did not have to be for child abduction or kidnap precisely, as such
charges are often subsumed by a larger, more serious conviction at trial. Inclusion was therefore based on convictions that involved behaviour where the offender takes or detains, or attempts to take or detain, a child. Secondly, only reports where there was an identifiable individual offender were used in order to ensure that all sources related to the same case. Thirdly, as many sources as possible pertaining to each case were utilized in order to verify reports.

Searches for cases and materials were carried out online using a variety of search tools. Generic searches using freely available popular search engines- in particular, Google and Google Scholar- were carried out using the following key words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Words Searched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Searches of databases of legal cases were carried out using the same criteria. The databases used were Lexis Nexis and Westlaw. Finally, searches of dedicated newspaper archives were carried out. The primary archive utilized was Lexis.

In all instances, the results of the search gave hits that included references and links to other, similar cases which, although not appearing as results to the initial search, were followed up and found to match inclusion criteria. The home sites of the various media outlets identified in this manner were searched as well. 56 outlets were identified and searched, as follows:
Table 4.2: Local and National UK Media Outlets Searched

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Outlets Searched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The York Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall Advertiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Northern Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mancunian Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Chronicle &amp; Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express and Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotherham Advertiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull Daily Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool Gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraph &amp; Argus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull Daily Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford Telegraph &amp; Argus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnley Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welwyn Hatfield Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire Evening Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huffington Post UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doncaster Free Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keighley News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Daily Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bury Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent and Sussex Courier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glasgow Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Birmingham Evening Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Northern Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolton News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newham Recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Wales Daily Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITV News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroud News &amp; Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Evening News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Online</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, this search resulted in identification of 187 sources that were used to provide the information present in the finalized database. Of these, 32 were court case transcripts, and 155 were newspaper reports. The number of newspaper sources for each offender ranged from 1 to 9, with a mean of 2.7 sources per offender. Those cases with 1 source would have an accompanying court case transcripts. Court transcripts were available for 24 offenders, with a range of between 1 and 3 reports per offender. There were also documentary films available regarding 2 of the offenders, available from Channel 4 and Real Crime.

Using these sources, information relating to each incident was compiled into narrative vignettes chronicling the offence, including as much detail as possible. These profiles were the used to code for the presence of factors identified from the literature review, pertaining to various offence features. The exact variables are identified below.
In order to ensure that only cases of stranger child abduction were included, it was necessary to utilise a detailed set of exclusion and exclusion criteria. These were used to identify cases using the search strategy detailed above. Based on the extensive literature review surrounding child abduction, inclusion was based on the following:

The victim and offender must be strangers, which was taken to mean that they had no previous contact or knowledge of one another prior to the occasion of the offence; the offender must have made some effort to take control of a child; the offender must be over 18; the victim must be aged under 18. Due to the exclusion criteria disallowing maternal desire cases and infant abductions, they must also be aged over 2 years (24 months).

A number of additional criteria have been put in place to ensure maximum levels of reliability and corroboration between sources. The offender must be identifiable by name. This was done to ensure that all information pertained to the same individual, as there were some instances where similar cases would use code letters for the offender. There must be evidence of a guilty verdict pertaining to the series of behaviour in which the abduction offence took place. It was NOT necessary for the conviction to be for child abduction or kidnap. This was done in order to ensure a level of corroboration between the legal case and the documentary source. Additionally, many of the cases simply did not receive a legal case report due to not contributing to legal precedent, making media reports relating to court proceedings the best evidence available about case disposal.

There was no specific timeframe for offences in mind when carrying out the project- as many cases as possible were gathered, with a view to dealing with timeframe elements upon
identification of all cases. It was anticipated that use of electronic resources would impose an effective limit as articles prior to 1980 are not commonly databased. The date range in the final sample was deemed acceptable, with a range of 1988 to 2014. The majority of cases occurred after 2000.

4.3.2b Exclusion Criteria

Additionally, a number of criteria meant that certain cases could not be used in the study. Again, these measures are intended to ensure the maximum level of consistency between cases, and to ensure that cases not involving the target behaviour were not included in the sample.

Only cases where the victim and offender were total strangers were included, meaning that offences were any level of prior knowledge between victim and offender was present had to be excluded. This meant that a number of high profile abduction cases, such as Mark Bridger's abduction of April Jones, and Ian Huntley's abduction of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman, had to be excluded because there was evidence in each case that the victim and offender had sufficient contact to be considered acquaintances.

Additionally, only offences where the perpetrator was aged over 18 were included. This is because there is evidence to suggest that adolescent offending of this nature is distinct from adult offending, and warrants its own study (e.g., Knight & Prentky, 1993; Marshall & Barbaree, 2008). It was beyond the scope of the present project to investigate juvenile offenders as well as adult offenders.
Only cases of sexual or aggressive offending were included. The other domains of stranger child abduction mentioned in the literature review and including revenge, ransom, and maternal desire were excluded. Again, these types of abduction are considered distinct and ought to be studied separately (Baker, Burgess, Rabun & Nahirny, 2003).

There were three cases of stranger child abduction where a gang element could be inferred. Two were excluded due to direct evidence that the victim was known by the offenders and there was clear evidence of gang involvement. One was included due to there being no direct evidence of previous contact with the victim. Technically, this case met the inclusion criteria, so was kept.

There may ostensibly appear to have been arbitrariness involved in the process of eliminating some cases for inclusion, with a number of cases being rejected whilst similar cases were included. For instance, two cases of abduction of a child for ransom in relation to a drug debt were identified, but only one was eventually included. This was due to evidence in one that the offenders personally knew the victim before the event, whereas in the other the offenders appeared only to know the ransom subject and had no knowledge of the victim prior to conspiring to abduct him.

Approximately 95 cases (approximate as it is likely some cases that seemed distinct referred to the same incident) were excluded as a result of not meeting inclusion criteria, due to the offender not being named, due to lack of information, due to lack of a corroborating conviction, and due to contradictions between sources.
4.3.1 Sample Description

This process led to the identification of 78 cases of male perpetrated stranger child abduction in the UK. The offenders (n=53) represented in this sample were exclusively male. Their ages ranged between 18 years and 59 years, with an average age of 35.05 years and a standard deviation of 10.582. In total there were 83 victims. Where age was known (n=75), the average age was 11.03, with a standard deviation of 3.08, and a range of 2 to 17. In terms of grouping, 31 victims were aged 0-10 (41.30%), 36 were aged 11-14 (48.00%), with 8 (10.70%) aged 15-18. An additional 8 victim ages could not be verified (accounting for 9.60% of the overall sample of 83). 35.00% (n=27) of cases were attempted abductions, and 65.00% (n=51) were completed abductions.

The discrepancy between number of offenders and number of victims is due to there being cases with multiple victims, and because some offenders were responsible for multiple incidents. Some cases involved more than one victim, with 5 cases having 2 victims, and 1 case having 3 victims. 8 offenders were responsible for more than 1 offence.

The offenders received a variety of convictions, some of which were paired with convictions for child abduction or kidnap, and some of which, due to the rules of primacy, did not acknowledge the abduction behaviour in the charge. Table 4.4 shows the primary convictions given to each offender. Aside from involving abduction behaviour, the offences were predominantly sexual in nature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conviction</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempted child abduction/kidnap</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child abduction/Kidnap</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Description</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Murder</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecency with a child/Indecent Assault</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecent Assault</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attempted sexual assault</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conspiracy to abduct</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.2 Coding and Analysis Procedure

All sources of data pertaining to each individual case were compiled, with this raw data being used to produce profiles of each offence. Profiles including as much detail as possible were created regarding the features of each offender, each victim, the nature of the offence in question, and the offence’s outcome. These details were coded into IBM SPSS 22, and their features measured utilizing SPSS’ analytical functions.

These features were subjected to initial descriptive tests, including production of frequency tables and examination of means. Additional descriptive tests were carried out with controls for case outcome in order to provide profiles of the features of attempted as well as completed cases.

Subsequent bivariate tests were carried out utilizing an association matrix to identify offence features that had significant interactions with demographic features of the offence. Inferential cross-tabulation analyses were performed using Pearson’s Chi-Square.

In order to ensure an acceptable level of corroboration, only cases where an identifiable individual was convicted of an offence were included, the implications of which are discussed below. The conviction did not have to be for the precise legal offence of child abduction or kidnap; given that the UK has rules of primacy that mean a more serious offence
might cause the specific charge to be lost. As such, inclusion was based on behaviour that involved taking or detaining, or clearly making an attempt to take or detain a child rather than on conviction for a specific offence. For example, one of the cases examined in this thesis involved a conviction for rape, rather than for abduction. The offender’s behaviour involved the forceful movement of a child across the length of a train station and into a set of bushes outside. With reference to the definition of abduction used in this thesis, this case can be considered to have involved abduction and was coded as such, even though there was no conviction for abduction.

The presence or absence of these variables was ascertained by thorough examination of the sources relating to each case of stranger child abduction. The variable was only coded as present if there was positive evidence that this course of behaviour had been taken. For example, a victim who leaned out of a window in order to alert passers-by was coded as having called for help. A victim who told the offender to go away, while simultaneously running towards and alerting others nearby was coded as “run, yell, tell”. In cases where the victim accompanied the offender or was overwhelmed, with no evidence that they did or were able to resist, this was coded as “no resistance”. Thanks to having multiple sources for each case, there tended to be at least some information relating to the victim’s reaction. There is some likelihood of researcher error in this case, as it is possible that reports may on occasion have mis-represented the victim behaviour of the researcher has misread the intended meaning from the report. In particular, there is a small risk of over-representing the number of cases in which a victim did not resistance if reports have failed to mention this or there was no evidence of it.

Statistical analysis was carried out with the assistance of IBM’s SPSS program, version 22. Levels of significance were ascertained by accompanying crosstabs with chi-square tests, utilized as the data was nominal, making it suitable for analysis using this test of
association. In chapters 5, 6 and 7, the primary modes of analysis were descriptive, using frequency analyses, and inferential, utilising Pearson’s chi-square test, which measures associations between variables. In chapter 8, the main analytical procedure used was multidimensional scaling, detailed below, which was complimented by additional descriptive statistics.

Additionally, in order to assess the extent to which further offences took place following the initial abduction and to examine whether resistance strategies had any relationship with preventing further harm, the presence of ‘escalation’ was also recorded. ‘Escalation’ refers to an attempt by the offender to enact a further offence, such as assault or rape on the victim following completing the abduction phase of the offence.

The effectiveness of victim resistance strategies is evaluated according to the extent to which the presence of the resistance strategy is associated with the abduction element being uncompleted, as well as whether escalation occurs in cases where the abduction is completed.

4.3.3: Individual Studies

Given the type of data available, it became clear that the most useful and appropriate way to treat the data was to carry out a series of small studies investigating various themes as they relate to attempted and completed stranger abduction, rather than a single contiguous study; early attempts to examine the relationships between victim age, offender approach and offence outcome proved overly complex and failed to produce significant results or useful patterns. Instead, studies examining each of these important elements of stranger child abduction were carried out, with it being judged that it was more useful to understand these constituent components of abduction. Each study represents an inquiry into a particular aspect of stranger child abduction that has been identified by the literature review as
representing either a gap in knowledge or possessing interesting features that would benefit from being analysed in light of case outcome. The details of why each of these four areas was selected for study are detailed in the literature review chapter, and in the introduction section accompanying each relevant study. Furthermore, this realization meant that it would be preferable to structure this thesis by using each individual study as a separate chapter, rather than the more typical approach of presenting a more overarching narrative regarding stranger child abduction. It is felt that this approach enables attempted and completed cases to be more thoroughly compared.

The main body of the study is comprised of four quantitative studies. This section details the methods used to create the quantitative database. However, there was a significant amount of qualitative data that could be utilized for one of the studies. The qualitative methodology will be discussed later.

The data gathering method was document analysis. This produced qualitative data which was transferred into quantitative information via coding. This was then used in the fashion of an experiment, controlling for various factors in order to examine how they interacted with the outcome.

4.3.4: Specific Codes

This section outlines the particular variables used in each individual study, as well as the methods of analysis that are used. General analyses used throughout the thesis are also identified.

The original coding process had been very extensive. From the relevant literature on stranger child abduction, as well as on similar domain offences and literature (primarily
including aggression, child abuse, rape, victim-offender interaction, situational crime prevention, routine activity theory, journey-to-crime, and sexual offending literature), a vast number of potentially relevant factors were identified, eventually totalling 257 variables (see Appendix A). Each of the 78 offences identified were individually coded. This process, including identify variables, creating (and amending) a coding frame, and inputting the readings into SPSS. This process originally took around 12 weeks to complete in the first instance. Revisions and amendments continued to take place as the project evolved, and as subsequent searchers were carried out, up until the database underwent finalization in May 2015. Any time an additional case was added, or an existing case amended, all analytical tests were repeated in order to ascertain if the change had any effect on existing findings. Due to the iterative nature of this process, this tended to slightly alter the figures, although never having had enough effect to alter overall conclusions.

The process for recording information was as follows: Whenever a potential participant met the inclusion criteria, all available sources pertaining to that case would be retrieved and recorded. The information from these sources was used to produce detailed profiles including narrative accounts of the offence. The contents of these narrative profiles were then cross-referenced with the variables in the database, recording and coding the information into SPSS depending on the contents of the profile. This process was used to assess the quality and quantity of information available for analysis, and helped to author to identify the areas to focus on as studies in the thesis, according to which were most likely to produce robust and reliable findings based on these preliminary analyses.

Following the decision to proceed fully with the database design and due to the need to begin producing final analyses, it was decided to finalize the database as of May 2015. Locking down the database was done to make the process of analysis as smooth as possible thereafter, and to avoid any inconsistencies or errors. Finalization involved confirming
inclusion and exclusion criteria, and repeating of all searching and coding processes using the new operationalized terms to ensure that any cases already in the database belonged there based on updated parameters, and to allow for any subsequent or previously discarded cases to be reassessed for inclusion.

4.3.4a Variables by study

As mentioned, the initial coding process utilised an open approach that essentially made note of any possibly pertinent factor in each case, resulting in a very large database. This refers to any possible type of behaviour, environmental feature, third party actor, item presence, or any other piece of information that might have had any bearing on the case and that the media or legal source had deemed fit to report on. See Appendix F for a full list of the variables that were identified. The literature review was used to guide initial variables, however the contents of the cases themselves led to a greater volume. As further cycles of coding took place, it was possible to eliminate variables that had no bearing on results or could not be used for analysis. Variables which had only been coded as present in a small number of cases were excluded. Variables that were not featured in the ultimate themes utilized were removed, for example, whether the offender had admitted guilt were deemed to be potentially relevant factors in the initial literature review (e.g., Heide et al., 2009) and so were coded at first, but omitted once the final themes of the study became clear. This process was assisted when the four areas for individual study were identified, as this allowed for further elimination of superfluous information. This process of refinement allowed for the simultaneous reduction of non-essential information, with repeat cycles allowing for better defining of the codes used to define each variable.
The vast majority of data, aside from the ages of victims and offenders, was recorded as nominal data. In other words, it was recorded as being either present, or not. This is standard practice for this type of study, and enabled use of chi-square tests for association, and multidimensional scaling (MDS), which both utilize nominal data and are commonly utilized in research pertaining to offending and offender profiling. Additionally, this was simply the most logical manner in which to record the information available; it was not possible to establish the hierarchy necessary to record data using ordinal values. Detailed information regarding the coding decisions and definitions are provided in the short methods section accompanying each of the four subsequent chapters, where the specific variables used in that section will be detailed.

4.3.4b Variables Relevant Across Each Study: Attempted and Completed Abduction, and Escalation

Due to the focus of the study, the primary variables to be recorded, which were used to group each study, were whether the offence pertained to a completed or attempted abduction. This was assessed based simply on whether the offender in question had successfully taken control of the child during their offence sequence. If they had, the offence was considered to have been a completed abduction.

In addition, information was recorded pertaining to what happened following an abduction, and whether the offender carried out any further offences. Where there was evidence that a further offence had taken place, the offence was recorded as having been escalated, and the type of offence carried out was recorded. If the further behaviour was attempted but not completed, this was also coded. This was used to ascertain change over time in several studies, a dimension of offending proven to be important in related studies but
that was difficult to reflect elegantly using a quantitative approach in the absence of verifiable timescales (Beauregard et al., 2008).

Additionally, in order to assess the extent to which further offences took place following the initial abduction and to examine whether resistance strategies had any relationship with preventing further harm, the presence of ‘escalation’ was also recorded. ‘Escalation’ refers to an attempt by the offender to enact a further offence, such as assault or rape on the victim following completing the abduction phase of the offence.

The individual codes used in each individual study will only be briefly outlined here, as each relevant chapter will have a section dedicated to the methods used in that study.

4.3.4c Analytical Procedure used in Chapters 5, 6 and 7

Statistical analysis was carried out with the assistance of IBM’s SPSS program, version 22. Levels of significance were ascertained by accompanying descriptive crosstabs measuring frequency with chi-square tests, utilized as the data was nominal, making it suitable for analysis using this test of association.

These features were subjected to initial descriptive tests, including production of frequency tables and examination of means. Additional descriptive tests were carried out with controls for case outcome in order to provide profiles of the features of attempted as well as completed cases.

Subsequent bivariate tests were carried out utilizing an association matrix to identify offence features that had significant interactions with the variables utilised by the study in question. Inferential cross-tabulation analyses were performed using Pearson’s Chi-Square. This process enabled thorough examination of the profiles of attempted cases compared to
completed cases, and for the identification of any statistically significant associations that existed between the tested variables and whether an offence was attempted or completed.

4.3.4d Analytical Procedure used in Chapter 8: Modus Operandi Study

This part of the study analyses the data for features relating to the offender’s behaviour, focusing on activities intended to facilitate abduction. Multiple types of analysis were conducted. Firstly, data was coded using simple tests of frequency, in order to ascertain how common various types of offender behaviour were in attempted and completed cases of abduction, and to compare these with commonly held assumptions about offender behaviour. Secondly, inferential tests were carried out on each individual factor in order to ascertain whether statistical associations with case outcome existed.

Next, multidimensional scaling was carried out on the dataset (utilising the variables identified in Chapter 8). This was felt to be an appropriate for several reasons: such tests allow a “snapshot” of offender behaviour to be captured; the output would allow interpretation of whether the various factors analysed had any relationships with one another, rather than simply with case outcome. Other, similar analytical tests were considered (i.e., logistical regression), however, multidimensional scaling was felt to be more appropriate for this dataset given that the data present entirely nominal, and because multidimensional scaling can produce meaningful results even with a relatively small sample size (Field, 2013). The multidimensional scaling utilized Jaccard’s coefficient.

The variables were coded using IBM SPSS version 22. Multidimensional scaling (MDS) was used to test for correlations between variables, utilizing the Jaccard’s coefficient
to measure distance and establish similarity between variables using IMB SPSS v22’s distance measuring functionality. Jaccard’s Coefficient is one of several ways in which the similarity between variables can be assessed, and takes account of only positive co-occurrence (Jaccard, 1908). This approach was chosen as it best suits what Goodwill, Stephens, Oziel, Yapp and Bowes (2012, p. 96) calls “messy behavioural data”, as appears in this study. It is among the most commonly used method used to assess similarity in studies utilizing MDS and SSA of offender behavioural patterns, including examinations of stranger perpetrated sexual offences (e.g., Canter, Bennell, Alison & Reddy, 2003). Jaccard’s measure of association uses the following formula to calculate similarities between variables by counting co-occurrence of these variables between members of the dataset, with the resultant score’s proximity to 1 or 0 indicating the level of similarity between the variables, with 1 complete similarity and total co-occurrence, and 0 indicating no similarity whatsoever with no co-occurrence.

\[
\text{Jaccards Formula: } \frac{A}{A+B+C}
\]

(Adapted from Goodwill, 2014)

**Figure 8.1: Formula for Jaccard’s Coefficient**

The similarity matrices produced by Jaccards measure of association, which can be found in Appendix D, depicts the similarities between the variables in this study, and was used to carry out the Multidimensional Scaling test that resulted in Figures 8.1 and 8.2.

Multi-Dimensional Scaling (MDS) is a form of statistical test that measures the level of correlation present between a collection of variables, and has the advantage of being able to depict the structure of a dataset visually in the form of a plot (Young, 1987). MDS, along
with several tests derived from it, such as Small Space Analysis (SSA), are commonly utilized by investigative psychologists to examine various facets of offending behaviour and decision making (Goodwill, Stephens, Oziel, Sharma, Allen, Bowles & Lehmann, 2013). MDS is capable of depicting similarities and dissimilarities between variables (Sturrock & Rocha, 2000). The current study is an analysis of similarities. Multidimensional scaling is the most appropriate method of grouping variables given its focus on correlation coefficients between variables, which made up for the relatively small sample size that would have reduced the predictive power of logistical regression and other similar alternatives. It is also the most appropriate test to use when variables are nominal, as all were in this study. The multidimensional test was programmed to test for similarities between variables, with separate tests being carried out for attempted cases and for completed cases. The test was done using PROXSCAL with a single similarity matrix for each test. This produced two-dimensional scatter plots. These scatter plots were interpreted according to the proximities between variables. Those situated close to one another, forming clusters, are associated. These associations were used to group the variables, as seen in the Figures below.

Following this, having identified two core themes of offender behaviour (see Chapter 8), additional descriptive and inferential tests, including cross-tabulation and use of Pearson’s Chi-Square, were used to establish frequencies of key behaviours present within each of the newly identified themes.

The dataset was also subjected to a process of “thematic interpretation” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic interpretation is a sub-type of thematic analysis, and is used to develop themes and sub-themes from data. To achieve this, the data sources were re-read in their entirety, with note being taken of any overarching behaviours that could not be specifically coded, but which nevertheless appeared to typify and appear across a large
proportion of cases in sample. This process was used in order to identify and test for the presence of any additional variables that could not be captured through quantitative coding. From this, two additional variables were identified. These variables were “front loaded control”, which refers to offenders utilizing multiple strategies early in the offence, and “shift”, which refers to offenders whose offending strategy shifted from manipulative to coercive means or vice versa, during the offence. These were subsequently coded quantitatively. Front loaded control was added to frequency and multidimensional analysis, whilst shift was omitted from multidimensional tests as it reflects a continuous process. Additionally, the verbiage used by offenders was analysed thematically in order to establish the function of their words and to ascertain whether a threat had been made.

Two additional variables were included in the descriptive section that did not appear in multidimensional tests. These were: “simple lure”, which denotes manipulative abductions with no other defining features; and “grab plus threat”, which denotes the presence of both these variables together. These were omitted from multidimensional tests as the former denotes absence of other factors, and the latter denotes a combination of two factors already present.

4.2.5 Quantitative Rigour

In order to have faith in its findings, an academic study must be rigorous and adhere to a high standards of practice. In quantitative projects such as this, the most common metrics to establish rigour are validity and reliability.
**Internal Validity**- This requirement of validity is twofold, and used to make sure that the processes of cause and effect are properly described, i.e., that effects are not a result of extraneous factors, and that the study is measuring what it purports to measure.

Researchers must ensure that the purported cause comes before the effect. In this dataset, this was straightforward in that the outcome variables were literal outcomes of the previous behaviours present in each case.

True causality between the factors studied and the outcome of child abduction cases is impossible to prove, and this has been particularly true in this study where there are so many contributing variables. It is for this reason that such an extensive literature review was conducted, alongside extensive input from interested parties in order to ensure that the factors under examination have strong supposed associations with the subject matter.

Again, this is a post-hoc study. The researcher did not control the variables personally, but rather compared cases where a variable was present against those where it was not.

A benefit of the post-hoc design is that the offenders could suffer no research effects. They were not being directly observed for research purposes, so therefore any confounding effects imposed by such intervention played no part in this study. In other words, the behaviour being analysed is ecologically valid (i.e., organic; not the artificial, contrived product of a laboratory), at the cost of being uncontrolled and ascertained via third-party sources.

**External validity** essentially refers to whether the results of a study can be generalized (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Cook & Campbell, 1976). Good sampling is at the heart of
generalization. A strong sample is generally considered to be representative of the population being studied and large enough to draw significant conclusions (Higgins, 2009).

The current study had some difficulty in establishing the exact size of the "stranger child abductor population". The rates at which this offence occurs is unrecollected (see Newiss, 2016). The best practice available was, during data gathering, to rigorously search through all available sources and identify as many cases as possible, utilizing the constructs and definitions agreed upon in Chapter 3. The study includes every last case that met the inclusion criteria.

Validity is also often concerned with use of control groups. A control group is a group of participants or material that is similar to the experimental group, but is not subjected to the conditions of the experiment (Mitchell & Jolley, 2012). This enables researchers to determine if any changes occurring in the experimental group are a result of the experimental conditions. In this study, control grouping was not possible. The only control that could be done was to compare various groups within the sample to ascertain the effects of certain variables on case outcomes, i.e., comparing offenders by age. Aside from this, the best that can be done is to compare the current data to outputs of studies that examined similar offence types with similar variables.

Ultimately, the best thing to do with a piece of research such as this is to be candid and realistic. The current study is exploratory in that is one of the first studies to closely examine this type of offending and its internal causal relations using such a design. The extent to which the group is homogenous is not known at this time, and generalizability to all stranger child abductors is based largely on how closely the findings reflect outcomes and assumptions from existing research.
**Consistency of terms and construct validity** - Construct validity is the term used to describe the process of the definitions and measures utilized in a study actually reflecting the phenomenon they purport to represent. For this project in particular, defining terms and outlining variables in great detail has been necessary in order to explain in detail what it is that each measure is attempting to analyse, and how those were measured utilizing the dataset. The project must ensure that it uses terms consistently. It is for this reason that such effort was placed on establishing definitions of stranger child abduction, and why the limits of the variables were detailed above.

**Reliability and Repeatability** - Ways to ensure reliability involve ensuring that the same result would be met if the same circumstances of the experiment were to reoccur. To assess this, experiments should be repeatable, i.e., it should be possible to use the same tools, materials and methods again in order to ensure that the same result occurs.

Inter-rater reliability was established by having Dr. Karen Shalev-Greene, the author’s first supervisor, evaluate the coding frame. Dr. Shalev-Greene examined each code and its parameters, checking with the first author what these meant in the event of any uncertainty. Subsequently, the coding frame was used to recode every 5th case in the sample, utilizing the narrative vignettes and original media articles and legal transcripts. No disagreements were found. (Gwet, 2014).

In order to ensure as great a level of reliability a possible, effort has been made to make all processes and terms as transparent as possible in order to ensure that it would be possible to obtain the same results given the same dataset and terminology were utilized again. Consistency of terms and constructs is also of great importance in working towards a
guarantee or repeatability. For this reason, full and frank descriptions of all tests carried out, and clear definitions of all terms used, have been provided.

It should be said that this repeatability only refers to coding and analysis. The data examined was not gathered as a result of any kind of controlled experimental design, making it impossible to guarantee that the subjects themselves would have behaved in the same manner should their circumstances be repeated. Analysis is of offences that occurred in an uncontrolled environment, with our conclusions relying on assumptions of universality and with regard to the sample being of sufficient size to be confident in any observed patterns. Stranger child abduction is a complex behaviour reliant on the convergence of multiple, varying factors that could potentially result in very different behavioural results should even one condition be changed.

4.4 Limitations

It should be kept in mind that the methods utilized in this study bring with them some unfortunate limitations. The implications of these limitations are discussed in more detail in the methods section of Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, each respectively detailing how those limitations affected that study, however, the main shortcomings are outline here as well.

4.4.1 Small Sample Size

Firstly, the sample size is relatively small. It was only possible to gather data pertaining to 78 cases of stranger child abduction. This shortcoming is partially due to the measures taken to ensure reliability, most notably the requirement that each case refer to a confirmed conviction, and that there be corroborating sources. Without this limitation, it would have been possible to retrieve a far larger sample, however, it would have been
impossible to verify information to any reliable degree. For this reason, it is felt that the small sample size, although regrettable, was unavoidable.

Furthermore, the difficulty of having a small sample size is mitigated somewhat by two further facts. Firstly, stranger child abduction is a very low incidence offence, with there being just 247 reports annually (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Further still, despite the small sample size, this approach has enabled an unprecedented level of detail for analysis. Most other studies on the topic have been limited by utilizing fairly limited police data that records only very basic details of the offence, which in turn has limited the level of analysis that those studies could carry out.

Finally, this approach has allowed the researchers to focus on cases that can be confirmed to deal with stranger child abduction specifically, thereby avoiding the issue encountered in other pieces of research where data sets have included a mixture of stranger and acquaintance cases (e.g., Finkelhor et al., 1992), or where abduction has been treated alongside other offence types such as indecent exposure (Gallagher et al., 2008) or homicide (Francis & Soothill, 2010).

4.4.2 Reliance on Secondary Sources

As outlined, it has been necessary to utilize data from legal and media sources for this project, rather than conducting first-hand, qualitative interviews with offenders. Secondary sources can be problematic in that they may favour reporting of only certain types of information, or may report that information from a certain perspective. It can also be difficult to discern whether the persons originally gathering the data were utilizing consistent terminology, or that terms have been used consistently between the sources (Bradley, 1991).

It is partially for this reason that great care has been taken to define terms in this study, so that references to behaviour, rather than references to specific terms, were utilized
for the coding process. The practice of corroborating information between multiple sources was also taken to mitigate the effects of individual sources utilizing their own perspectives and definitions.

Furthermore, particularly with media sources, it is difficult to implement proper quality control over the sources utilized. To guarantee quality as far as possible, media sources had to be from established news outlets. Both tabloid and broadsheet sources were utilized.

### 4.4.3 Tendency Towards Serious Cases

As a result of utilizing media cases and those that warranted reporting in legal reports, it is likely that the dataset is skewed towards reporting of more serious or otherwise newsworthy cases. As a result, since most cases of stranger child abduction are not reported in the news, this may limit how representative the sample is of truly typical cases of abduction.

Again, however, as multiple authors have pointed out (Newiss & Traynor, 2013; Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000), most of these cases that might be considered typical go unreported altogether, meaning that there is no data on these to be gathered either from the police or from any other resource. Additionally, should there be any information recorded on most attempted cases, these incidents are likely to have extremely limited detail, and would be difficult to corroborate. If recorded by police, they would also likely be very difficult to categorize as attempted or completed cases, or even as abductions, as the limited detail means such incidents may not be recorded as crimes (Newiss & Collie, 2015).
4.4.4 Unavailability of Certain Data

Certain types of information that would have been desirable to analyse in this study simply were not recorded with sufficient levels of detail or consistency to be included. Notable examples include:

- Demographic information such as victim and offender ethnicity and nationality (Neiwss & Fairbrother, 2004), offender’s work history, offender’s marital status (Beyer & Beasley, 2003).
- Information relevant to victim selection. It would also have been useful to analyse information on the appearance of the victim in relation to height, hair colour and clothes worn as these can be relevant to victim selection patterns (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000).
- Greater detail on the exact movements of offenders before and after offending, as well as movement between crime sites during the offence. These can be relevant for case solvability (Brown & Keppel, 2007).

However, given the depth of detail available on other areas, it is felt that this limitation can be reconciled, and presents avenues for future research.

It is felt that the methodology utilized by this study was the only real option available that would allow the project to be completed in a timely manner, as well as the only way to gather information regarding cases of stranger child abduction that would yield a sufficient level of detail to enable analysis. For the reasons outlined in this section, the limitations faced are almost entirely a result of the type of data used, which as discussed was essentially the only dataset available, or as a result of the implementation of practices meant to ensure, as far as is possible, the reliability and validity of findings. Given that failure to implement these
measures would have resulted in a lack of validity, it is felt that the limitations experienced as a result are justified.

4.4.5 Cases Involving Multiple Victims or Offenders

The sample features cases that involve either multiple offenders or multiple victims. There is a small possibility that these cases may create biases within the results. Wherever possible, the presence of cases featuring multiple victims and/or offenders is noted, however it has not been possible to meaningfully extricate these cases from the sample or to examine them in isolation as they are too few in number to be analysed. As such, the most logical way to address these potential issues is to be transparent about their presence. It is expected that the influence of these would not be enough to meaningfully alter results.

4.4.6 Inability to Guarantee Relationship

All reasonable precautions have been made to ensure that the cases utilized by this study have involved victims and offenders with no previous familiarity with one another. There is no indication of such an occurrence in the cases included, and any case that did have such an indication was excluded.

4.5 Ethics

A high ethical standard is paramount to any academic study. This ensures that a project has necessary levels of rigour, and that the work and its findings reflect well on the researcher and any institutions or organizations associated with the research. This particular study has had an interesting relationship with ethical considerations, thanks mostly to the aforementioned transition that occurred. Of course, ethics are of importance to any study,
however, it is of particular importance when the study involves contact with human participants, and when external agencies are involved.

The original design of the study involved both of these considerations. It was to conduct face-to-face interviews with offenders in custody, who represent a potentially vulnerable population. Their involvement necessitated that a large range of ethical considerations be taken into account, ranging from relatively straightforward matters such as ensuring informed consent and keeping personal details confidential, to more complex matters such as ensuring that any materials used were in conformity with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, as it was necessary to presume that such participants could have a mental health issue as per the provisions of that legislation which incurred duties on the researcher. Other considerations included having any staff involved sign confidentiality agreements in order to protect the participant's information, as well as inviting therapeutic staff to observe interviews in order to avoid interfering with any treatment offenders might be undergoing.

The project was also to be carried out with permission from and under the auspices of the National Offender Management Service- the branch of the government that oversees prisons and authorizes any research carried out within them. Interviews would have been carried out in various facilities, each with their own governor, who would also have been required to give their consent to the project being carried out within their facility. When organizing this side of the project, great effort was taken to ensure that the project in no way reflected poorly on NOMS, with the intention being to not mention the workings of the prisons unless it directly impacted on the interviews (Cowburn, 2005).
A long, detailed consideration was made involving application to the University ethics committee, and the NOMS. Eventually, approval was received from both bodies. The applications and their contents can be found in Appendix C.

However, the project eventually did not involve any face-to-face interviews, nor direct involvement with external organizations. Ethics were still of relevance, however, and ought to be dealt with. According to the most relevant set of ethical standards, those of the British Criminology Society (2016), the researcher has ethical responsibility towards participants, sponsors, and any parties involved in the research:

4.5.1 Consent and Access to Data

Consent became a non-issue, as there were no participants involved, and none of the information accessed was from a protected or private source; all data was retrieved from publicly available sources of information. It therefore was not necessary to receive consent from any of the offenders to whom this information pertains, nor from police forces or courts who may hold similar data.

Although some National Crime Agency databases were accessed, none yielded any usable information. These were accessed on a preliminary basis with the assistance and oversight of NCA staff. It became quickly apparent that the data held was not suitable for use in the project as these databased contained very few cases for analysis, and because they had been recorded in such a way that stranger and acquaintance cases could not be reliably differentiated from one another. As a result, no further access to these databases was sought,
which in turn meant no further ethical considerations were necessary in respect of these sources.

4.5.2 Anonymity and Disclosure

It is standard practice to ensure that participants involved in research projects have their information kept anonymous. Even though this project involved no direct participants, it did involve offenders who could be identified by name. In order to avoid any ethical difficulties, the final project uses pseudonyms for the offenders, victims, and any named locations or any specific party involved at any stage of the offence or its investigation. Any information that could be used to directly identify an individual has been obfuscated.

That said, given the distinct nature of some of these offences, there remains a possibility that individual cases may be identifiable. Again, it is felt that this is reconciled by the fact that all cases were sources from publicly available data sources, and therefore the project is incapable of disclosing information that is not already in the public domain.

Incidentally, providing anonymity means that the final project does not include references for all data sources, as many of these directly name the subjects. Examiners will be privy to this in order to properly review the project, however, any other reader will need to contact the author in order to access this list of references of data sources. Provision will be made following ethical approval from the University of Portsmouth ethics board to disclose.
4.5.3 External Agencies Involved

In the name of disclosure, it should be mentioned that agencies outside of the university have been somewhat involved in the project in advisory capacity, helping to guide the project and offering advice on the kinds of finding that would be useful for their work. The school of criminal justice to which I am attached, and my supervisor in particular, often works closely with charities and agencies related to missing persons. These organizations and their senior representatives have shown interest in my project, and agreed to assist. From the charity PACT, a highly experienced researcher attended to consult, and from the National Crime Agency, the head of UK missing persons investigations and experienced police officer and researcher, as well as an analyst, attended to consult. These individuals have since been involved with reviewing materials I have submitted to my supervisor on an informal basis, with their opinions being their own on not those of their organizations.

Additionally, an experienced Behavioural Investigative Advisor (BIA) from the NCA also reviewed the proposals and abstracts for this project, and submitted them to his team for input. The feedback received was used to assist in identifying areas for study in the final version of the project based on the research gaps that these BIAs helped to identify. The main gap identified as being relevant for study pertained to the distance over which victims had been moved. While it was not possible to examine this directly in the final thesis due to insufficient data, effort was made to examine potential variances in crime scene in the Modus Operandi chapter. The role of the BIAs was informal and entirely advisory.

4.5.4 Responsibility to criminology
Researchers also have a responsibility towards the field of criminology in general, and must adhere to standards of practice for good and thorough procedure and quality. It is hoped that the detailed outline above explaining how data was gathered and how considerations for rigour have been made will sufficiently meet these requirements, and maintain the reputation of the field, the university, and the researcher.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology utilized by this study, detailed pertinent aspects of the design, and discussed the considerations and reasoning that have informed the creation of this design. Additional information on the minutiae of each study conducted will be included in their relevant chapters. The research in all studies utilizes secondary information from a set of 78 real-life stranger child abduction cases that took place in the UK between 1998 and 2013. Each of the following chapters details a study examining particular features of the dataset, intended to provide a fully featured analysis and overview of stranger child abduction and an investigation of the current knowledge base.
Chapter 5: Examining Offender, Victim and Offence Characteristics in cases of Stranger Child Abduction: An Exploratory Comparison of Attempted and Completed Cases in the UK.

Chapter Summary

Following the literature review, it has been possible to identify features of stranger child abduction cases that are most commonly studied and which have been identified as forming an important part of the profile of such cases. These factors include victim sex, victim age, offender age, offender’s criminal background, the location of the offence, and the timing of the offence.

This study analyses these factors in order to assess whether they can be used to usefully distinguish attempted cases of stranger child abduction from completed cases, and also whether utilizing this distinction reveals any notable differences in the profiles of attempted cases compared to completed cases. This exercise will enable the ascertainment of whether there is any notable relationship between case characteristics and offence outcome.

Findings indicated that while females victims are targeted more frequently overall, male victims are at greater risk of being abducted successfully by strangers. Females are more likely to be approached by non-specialist offenders, whereas male victims are more likely to be targeted by chronic child sex offenders. Victims aged 10 were found to be at risk of being victimized successfully, whilst attempted victimization was even across all victim age groups. Finally, older offenders were found to be more persistent, with younger offenders discontinuing their offence earlier in the behavioural sequence.

The implications of these findings are discussed and recommendations for future research made. The continued analysis of abduction offences utilizing the attempted-completed distinction is also strongly encouraged and endorsed.
5.1 Introduction

As established in the literature review, initial studies into child abduction spent a great deal of time discussing incidence, which led to inappropriate use of terminology, i.e., the treatment stranger and acquaintance abductions under the single heading of “non-family” abduction. This lead to the issue of there being very few studies where it can be reliably said that the data relates purely to stranger child abduction, which results in the demographic picture of this offence being obscured and uncertain.

While many studies examining stranger child abduction measure demographic details of victims and offenders to some extent, as a result of a preference to focus on incidence, they tend to record only the most basic information pertaining to victims and offenders (e.g., Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). Although many existing studies provide information on victim sex, only a small handful of studies give details as to the age of offenders, with fewer still giving details as to their offending history. As a result, while many studies feature large sample sizes, they feature limited levels of demographic detail. This means that they have few variables with which to compare to one another and carry out analysis.

This has left a number of notable gaps in the current understanding of the profile of stranger child abduction, for instance, little information exists regarding the offence histories of stranger child abductors and how this interacts with other offence variables such as victim age or sex preference; while there is information as to the ages of offenders involved in stranger child abduction, it is not known if offender age interacts with crime scene behaviours. In favour of a more detailed approach, reference can be made to the study carried out by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999), which, by gathering detailed case information, showed that victims of school age are the most likely to be targeted by abductors, and that offender motive interacts with victim sex when selecting victims.
Furthermore, Chapter 4 clearly established that studies examining stranger child abduction have not taken into account whether the abduction was completed or not. This study aims to examine demographic features by comparing attempted cases of stranger child abduction against completed cases in order to ascertain which variables, if any, have an impact on case outcome.

5.1.1 The Existing Picture of Stranger Child Abduction

As one might expect given the limitations outlined above, findings that purport to describe the demographic profile of stranger child abductions have been mixed, resulting in a number of competing perspectives. The most common data recorded pertains to victim age and to victim sex. Studies have shown the gender split to be largely even (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Asdigian, 1995; Gallagher, Bradford & Pease, 2008), whereas others have found females to be over-represented at rates ranging from the 60.00-65.00% (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Rodriguez, Nahirny, Burgess and Burgess, 1998; Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson, 2008) to 81.00% (Asdigian, Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1995).

Some studies have found that stranger child abduction is most strongly associated with older victims, with reports indicating peaks of victimization between 13 years and 16 years (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Gallagher, Bradford & Pease, 2008; Miller et al., 2008; Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak, 2002). Other studies, however, indicate that younger victims, aged 10-11 years, are most at risk (Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999; Gregoire, 2010; Newiss & Fairbrother, 2004). The study by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999) goes some way to explaining why there are differences in age and sex. They show that offenders are likely to prefer school aged victims, particularly around the age of 10 years, as they are the least defended. Victims at other ages are more likely to either defend themselves or to be guarded by other actors, such as parents.
Offender characteristics are recorded less often, although findings tend to be more consistent than those dealing with victims. It has been consistently and overwhelmingly shown that males are vastly over-represented as offenders in stranger abduction cases (Gallagher et al., 2008; Finkelhor et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2008; Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999). Reports range from 86.00% of stranger child abductors being male (Finkelhor, et al., 2002) to 98.00% (Boudreaux et al., 1999). A sub-type of stranger child abduction, involving maternal desire, is dominated by female victims (Ankrom & Lent, 1995; Baker et al., 2003). However, this is distinct from the current topic of study. Similarly, studies examining the age of offers found that, although stranger child abductors can be of any age, the majority of offenders are aged in their mid to late 20s (Finkehlor et al., 2002; Gallagher, et al., 2008; Gregoire, 2010; Bourdreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999). That said, as of yet, no study has analysed how an offender’s age influences the properties of stranger child abduction cases.

There have been particularly interesting findings relating to offender background. Stereotypes of stranger child abductors would suggest that all such offenders are predatory paedophiles with specialised offending interest in children. However, it has been found that stranger child abductors tend to have either a diverse criminal, with a majority (75.00%) of child abducting offenders and other similar offenders (Liu, Francis & Soothill, 2007) having perpetrated a range of offence types, and a smaller number (25.00%) having no offence history at all (Beasley, et al., 2009; Langevin, 2006; Gregoire, 2010). These findings suggest extremely low levels of specialisation among child abductors. As with offender age, the effect of such background on case outcome remains un-researched.

There is little information available regarding even quite basic offence features. The time of day at which offences occur. Finkelhor and Ormrod (2000), who split the day into four blocks of six hours, found that stranger child abductions most frequently occur in the afternoon (noon till 6pm), at 44.00% of the time, followed closely by evening (6pm till
Midnight). A notable amount (15.00%) occurred in the morning (6am till Noon), with the fewest occurring at night (Midnight till 6am). By far the most specific study was carried out by Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson (2008), who were able to analyse the time of the offence down to the hour. Their examination of all abductions showed that offending was most likely to occur between 2pm and 9pm, what they referred to as “the afterschool and evening hours”. When controlling for stranger offenders specifically, a very similar pattern emerged, with a peak at around 4pm, with an additional unusually high number between 8 and 9am, which incidentally coincides with the time that children would normally be on their way to school.

Overall, the key trends between these studies is that offending tends to occur after what could be considered school hours and into the early evening, albeit with additional peaks early in the day. Miller et al. (2008) also broke down the rates at which various abduction types happened on each day of the week, finding that offences were spread evenly across the week, with the exception being that Sunday had somewhat fewer offences.

The location of offences is also uncommonly recorded. However, a number of location characteristics are commonly agreed upon. Miller et al. (2008) found that most 74.10% of offences occurred away from the home, with 45.7% occurring on “highways”. Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak (1992) similarly found that most non-family abduction offences occur in public, with 32.00% occurring in a street or car, 25.00% in a park or woodland and 14% in other public areas. 18.00% occurred in other homes or yards, with very few (<1%) occurring in stores. Finkelhor & Ormrod (2000) found stranger abductions to mostly occur outdoors (58%) in locations like “streets, highways, parks, waterways and other public areas”. 22.00% occurred in a residence or home, 17.00% in an “other building”, i.e., non-residential indoor location, and 3.00% at schools. In all, stranger child abductions appear to occur
predominantly in public and outdoors, with street areas being repeatedly cited as the most common offence site.

With regard to offender race, UK studies have found offenders to be predominantly white. Newiss and Fairbrother report 90% incidence of white offenders, with others finding that race plays such a small role that it was not reported (Gallagher et al., 2008).

From this, a tentative profile of key recurring features of stranger child abduction can be drawn. However, little to no further analysis of demographic information such as this has been carried out in existing studies. It is unclear the extent to which, e.g., that an offender’s background influences other features of their offences. Additionally, very little work has been done to examine how these features differ between attempted and completed cases.

The aim of this study is to examine the demographic features of victims and offenders involved in cases of stranger child abduction in the UK, and to establish the extent to which offenders and victims’ profiles differ depending on case outcome. This comparison will enable identification of case features and demographic trends that have associations with cases where the abduction attempt is completed, and to discuss the mechanisms underlying such association.

For the reasons outlined in Chapter 4 above, the data available regarding stranger child abduction is limited, however, given the findings detailed above, it is hypothesized that there will be a difference in the demographic profiles between attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction. Aside from that, this study is exploratory in nature and seeks to provide additional information regarding the features of stranger child abduction, particularly demographic features as well as basic offence features.

5.2 Method
This study draws on the sample of 78 cases of stranger child abduction discussed at length in Chapter 4. The variables relating to whether the offence was attempted or completed are detailed in that chapter. Analyses for this particular study, also discussed in Chapter 4, utilise frequency tests and chi-square tests administered using SPSS. The additional variables specific to this study are detailed as follows:

This section was the most straightforward in terms of coding. Information pertaining to the characteristics of the offender, the victim, and the offence were recorded. Ages of victims and offender were recorded in both ordinal and scale fashion, i.e., by exact age, and by age group to allow for different analyses. All other information was recorded as nominal values, i.e., they were coded according to whether that factor was it present or not.

It should be noted that the term “sex” is preferred to the term “gender”. Sex refers to the biological makeup of the individual in question, whereas gender relates to a more complex social construct that is contingent on history and perception (see Walker & Cook, 1988; Pryzgoda & Chrisler, 2000). As it is only possible for the data to speak to the biological characteristics of subjects, the term “sex” is therefore used when determining whether someone is male, female or otherwise.

This was mostly based on common sense, commonly reported aspects of offending, assisted somewhat by factors mentioned frequently in previous studies. Additions included factors relating to timing, such as the time of day, month, and season of the offence, as well as its duration. It was not possible to accurately record distance travelled in most cases. Both the literature review and personal correspondence with senior forensic psychology staff at the National Crime Agency indicated that this would be desirable, however the current design and data available meant this was not a viable avenue for investigation.
**Victim sex** was coded simply according to how the victim was identified in the data available.

**Victim Age** was coded again according to the age, in years, specified in the data. In addition, victim age was grouped.

**Offender age,** similarly, was coded according to the age, in years, reported by the data. Offender age was grouped.

**Offending History** was coded based on the overriding character of the previous offences attributed to the offender in the data. The offender was coded as violent if their offences predominantly involved assaultive and aggressive, non-sexual acts; as sexual if their history was characterised by sexual acts against adults, or a mixture of adults and children; as chronic child sex offenders if their history consist of only or predominantly repeated sexual offences targeted specifically against victims aged under 18 (see, e.g., Jennings, 2015); and general offenders where the offending background included a variety of offences, including property offences; and no offending history was recorded if the offender was reported to have no prior convictions (see Beasley et al., 2009).

**Offence Outcome** was coded depending on whether an abduction event had been completed in law. If an offender had completed the act of taking control over a child, the event was coded as a completed abduction. If the offender had not completed such an action, but there was clear evidence that they had made an effort to do so, the case was coded as an attempted abduction.

**Area of the Offence** was coded according to the general description of the area provided by the case file. The codes utilized were developed based on those that have been identified
in existing literature, and included streets and roads, wooded areas and parks, schools, city centres, shops, and with any other locations being categorized as “other”.

*Time of Day* was coded by dividing the day into 3 discrete sections of morning, afternoon and evening.

*Day of the Week* was coded simply based on the day of the week on which the offence took place.

5.3 Results

Of the cases analysed, 32.50% of involved attempted incidents of stranger child abduction, with 67.50% involving completed incidents of stranger child abduction. The proportions of attempted and completed cases present in each of the demographic features examined will be discussed in their relevant section below.

5.3.1 Victim Characteristics

5.3.1a Victim Sex

*Victim sex overall.* The sex split of victims represented in this study was roughly even, with 54.43% female and 45.57% male.
Victim sex and abduction completion. As Table 5.1 illustrates, the shape of the sex distribution alters greatly when differentiating attempted and completed cases. In attempted cases, females are represented far more often than males, being present in 64% of attempted cases. Conversely, and more surprisingly, males become the most common victim when examining only completed cases, present in 52.94% of cases, when they represented only 45.57% of victims in stranger abductions overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Sex</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36.00% (n=9)</td>
<td>51.79% (n=29)</td>
<td>46.91% (n=38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64.00% (n=16)</td>
<td>48.21% (n=27)</td>
<td>53.09% (n=43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (N=25)</td>
<td>100% (N=56)</td>
<td>100% (N=81)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As such, there is a clear difference between attempted cases and completed cases when controlling for sex.

5.3.1b Victim Age.

Of the 81 victims represented in the full dataset, it was not possible to discern the exact ages of 3. The figures in this section refer to the 78 victims whose ages were discernible.

The age range was 2-17 years. This range of victim ages ran almost the entire range of possible ages to be considered a child for the purposes of stranger child abduction. Victims were, on average, 10.86 years old. There was a standard deviation of 3.078 from that mean. This places the mean at roughly the middle range of possible ages.

10 years was also the most represented age, with 14 (17.90%) victims being 10 years old at the time of the offence. The next most frequent ages were 13 (14.10%), 11 (12.80%), 14 (10.30%) and 12 (10.30%) years, with the least represented ages being at either extreme of
age-the ages of 2 years and 3 years, and 17 years, were represented by single victims. There was noticeable drop off at the age of 15 years. Given the small range of ages represented, the data’s distribution roughly follows a standard distribution, with only the ages of 10 years and 13 years being notably over-represented.

5.3.1c Comparing Attempted and Completed Abductions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Age</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-9 Years</td>
<td>44.00% (n=11)</td>
<td>20.00% (n=11)</td>
<td>27.50% (n=22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 Years</td>
<td>56.00% (n=14)</td>
<td>72.72% (n=40)</td>
<td>67.50% (n=54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18 Years</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
<td>7.27% (n=4)</td>
<td>5.00% (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (N=25)</td>
<td>100% (N=55)</td>
<td>100% (N=80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 25 identified attempted cases of stranger child abduction where age was discernible, 11 (44.00%) victims were aged 2-9, 14 (56.00%) were aged 10-15, and none were aged 16-18. The victim’s age ranged from 2-14. The average age was slightly lower than in overall abductions, at 9.67 (SD 3.332).

In the 55 completed cases, 11 (20.00%) victims were aged 0-10, 40 (72.73%) were aged 11-14, and 4 (7.27%) were aged 16-18. Their ages ranged from 3 to 17, with a mean age of 11.11 (SD 2.792).

The pattern observed in completed cases is very similar to the pattern observed in child abduction overall. The average age is once again 10 years, and is vastly over-represented.

---

6 Pearson’s Chi-Square showed significant association between offence outcome and victim age group, $X^2 (2, N=80)=6.131$, p=0.047.
This becomes even more pronounced, as, unlike with the overall figures, there is no accompanying peak observed at age 13 years. As such, in completed cases, 10 years appears to be an age of particular significance.

However, the pattern changes clearly when attempted cases are examined. The age distribution does not comfortably follow a distribution curve. There are large peaks in victimization at ages 8 and 13 years, with victimization also being high at ages 10, 11, 12 and 14 years. This seems to indicate that victims both slightly older as well as slightly younger than 10 are also being victimized to a high degree; however the offences against them are more commonly going uncompleted.

5.3.2 Offender Characteristics

5.3.2a Offender’s Sex

As discussed above, 100% of the offenders in the sample were male due to inclusion criteria allowing only for male subjects.

5.3.2b Offender’s Age

Offender Age Overall. The youngest offender in the sample was 18 years old (the youngest age suitable for inclusion), with the oldest offender being aged 59 years old at the time of the offence. The average age of offender was 35.05, with a standard deviation of 10.582. It was not possible to determine the age of 11.30% (n=7) offenders. Where an offender was responsible for multiple offences, the above calculations used their age at the first known offence, when known.
Offender Age in Attempted and Completed Cases. In cases that became attempts (n=24), the average offender age was 31.83 years (SD=10.512). In cases where the offence was completed and age was known (n=30.00), the average offender age was 37.83 years (SD=10.151). As such, offenders in attempted cases were likely to be somewhat younger than offenders whose abductions were successful, although on average offenders remained in the mid-to-late 30’s age range when accounting for completion.

The age group of the offender was found to have a significant association with both whether the abduction element of the offence itself was attempted or completed (p=0.010), as well as whether any further offence took place against the victim, i.e., whether the abduction was escalated (p=0.018).

The pattern that emerged when comparing attempted and completed cases, as shown in Table 5.3, was that, on the whole, offenders in attempted cases were more likely to belong to the younger age category, whereas offenders in completed cases tended to belong to mid-range or older age groups and aged over 50 years in 12.50% of cases.

In cases where an effort was made to escalate the offence, while offenders generally were successful in doing so (70.30%), the completion rate was somewhat higher for offenders in the mid-range age group (80.00%) than it was for younger offenders (61.50%), and was even less so for the oldest group (50.00%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender Age Group at Time of the Offence by Offence Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total N</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2c Offender Age and Level of Post-Abduction Movement

As revealed by the Matrix of Association, there was an additional significant effect for an offender’s age group on whether the offender moved the victim to various crime sites following the initial abduction \(((10, n=54)=20.940, p=0.021)\).

The younger group was much more likely to not have moved the victim. The most common reason for this was a failure to progress the offence to a point where abduction was successful.

This appears to indicate that younger offenders would be likely to give up their abduction attempt or otherwise fail to abduct their victim at an earlier stage of the offence than older offenders. The implications of this finding will be discussed below.

Table 5.4: Post-Abduction Victim Movement According to Offender Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender Age</th>
<th>No Movement</th>
<th>False Imprisonment</th>
<th>To Secluded Area</th>
<th>To Offender's Home</th>
<th>To Home not of the Offender's</th>
<th>To Public Area</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
<td>25.00% (n=3)</td>
<td>46.67% (n=7)</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-49</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
<td>66.67% (n=2)</td>
<td>66.67% (n=8)</td>
<td>40.00% (n=6)</td>
<td>100% (n=2)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
<td>33.33% (n=1)</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2d Offending Background

Results indicated that offenders in the sample had a diverse range of offending backgrounds. Offenders could be categorized into groups that best described their overall offending history. 42.30% had no recorded offending history at all, 20.50% were generalized offenders who had a range of convictions including property offending, violent offending and others, 17.9% were predominantly violent offenders, a relatively small proportion at 3.80% were predominantly sex offenders, 3.80% had offending careers characterized by alcohol problems, with 11.50% being categorized as chronic child sex offenders. Note that, cumulatively, 15.30% of offenders could be considered sex offenders if general and child sex offenders were combined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offending History Type</th>
<th>Overall Frequency</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Offending History</td>
<td>33 (42.30%)</td>
<td>15 (45.45%)</td>
<td>18 (54.54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized Offending</td>
<td>16 (20.50%)</td>
<td>6 (37.50%)</td>
<td>10 (62.50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Offending</td>
<td>14 (17.90%)</td>
<td>5 (35.70%)</td>
<td>9 (64.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offending</td>
<td>31 (39.70%)</td>
<td>9 (29.00%)</td>
<td>22 (71.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>4 (5.10%)</td>
<td>1 (25.00%)</td>
<td>3 (75.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Child Sex Offending</td>
<td>30 (38.46%)</td>
<td>5 (16.67%)</td>
<td>25 (83.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing Illegal Images</td>
<td>2(2.56%)</td>
<td>0(0.00%)</td>
<td>2 (100.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Note that totals in each column are higher than 100% to reflect offenders whose histories included multiple offending types
In terms of holding a conviction for any offence, 17.90% had been convicted of a violent offence, 39.70% of a previous offence, 5.10% for a substance abuse related offence, 38.46% of a sex offence involving a child, and 2.56% had been convicted for accessing illegal images of children.

5.3.2e Victim Sex, Offender's Background: Male Victims and Chronic Offenders

In order to test for significant interactions between the factors discussed alongside offence outcome, a matrix of association was created. This returned highly significant effects when comparing victim sex with offender background. The test of association showed that there was a significant interaction between victim sex and offender background. This association was particularly strong for offenders with a history of chronic child sex offending ($X^2(1, N=59)=10.750, p=0.001, \text{Cramer's } V=0.376$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Sex</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Child Sex Offender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>61.11% (n=22)</td>
<td>92.5% (n=37)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38.89% (n=14)</td>
<td>7.50% (n=3)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (n=36)</td>
<td>100% (n=40)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2(1, N=59)=10.750, p=0.001, \text{Cramer's } V=0.376$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim's Sex</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous</td>
<td>No Offending History</td>
<td>47.22% (n=17)</td>
<td>35.00% (n=14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offending</td>
<td>Generalized</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.33% (n=3)</td>
<td>32.50% (n=13)</td>
<td>21.05 (n=16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>11.11% (n=4)</td>
<td>25.00% (n=10)</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>8.33% (n=3)</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
<td>3.95% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse Related</td>
<td>2.78% (n=1)</td>
<td>5.00% (n=2)</td>
<td>3.95% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Child Sex Offending</td>
<td>22.22% (n=8)</td>
<td>2.50% (n=1)</td>
<td>11.84% (n=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (N=36)</td>
<td>100% (N=40)</td>
<td>100% (N=76)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[X^2(5, N=76)=17.728, p=0.003, \text{ Cramer's } V=0.483\]

Offenders with a history of child sex offending were far more likely to select male victims, doing so in 88.87% of cases. On the one hand, offenders with a generalized or mixed criminal career were far more likely to target female victims. Offenders with general offence histories that included crimes of dishonesty, theft, sex and/or violence targeted females 81.25% of the time, and those with previous violent histories who had transitioned to sexual offences targeted females in 71.40% of cases involving such offenders. This was a statistically significant association, \[X^2(5, N=76)=17.728, p=0.003, \text{ Cramer's } V=0.483\].

### 5.3.3 Timing of the Offence

There was a fairly even distribution of offences across each day of the week, with the only notable trend being a slight increase in offences on Thursday, and a decrease on Wednesday. When comparing attempted and completed cases, there was a slight trend indicating that offences enacted on the weekend were less likely to become attempted cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of the Week</th>
<th>All Offences</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9.64% (n=8)</td>
<td>14.29% (n=5)</td>
<td>13.04% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>All Offences</td>
<td>Attempted</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>10.84% (n=9)</td>
<td>11.43% (n=4)</td>
<td>21.74% (n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>4.82% (n=4)</td>
<td>11.43% (n=4)</td>
<td>0% (n=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>14.46% (n=12)</td>
<td>25.71% (n=9)</td>
<td>13.04% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>8.43% (n=7)</td>
<td>14.29% (n=5)</td>
<td>8.70% (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>10.84% (n=9)</td>
<td>8.71% (n=3)</td>
<td>26.09% (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>10.84% (n=9)</td>
<td>14.29% (n=5)</td>
<td>17.39% (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (N=58)</td>
<td>100% (N=35)</td>
<td>100% (N=23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9: Time of Day on which the Offence Took Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>All Offences</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning: 6am-Noon</td>
<td>14.63% (n=6)</td>
<td>20.00% (n=3)</td>
<td>11.54% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon: Noon-6pm</td>
<td>41.46% (n=17)</td>
<td>40.00% (n=6)</td>
<td>42.41% (n=11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening: 6PM-Midnight</td>
<td>43.90% (n=18)</td>
<td>40.00% (n=6)</td>
<td>46.15% (n=12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night: Midnight-6am</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
<td>0.00% (n=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (N=41)</td>
<td>100% (N=15)</td>
<td>100% (N=26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was found to be no significant interaction between offence timing, either time of day or day of the week.

### 5.3.4 Location of the Offence

General patterns strongly indicate that offenders tend to target victims in street or road locations. Parks and wooded areas are the next most common location. Small proportions of offences occur in shops, with a very small number occurring at or around schools. The “other” locations (n=11) were as follows: Fairground; bus stop; house of mutual acquaintance during a party; internet café; outside victim’s friend’s house; train station.

Table 5.10: Location at which the Offence Took Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>All Offences</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

180
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence Location</th>
<th>Street or Road</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Shop</th>
<th>Park/Wooded Area</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.85% (n=42)</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
<td>8.97%</td>
<td>17.95% (n=14)</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
<td>100% (N=78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.02% (n=25)</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>9.80%</td>
<td>19.61% (n=10)</td>
<td>15.69%</td>
<td>100% (n=51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.69% (n=17)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>14.81% (n=4)</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>100% (n=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was found to be no statistically significant association between the location at which the offence was initiated and the outcome of the offence. The only notable trend relating to offence completion was that offences initiated on a street or road were marginally more likely to end as an attempt, whereas offences initiated in all other locations were more likely to end as completed abductions.

### 5.4 Discussion

The results indicate that there is a notable level of variation in the features of stranger child abduction when controlling for case outcome. By far the most notable findings are the interaction between an offender’s background and victim sex, and the patterns observed in victim age. The overriding purpose of this chapter was to examine the extent to which there are differences in the profiles of attempted cases of stranger child abduction and completed cases of stranger child abduction, with a focus on victim characteristics, offender characteristics, and offence characteristics. For all of the demographic features examined, the offending profile did indeed appear to vary depending on whether the offence became completed or not, indicating that demographics likely have a role to play with case outcome. As such, the primary hypothesis is confirmed.

#### 5.4.1 Victim Sex
The findings pertaining to victim sex are of particular interest as they indicate that, while female victims are at more risk of being targeted by stranger child abduction overall, male victims run a greater risk of suffering a completed abduction when they are targeted. These findings observed in this study are largely consistent with those made by Newiss and Fairbrother (2004), who carried out the only other study known to specifically compare cases of attempted and completed stranger abduction. They found that, in attempts, 61.00% of victims were female, whereas in completed cases, this fell to 54.00%. Although not quite as severe a difference as identified in the current study, this still indicates that there is consistent evidence that females are more present in attempted cases than male victims.

5.4.2 Victim Sex Interaction with Offender Background

Furthermore, a strong interaction was found with regard to victim sex and the interaction this has with offender background. It was found that chronic sex offenders targeted male victims more frequently than they do females. In combination with the finding that generalized offenders target females victims more often, this trend could explain why offences against male victims succeed more often than they do against females. It is likely that chronic sex offenders tend to be more experienced offenders. They are likely to have carried out similar offences in the past and may have had time to consider and reflect on this type of offending in detail. As such, there is reason to suspect that such individuals are more capable of identifying suitable victims and recognizing conditions in the environment and characteristics of the victim that reduce risk to them and increase chances of success (see, e.g., Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

Chronic offenders are also less likely to offend in a completely opportunistic fashion. Generalized offenders, by virtue of having little specific preference for children, are more likely to be dissuaded from offending if they are met with resistance and subsequently
abscond or redirect their criminogenic behaviour onto another target, which could be another child, but could also be an adult, of even a piece of property, or they may resolve their need in a non-criminogenic manner in that instance, i.e., by masturbating or watching pornography (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). The results appear to indicate that chronic offenders are more likely to have a specialized interest in male children, and therefore perceive fewer alternatives to meet their criminogenic needs aside from targeting male victims directly, thereby making them more persistent in their pursuit of such victims.

An additional related finding was that the chronic sex offenders were somewhat older on average than the rest of the sample. This could be taken as further evidence of their likely persistence, given that the dataset also found that older offenders, regardless of offending background, were more likely to be persistent than younger offenders and give up later in the offence sequence. Moreover, male victims were also younger overall than female victims. Younger victims appeared less able to enact resistance techniques or recognize dangerous situations than older victims (Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999) which replicates findings observed in research attempting to teach children for varying ages protection and safety skills (Hilme, Miltenberger, Flessner & Gatheridge, 2004).

5.4.3 Victim Age

This examination of attempted and completed offences equips us to tentatively comment on the point put forward by Boudreaux et al. (1999) regarding why stranger child abductions seems to onset the most at school age, and why the age of 10 seems to be a recurring mean age in (most) previous studies. As a reminder, Boudreaux suggests that the reason why children of school age seem to be targeted by (sexually motivated male) stranger abductors is likely to be a combination of stranger child abduction being mostly an opportunistic offence, and because school age coincides with children receiving both more
autonomy and less constant supervision whilst maintaining childhood naiveté, making them more suitable targets. The current findings can add to this. The distribution of completed cases shows a peak at age 10, as might have been expected to occur given that this reflects the findings of previous studies. However, when examining attempted cases, peaks do not occur at 10, but rather at ages of 8 and of 13. This means, building on the hypothesis made by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999), that 10 is the age where a victim is most at risk of being successfully targeted by a stranger child abductor, but is not the age at which they are most likely to be targeted overall. This is likely by reason of this age having the greatest overlap of circumstances where protective factors are weakest, and where opportunities for offending exist.

This may also explain and reconcile discrepancies observed in the victim age patterns reported by existing studies. Self-reports identify many more offences against older victims than those reports that utilize official statistics. The patterns observed in this study appear to indicate that these older victims are able to resist the offences against them, which makes it less likely that they will not come into contact with the criminal justice system. If this is accepted, this has the further implication that stranger child abduction is more commonly perpetrated against older victims, but that these are going unrecorded as a result of victims resisting the offence and subsequently not reporting it to relevant authorities.

5.4.4 Offender Age

The age of the offender did not appear to reveal any particularly notable patterns with reference to offence outcome. However, when examining the extent to which offenders escalated their offending beyond the mere attempt of abduction, there was a pattern whereby older offenders appeared to be more persistent in their offending than younger offenders. Younger offenders appeared to desist at an earlier occasion, or not attempt to escalate their
offending at all, whereas older offenders would be more likely to escalate their offending to completion.

5.4.5 Offence Characteristics

The study appeared to show that basic offence characteristics, including offence location, time of day, and day of the week, had little to no interaction with case outcome. However, it has been useful to gather this dataset in order to provide a profile of stranger child abduction incidents. The findings confirm, as has been shown by Miller et al (2008) and Finkelhor and Ormrod (2000) that most offences occur in street areas, with notable numbers also occurring in parks and woodland. Day of the week appears to have little influence on case outcome, with no discernible patterns occurring aside from a limited trend whereby a greater proportion of offences fail on the weekend, however, this association was not found to be statistically significant. The findings regarding the time of day at which offences occur were inconsistent, showing only a general tendency for offences to occur later in the day. The tentative conclusion from this study, in combination with previous inconsistent results, is that offence timing has little association with offence outcome, and that there are no clear trends in offence timing that can aid in risk assessment. Given that existing findings were equally inconclusive (Miller et al, 2008; Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000), future work should attempt to gather more detailed information on this aspect of stranger child abduction in order to ascertain more concretely whether offence timing has any effect on case outcome.

5.4.6 Future Directions

It is recommended that future research attempt to differentiate between the behavioural patterns of stranger child abductors according to the offender’s age in order to further illuminate this pattern. In addition to helping to create a clearer picture of patterns in stranger child abduction, examining this offence type according to attempted and completed cases, the
findings from this study, when compared to existing work, leads to interesting possible reasons for discrepancies observed between studies. Particularly with reference to victim age patterns, the current findings are in line with trends identified by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999), where it was found that there was an increase in victimization by stranger abductors as children became more autonomous, resulting in a spike between the ages of 10 and 15. This trend is largely replicated here, with the majority of victims falling between the spread of 10-14 years of age. This was also contemporaneous with Miller et al.’s. (2008, p. 536) work which found a similar pattern when comparing abductor type with victim age. However, these findings, as well as the current findings are somewhat at odds with Finkelhor, Hammer and Sedlak (2002), who found that in nonfamily cases generally, victims tended to be 15 or over. The present findings showed that this was by far the least represented group, appearing only a tenth as often as Finkelhor et al. (2002) found.

It may be possible to explain this discrepancy by examining the types of data used in each study. Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak (2002) combined acquaintance and stranger abductions under a single heading. Other studies, most notably Finkelhor’s own previous work with Ormrod (2000), demonstrated that acquaintance abductors display a preference for victims towards the higher end of the age bracket in terms of their offending frequency. That said, Finkelhor and Ormrod (2000) also showed a steadily climbing rise in victimization frequency from school age up until the age of 15, where there was not only a peak, but a plateau. This is similarly not replicated by the present findings. This is likely due to under-representation of this age group in the present sample.

Another notable discrepancy is between present findings and Gallagher et al. (2008), who, whilst not discussing the point in much detail, showed that stranger abductions were more common among older victims than younger, with those aged 13 or over being victimized more often than those aged between 9 and 12. Those studies reporting older ages
to be the average, with the exception of Finkelhor & Ormrod (2000), incorporated self-report elements that the other studies have not. It is possible that there is a greater frequency of victimization towards older children by stranger child abductors that is not well reflected in official records. This argument would make sense since self-report based studies, such as Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak (1992) and Gallagher et al. (2008), indicated that report rates are low since cases are frequently unrecognized or dismissed as innocuous by those experiencing them.

It is very likely that these offences would be attempted cases. Completed cases become far more likely to be reported, and hence would be more likely to be reflected in studies utilizing police data or court data (presuming conviction). An alternative explanation could be that offences against older victims are escalated more often, and hence are reported, coded and even subjectively thought of as, i.e., a rape or sexual assault and not as an abduction.

5.4.7 Limitations of the Study

The method utilized in this study has a number of unfortunate but unavoidable limitations. Firstly, the use of media and legal cases means that this data-set is likely skewed towards more serious cases that have newsworthy elements. The decision to utilize only convicted cases, although necessary for the purposes of verification, further skews the dataset towards serious offences. As such, the dataset may not accurately represent all incidences of stranger child abduction. Secondly, the sample is small. Both Gallagher et al (2008) and Newiss and Traynor (2013) reported that most cases do not go reported, which means that there is a limited number of cases that progress to the conviction stage, and even fewer that have sufficient levels of detail such that they can be fully analysed. The authors would argue that, given the exploratory nature of this study, and given the useful findings of other, similar
studies examining child abduction (e.g., Shelton, Hiltz & MacKizer, 2016), that utilizing a small but detailed sample provide a robust foundation on which to build future work.

Thirdly, a number of potentially relevant offender, victim and offence characteristics could not be identified with a sufficient level of consistency for analysis in this study, including: ethnicity and nationality of offenders; ethnicity and nationality of victims; offender employment (current and historical); offender education level; offender family background; and offender marital status. Their absence is due to these factors not being routinely recorded by police, the media, or the courts. These characteristics have been found to be important in other studies (i.e., Shelton, Hiltz & MacKizer, 2016), and it is recommended that future studies attempt to gather information pertaining to these.

These drawbacks are regrettable; however, this data represents the best information currently available on this population. Most offences of stranger child abduction are not brought to the attention of authorities, and when they are, there are a number of recording issues, including potentially relevant demographic details not being noted, and their being inadequate distinctions between acquaintance and stranger abductions (see Newiss & Traynor, 2013). As a result, the current small, relatively un-representative sample represents the only source of data where an acceptable level of detail on this population exists, and could be readily accessed by researchers.

5.5 Conclusions

This largely exploratory study, despite having a fairly small sample with limited representativeness, appears to demonstrate that the profile of stranger child abduction alters to notable degree when completed offences are compared to attempted offences.
The direct findings from this study raise a number of questions that should be prioritized in further research, and could even necessitate practical change in how one treats such offences. In particular, the finding that males and females have such distinct victimization patterns in terms of how often offences are completed against them, as well as in what kind of offenders target them, requires further exploration and explanation. Of similar importance, the findings indicate that additional measures are required to protect children aged closer to 10, making it useful to examine which features make them particularly vulnerable and what countermeasures could be viable. It may also be necessary to re-evaluate how children are taught to resist such offences, given the distinct risks faced by children of various sexes and age groups.

The primary avenue for investigation with regard to offenders alluded to by these findings would be the extent of offender persistence. It appears that certain offender features—particularly age and offending background—interact with how likely they are to pursue a single offending opportunity rather than to discontinue their offending or migrate to other offences. Further examination of offender characteristics as they pertain to abduction offence outcome, a notable gap left by the few previous studies examining this issue (notably Finkelhor, Hotaling & Asdigian, 1995) bears further examination.

At a practical level for researchers, this leads to an endorsement of continuing to analyse stranger child abduction cases according to the attempted-completed distinction. It will be extremely useful for future researchers if agencies involved with recording information pertaining to such behaviour distinguish between attempted and completed cases when taking information. It will also be useful if researchers take care to notify readers of the proportions of attempted and completed cases in future work on this topic, which will be especially useful in avoiding future, problematic discrepancies in analysis caused by inappropriately treating these distinct types as one.
In addition to the questions raised by the specific findings of this study, it would be particularly useful if other important offending features present in stranger child abduction be compared according to offence outcome. Initial recommendations would be to analyse commonly recorded crime features such as abduction site, use of vehicles, and use of tools and weapons, as this information is likely to be relatively easy to collect while also representing valuable avenues for investigation that would be likely to reveal valuable further information with regard to the profile of stranger child abduction.
Chapter 6: The Effectiveness of Victim Resistance Strategies Against Stranger Child Abduction

Chapter Summary

Having examined the core features of stranger child abduction offences, the next most cited way in which to examine stranger child abduction is by studying factors that play a role in preventing abductions from taking place, or mitigating harm to victims. The most immediately obvious of these is to examine the ways in which victims themselves can respond to instances of stranger child abduction, and to examine whether the victim’s response has an impact on whether cases become attempted or completed.

A review of existing research, policy information, and materials intended to teach children assume that certain behaviours will protect children in the event that a stranger tries to abduct them is carried out in order to identify key messages being communicated to children and their guardians. It is argued that, although such lessons can be useful, there is little empirical basis for suggesting that such measures are effective in practice. This chapter analyses the dataset of stranger child abductions in order to ascertain which behaviours children employ in practice, and assesses the effectiveness of these strategies by measuring whether they are associated with attempted or completed case outcomes. The study also assess how widely held assumptions regarding the effectiveness of certain resistance strategies compare to these empirical results.

Results show that direct, unequivocal verbal resistance, running away, and a composite approach where the victim runs away, calls for help and reports the offence were highly effective means of resisting an offender, whereas physical resistance, indirect verbal
resistance and non-resistance were not effective. Female victims were almost twice as likely to employ any kind of resistance strategy against an offender as male victims. The implications of these findings for augmenting ways in which children are taught about safety are discussed.
6.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to evaluate which behaviours by the victims of stranger child abduction correlate with how effectively victims are able to resist being abducted. When a child is targeted by a stranger abductor, it is not a foregone conclusion that they will in fact be abducted. Recent findings analysing stranger child abduction in the UK have revealed that up to 75.00% of stranger child abductions are attempted cases where the child is not abducted (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Furthermore, Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak (2002) found that the vast majority, over 99.00%, of abduction cases end with no physical harm to the victim. These findings suggest that even when a child is taken or detained by a stranger there is still opportunity for the child to escape, thereby preventing or avoiding further physical harm. This chance of resistance or escape is of critical importance as although injury is rare, the potential physical harm a child can suffer in these circumstances is immense, particularly if the abduction is allowed to continue for any significant duration (Hanfland, Keppel & Weis, 2006).

The effectiveness of victim resistance in deterring or minimizing a full attack has been the subject of previous research in relation to other crimes besides child abduction. These areas of study include robbery (Cook, 1986; Kleck & DeLone, 1993), carjacking (e.g., Copes, Hochstetler & Cherbonneau, 2012), and violent assaults (e.g., Fritzon & Ridgway, 2001). The most widely studied area involves rape and sexual assault (e.g., Kleck & Sayles, 1990; Woodhams, Hollin, Bull & Cooke, 2011), with a small number of studies having examined resistance in child sexual abuse cases (Leclerc, Wortley & Smallbone, 2011; Elliott, Browne & Kilcoyne, 1995). Unfortunately, there is a lack of information pertaining to the nature, role or prevalence of victim resistance in stranger child abduction cases.
The focus of most of this research is on the interactional element of offending, i.e., how the responses of the victim influences the behaviour of the offender, and vice-versa (Fritzon & Ridgway, 2001). Overall, the findings in these studies suggest that the role of resistance is not straightforward. It is not always the case that heightened resistance results in increased chance of the victim’s escape, and there is no exact calculus whereby the effects of resistance can be predicted. Some studies found that victim resistance is actually more likely to cause the offender to become more aggressive. Cusson (1998) refers to the process of ‘negative reciprocity’, where resistance only leads to heightened aggression or control on the offender’s part. In the worst cases, this can result in a cyclical process of heightened resistance and heightened aggression in return that can culminate with the victim being killed. Verbal resistance in particular has been identified as having a tendency to increase offender aggression in stranger rapes (Ullman & Knight, 1993). Although logical, this runs very much counter to mainstream perceptions of child abduction, where it is the norm to instruct children to say ‘no’. This is based on the understanding that such action can facilitate escape (Miltenberger & Olson, 2006). Thus, it is a matter of priority to establish whether such resistance can have such detrimental outcomes for child abduction cases.

Not all studies relating to stranger rape report that resistance had negative outcomes for the victim. Bachman and Carmody (1994) found that both physical and verbal resistance resulted in lessened risk of injury in stranger assaults compared to cases where victims did not resist. That said, those same behaviours correlated with greater harm when the victim knew the offender. Quinsey and Upfold (1985) found that screaming and calling for help was strongly associated with avoiding being raped and negatively associated with being injured when victimized by strangers at outdoor locations. This finding is far more likely to be compatible with stranger child abduction, where it has been consistently found that offences are far more likely to occur outdoors (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Miller, Kurlycheck,
Hansen & Wilson, 2008; Gallagher et al., 2008). The finding that calling for aid is a useful resistance strategy also makes sense from a rational choice perspective. If one accepts that there is a risk-reward analysis to offending perspective, it follows that offenders are less likely to engage in offending when risk of detection and interruption or when there is heightened chance of third party intervention (Cornish & Clarke, 1986).

It must be stressed that the overlap between the present study and the experiences of adult rape victims is imperfect. Most of the studies mentioned above dealt with adult victims, and only a small number examine stranger offences specifically. Still, the findings regarding the effect of resistance have been somewhat mixed in terms of how it effects on offender behaviour and likelihood that the victim can avoid harm. Such results make it desirable to engage in similar inquiries into how consistent the effects or resistance are with child victims of stranger abduction. A further example emerges on a careful reading of the resistance literature pertaining to resistance in rape. The verbal resistance being referred to is that which is employed as the rape was underway (Woodhams et al., 2012). This means that this literature may not directly overlap with the processes that occur during child abduction since abduction tends to occur prior to a further assault, not during it. This highlights how the literature on rape and sexual assault of adults, even by strangers, may have limited transferability to discussions of stranger child abduction.

Given this arguable lack of overlap, then, it is of concern that very few studies have dealt with the role of resistance by child victims. Those which have done so focused on the accounts of offenders involved in grooming type offences against children, which is of different character to stranger child abduction, but still highly useful. Notably, Leclerc, Wortley and Smallbone (2011) examined cases of child sexual abuse. To use child abduction terminology, all of these cases would be considered acquaintance abductions since the victims and offenders had prior contact and the offences occurred over an extended period of
Leclerc et al.’s (2011) study found that the main forms of resistance used by victims could be categorized as physical resistance, non-forceful verbal resistance, and forceful verbal resistance. Of all of these, they found forceful verbal resistance, in particular saying ‘no’, was by far the most effective resistance strategy. Non-forceful means, such as crying or making indirect objections, were found to be far less effective, either being ignored or overcome by offenders in most cases, and not preventing the abuse. Physical resistance, such as fighting, were the least effective, only seeming to prevent around 1 in every 10 cases. Physical resistance in particular was associated with offenders becoming violent. These findings are somewhat reflective of themes that emerged in the studies pertaining to adult victims.

It should be kept in mind that, in missing persons and child abduction literature, stranger child abductions traditionally are studied separately from grooming, as grooming is associated with family or acquaintance abduction, which has been shown to be substantively different from low-contact stranger offences (Asdigian, Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1995; Boudreaux et. al, 1998). As such, findings such as those from the child abuse resistance studies cannot be assumed to apply directly to stranger child abduction, as they refer to behaviours that did or did not prevent or interrupt a longer campaign of abuse by a known individual that may not even have involved an abduction component, as opposed to preventing an abduction event.

Despite problems of direct applicability, key trends can be discerned from these existing findings. The evidence from both adult resistance and grooming resistance perspectives seems to suggest that directly saying ‘no’ to offenders is the most useful strategy in resisting them, whereas utilization of indirect verbal means and physical resistance are associated with the offence being completed.
It should be highlighted that this body of research has the advantage of having been derived from real cases and actual events. They describe and quantify the types of resistance that were displayed in practice, and examine how the effectiveness each resistance measure in mitigating the offence. It may seem elementary to state this, but it bears mentioning because although there is a large body of literature on methods available for children to potentially use to resist child abduction and other attacks (see Newiss, 2014), very few such studies have examined how often children actually employ preventive measures or the extent to which said employment effects the offender’s decision making or the victim’s likelihood of escaping harm. The focus has, so far, been on how best to teach children to use preventive measures when confronted with abduction situations and how well they retain such teaching (e.g., Johnson, Miltenberger, Knudson, Egemo-Helm, Kelso, Jostad, & Langley, 2006; Gunby, Carr & LeBlanc, 2010), with little attention being paid to how well these behaviours promote chances of escape. In other words, the effectiveness of these strategies is largely assumed, with little in the way of an evidence base. This study hopes to act as a bridge, examining the role of victim resistance in actual stranger child abduction cases. The most common lessons, which will be explored in this paper, include: saying “No”; calling for help; running away; and physical self-defence (Johnson, et al., 2006; Poche, Brouwer, & Swearingen, 1981). A combined approach where multiple resistance techniques are employed at once, is a commonly depicted as the ideal response in most curriculum, and appears under the collective heading of “Run, Yell, Tell” (Newiss, 2014).

6.2 Offender’s Approach Towards the Victim

In order to properly consider victim resistance, it is necessary to ascertain what it is that victims are being faced with. This necessitates examination of the perpetrator’s approach to the offence. There appears to be a divide in the type of modus operandi, which refers to the
overall approach to offending (e.g., Hazelwood & Warren, 2004), utilized by the stranger child abductor. Most instances can be broadly categorized as either ‘lures’ or as ‘blitz’ attacks.

6.2.1 What is a ‘Lure’ and a ‘Blitz’?

In most of the pre-existing literature that discuss how children ought to behave in order to disrupt an offending incident, there appears to be an assumption that the offender will be utilizing a ‘lure’ approach (e.g., Johnson, Miltenberger, Egemo-Helm, Jostad, Flessner, & Gatheridge, 2005). A ‘lure’ type offence is sometimes called a confidence or con approach. It uses a process of rapport building and trickery in order to get the victim into a vulnerable position, whereupon the offender will carry out their offence against them (Holcombe, Wolerey, & Katzenmeyer, 1995). Leclerc, Proulx & Beauregard (2009) identify the key features of the ‘lure’ as involving the replication of “pro-social behaviours which consist of demonstrating love, attention [or] appreciation” (ibid, 2009, p. 8) towards the intended target, in other words, they are a non-coercive approach where friendliness is affected. Common examples of ‘lures’ include asking the child to go for a walk (a simple ‘lure’), enticing them to go with the offender with a promise of reward (incentive ‘lure’), or suggesting that a parent or teacher has authorized the offender to escort the child somewhere (authority ‘lure’) (Poche, 1981).

This focus means that most defensive measures are therefore aimed at teaching children to recognize and resist ‘lures’. Although ‘lures’ remain a highly relevant feature of stranger child abduction, around half of the offences identified in the current research did not use ‘lures’ at all, and were more straightforward attacks, which are examined under the heading of ‘blitz’ attacks. ‘Blitz’ is a term commonly used in discussions of modus operandi in rape (Savino & Turvey, 2005), but can be borrowed to apply to other sexual or aggressive case. As
LeBeau (1987) puts it, in adapting the work of Burgess and Holstrom, “[t]he essence of the blitz approach is that the rape occurs out of the blue and without prior interaction between the assailant and victim.’20 The offender immediately applies threat and force to subdue his victim” (LeBeau, 1987, p. 312). Additionally, it can be possible for the offender to have a very brief interaction with the offender to close the gap or to disarm them before launching into an assault- this would still be a ‘blitz’ style attack (Beauregard, Rossmo & Proulx, 2007).

In summary, current understanding of the role of victim resistance in stranger child abduction cases involving either modus operandi is limited. In order to bolster understanding of victim resistance, and to capitalize on what is known about the character of stranger child abduction, this study will examine whether the resistance factors identified above have differing effectiveness when used against both ‘lure’ abductions as well as ‘blitz’ abductions.

This article seeks to establish the prevalence of key victim resistance strategies particularly direct verbal resistance, non-direct verbal resistance, physical resistance, calling for help, and running away. It also aims to examine the extent to which these factors are associated with the outcome of the case. The key measure is therefore the effectiveness of resistance techniques. Effectiveness is ascertained according to the extent to which the presence of the resistance technique is associated with the outcome of an offence being attempted rather completed.

6.3 Method

This study draws on the sample of 78 cases of stranger child abduction discussed at length in Chapter 4. The variables relating to whether the offence was attempted or completed are detailed in that chapter. Analyses for this particular study, also discussed in
Chapter 4, utilise frequency tests and chi-square tests administered using SPSS. The additional variables specific to this study are detailed as follows:

A combined total of 9 variables relevant to victim resistance were identified for coding and analysis. This included the victim's sex, whether the offence was attempted or completed, the approach used by the offender utilizing the aforementioned ‘lure’ and ‘blitz’ distinction, and 6 variables relating to resistance.

These 6 resistance variables were broadly identified using the literature review above, although had to be operationalised for the study. They cover a relatively broad range of behaviours, but can be grouped into these 6 headings. They were coded as follows:

**Verbal resistance**, which refers to utilizing the spoken word to dissuade the offence, was divided into three headings.

**Direct verbal resistance** refers to clear and unequivocal statements to the offender that the victim does not wish to go or remain with them. This includes saying ‘no’, declining invitations, and telling the offender to go away or leave the victim alone.

**Indirect verbal resistance** includes less obvious verbal efforts to dissuade an offender. This includes making excuses, giving false information, and any statements that indicate discomfort that fall short of directly declining the offender, for example, that the victim's mother would not approve or that they victim needs to be home by a certain time. In essence, this is any verbal resistance directed towards the offender that is not clear and forceful.

**Calling for help** is differentiated from the other two verbal types of resistance in that the victim is directing or attempting to direct their verbal efforts towards a party besides the offender, whereas the other forms of verbal resistance are directed towards the offender.
Physical resistance involves any physical effort to prevent the offence, including hitting, pulling and attempting to overcome bonds or doors. This was also differentiated depending on how quickly the victim used such resistance, with ‘immediate’ meaning they resisted as soon as the offence was initiated, and ‘delayed’ involving a lapse of time before doing so.

Running away, which does overlap somewhat with physical resistance, refers to the victim putting distance between themselves and the offender. The victim moving away from the offender is coded as running away.

‘Run, Yell, Tell’ is a combined measure where the victim ran away from the offender, called for help, and told another adult about the offence. This is singled out due to the frequency of this being taught as a resistance technique (see Newiss, 2014). For the purposes of this study, resistance was coded as “Run, Yell, Tell” if there was evidence that the victim did all three of; running away from the offender; verbally shouted for help (whether anyone was there to hear this or not); and made a clear effort to inform a nearby source of help about the predicament as soon as they could. It would be possible for the yell and tell components to overlap, should aid be within immediate earshot when the incident is enacted.

6.4 Results

In terms of victim (n=81) demographics, 36 victims were male (46.00%) and 43 were female (54.00%), with 2 victims’ sexes being unidentifiable based on the report (both involved in the same case). The mean age of victim was 10.68 years, with a standard deviation of 3.03, and a range of 2-17.44% of victims were 2-10 years, 51% were aged 11-14, and 5% were aged 15-18.
By far the majority of victims were school aged. 4.00% of victims were preschool age (2-4), 40.00% were primary school age (5-10), 55% were high school age (11-16), with only 1.00%, a single victim, being above the permissible high school leavers age (17).

The offenders in this sample were exclusively male (n=53). 51.00% were aged 18-30 (n=27), 38.00% were aged 31-49 (n=20), and 10.00% were aged 50 or over (n=6). The age of 7.00% of the sample was not discernible. The average offender age was 34.77, with a standard deviation of 10.347. The age range was 19 to 59.

Of the 78 offences, 35.00% (n=27) were attempted abductions, and 65.00% (n=51) had the abduction element completed. In 25.30% of cases, escalation, as defined above, could not or did not occur either due to the abduction having been abandoned, having failed beforehand, or since the offender simply did not heightening their behaviour beyond moving or detaining the child in some manner; 20.00% of cases saw an attempt to escalate the offence fail, while 51.00% of cases saw an escalation attempt completed. The offender perpetrated an offence beyond abduction against the child, in this sample including rape, assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, and homicide. Note that touching the victim to facilitate movement was not considered to be evidence of escalation, but rather treated as part of the abduction element.

Where modus operandi could be determined, 43 cases (57.00%) could be considered ‘lures’, while 33 were ‘blitz’ attacks (43.00%). There were 2 cases where the modus operandi was not be identifiable due to lack of evidence, or did not fall comfortably into either category.

The majority of cases occurred outdoors (88.00%), with 8.00% occurring indoors and 4.00% occurring in a location that could be considered to straddle indoors and outdoors, i.e., an exposed stairwell.
Further results are broken down according to the main themes of resistance strategies identified from the review above, including the victim’s immediate reaction. Comparison is made throughout to three considerations: was the abduction element completed or attempted; was any escalation attempted or completed; and was the general approach of the offender a ‘blitz’ type attack or a ‘lure’.

### 6.4.1 Victim Resistance- Frequency

It was found that, overall, resistance of some kind was present in 64.00% of cases, and absent in 37.00%. When resistance was present, the types of resistance identified were as follows: directly saying ‘no’ in 11.90% of cases; indirect verbal resistance in 24.00%; calling for help in 5.00%; running away in 21.00%; physical resistance in 24%; and a combination of strategies: running, shouting and calling for help, labelled as ‘run, yell, tell, in 14.00%. This means each action was present more often that the individual figures indicate. The exact type of resistance could not be determined in 15.00% of cases overall.
Use of physical resistance was strongly associated ($X^2(2, N=76)=13.867, p=0.001, Cramer’s $V=0.413$) with sex. Male victims were far less likely to resist physically than females were. Males resisted physically only 14.00% of the time, whereas females did so 50.00% of the time.

Physical resistance was also significantly associated ($X^2(4, N=75)=11.257, p=0.024$) with victim age. Victims in the youngest and oldest age ranges were less likely to resist physically than those in the middle age range. Victims aged under 10 resisted physically 16.00% of the time, while 15-18 year olds did so 14.3% of the time. By contrast, victims aged 11-14 resisted physically in 50.00% of cases. An interesting additional finding occurred when
controlling for sex of the victim. Male children were more likely than female children (twice as often) to offer no resistance.

Table 6.1- Resistance Strategies According to Victim Age (By Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Victim Resistance</th>
<th>0-10</th>
<th>11-14</th>
<th>15-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Resistance</strong>**</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal Resistance</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Verbal Resistance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Verbal Resistance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling for Help**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Resistance</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Away</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Resistance**</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run, Yell, Tell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** (p<0.05)

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8 This was significant using likelihood ratio (0.025). Numbers were too small to utilize chi-square results.
Female victims were also significantly ($X^2(1, N=76)=6.183, p=0.013, \text{Cramer’s } V= 0.287$) more likely to call for help. They did so in 27.50% of cases, whereas males did so only 8% of the time. Females represented 79.00% of victims who utilized this resistance strategy.

Table 6.2 - Resistance Strategy According to Victim Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Victim Resistance</th>
<th>Victim’s Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Resistance</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Resistance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Verbal Resistance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Verbal Resistance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling for Help**</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Resistance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Away</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Resistance*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run, Yell, Tell</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*($p<0.001$) ** ($p<0.05$)

6.4.2 Victim resistance: Effectiveness in Determining Case Outcome

At the broadest level, controlling only for whether resistance of any kind was present or not, appeared to indicate that the mere presence of resistance is not a strong differentiator between attempted and completed cases. However, the individual types of resistance utilized had far more discerning effects.

In attempted cases, 26.00% of cases featured no resistance from the victim, with 74.00% featuring at least some level of resistance. In completed cases, 39.58% featured no resistance, and 60.00% involved some level of resistance. While the presence of resistance was significantly associated with case outcome ($X^2(1, N=76)=8.886, p=0.003$), featuring somewhat more often in completed cases, the overall rates indicate that general levels of resistance are relatively similar in attempted and completed cases.
**Table 6.3- Victim Resistance Success Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resistance Type</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Resistance</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Verbal Resistance**</td>
<td>84.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Verbal Resistance</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling for Help</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Away**</td>
<td>44.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Resistance</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run, Yell, Tell**</td>
<td>83.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** (p<0.05)

Direct verbal resistance, such as saying ‘no’, was found to be an effective resistance strategy ($X^2(1, N=78)=17.231$, p<0.001). When present, 84.62% of abduction attempts were resisted. In addition, where further escalation was attempted following a completed abduction element, direct verbal resistance prevented escalation 83.00% of the time ($X^2(3, N=78)=15.144$, p=0.002).

Direct verbal resistance was only present in a single ‘blitz’ case. This case saw the offence being resisted. This was, however, a very unusual scenario where the victim, the index child’s infant sister, and their grandmother, were accosted by an assailant armed with a knife. It is unlikely that the verbal resistance was a determining factor in this particular case.

In ‘lure’ cases involving direct verbal resistance, there was a 75.00% resistance rate for both the abduction element and for escalation. Such resistance was mostly characterised by children saying no to offers of assistance or invitations to enter a vehicle, which was immediate where the victim resisted the abduction, and delayed, i.e., used after the abduction was already underway, in cases where escalation was avoided after the victim had gone with the offender to some extent, but come to realize something was wrong with the situation. Direct verbal resistance seems to be much more associated with, and more effective against, offences where a ‘lure’ is used.
In contrast, indirect or passive verbal resistance, i.e., giving an excuse or providing false information, was a very ineffective resistance strategy, providing a resistance rate of just 10%. It was not effective in a single ‘blitz’ case, all of which were fully completed including escalation. For ‘lures’, the resistance rate was slightly higher, but still generally low at 20.00%. In all cases where passive verbal resistance failed to resist the offence, the abduction was escalated successfully as well. Although the association for abduction was not significant, the association for escalation was ($X^2 (3, N=78)=6.802, p=0.026^9$).

Although present in relatively few cases, there was a 100% resistance rate for cases where the victim’s primary form of resistance was calling for help. While this could indicate that this is a highly effective form of resistance, further research must be done to verify this as the figures could be mere outliers. Additionally, the low prevalence also indicates that the behaviour of calling for help and doing nothing else is not ecologically representative, i.e., it does not reflect the reality of how children react to offenders in practice.

Where the victim exhibited some form of physical resistance, such as hitting, struggling to escape, or attempting to open a lock or bonds, but not including running away, the resistance rate was low, at 30.00% for overall stranger child abduction. When controlling for offender modus operandi, physical resistance prevented the abduction and escalation of ‘blitz’ offences 37.50% of the time. In ‘lures’ the resistance rate for physical resistance was non-existent at 0.00% not only for the abduction, but for escalation as well. None of these tests returned significant statistical associations.

Where running away was the primary form of resistance, results showed that victims resisted abduction 56% of the time ($X^2(1, N=77)=10.633, p=0.001, \text{ Cramer’s } V= 0.327$). Interestingly, only 11.00% of running away cases concluded with the offender successfully

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9 This test utilized a likelihood ratio due to small expected counts in the sample.
escalating the offence, meaning that, of those victims abducted, 89.00% were able to escape by running away (X²(3, N=77)=11.998, p=0.007, Cramer’s V= 0.395). In ‘blitz’ cases, the resistance rate for the abduction part fell to 50.00% but all victims were able to prevent escalation from occurring despite the offender’s efforts to achieve it. When examining ‘lure’ cases, rates were more or less similar, with the initial abduction being resisted 57.00% of the time. Additionally, in ‘lure’ cases, the victim was able to resist escalation 86.00% of the time by running away. When considering this ability to resist further harm, running away is therefore the most effective individual resistance strategy. However, it is somewhat less effective at avoiding the initial offence.

6.4.3 ‘Run, Yell, Tell’

Where the victim exhibited all three constituent behaviours of the ‘run, yell, tell’ mnemonic, having ran away, shouted for help or screamed, and tried to go directly towards someone to whom they could report the offence (n=6), overall the offence was resisted 83.00% of the time (X²(1, N=77)=4.472, p=0.034, Cramer’s V= 0.241). It was particularly effective with ‘blitz’ attacks, experiencing a 100% rate of resistance, and somewhat less so with ‘lure’ offences, resisting the abduction element 50.00% of the time, although in all cases escalation was avoided even if abduction had occurred. In one third of cases, a third party was alerted by the victim calling for help, enabling overlap between the “yell” and “tell” components.

6.4.4 Victim Released Without Prompt

A small subset of cases, 7.00%, saw the offender release the victim or give up the offence without any discernible external prompt, be it from victim behaviour, third party intervention, or change in the environment or circumstance. It is unclear what occurred in
these cases, although this behaviour may be attributable to internal processes causing the offender to change their mind, i.e., due to the stress or anger at a precipitating event having dissipated over time, or feelings of guilt superseding the need to offend (e.g., Beauregard et al., 2008). This would be consistent with the situational crime prevention idea (Wortley, 2001; Clark & Cornish, 2003). Also present in sex offending and aggression literature is the notion that precipitating situational events can ‘activate’ an offending propensity, but in a short term, temporary fashion. By this it means that while some situational event may have encouraged the offending to take place, the elapse of time or cessation of negative circumstances promotes desistance and the reinstatement of normal internal inhibitors (guilt; self-control; etc.) (e.g., Ward & Siegert, 2002).

6.5 Discussion

Overall, it was found that resistance of some kind or another was present in the majority of cases (63.5%). The most common types utilized were physical resistance, indirect verbal resistance, and running away. Aside from running away, these are the resistance strategies which were found to be most ineffective at resisting abduction.

The lack of resistance among male victims was a somewhat surprising finding, particularly since the gender distribution was roughly even within the sample. Previous studies had not reported heavily on males due to them being under-represented as victims in their datasets (i.e. Leclerc, et al., 2011). It is possible that this finding is related to males in the sample being on average slightly younger than females, since it was also found that younger victims were less likely to resist. When examining each resistance type, females were always more likely to utilize each given method than males were. This was particularly true of physical resistance and calling for help. Females were twice as likely to utilize several means at once. This included all resistance types together; all except calling for help; verbal
and physical resistance; physical resistance and running away; verbal resistance, physical resistance and running away; and verbal resistance, physical resistance and calling for help.

Where resistance was present, the least effective techniques, e.g. indirect verbal resistance and physical resistance, were also the two most commonly observed resistance strategies employed by victims.

At the broadest level, results appeared to indicate that the mere presence of any kind of resistance was not a strong differentiator between attempted and completed cases. The presence of some kind of resistance was more similar between attempted and completed cases that one might expect, 75.00% and 60.00% respectively. That said, in those cases where there was no resistance at all, the offender completed the abduction 74.00% of the time. As such, overall, resistance can be considered to be effective in mitigating abduction.

When examining individual types of resistance, their effects became far more apparent and determinative. Direct verbal resistance was found to be a very effective means of resisting abduction. Simply saying ‘no’ to the offender promoted desistance 80.00% of the time, and prevented escalation where abduction had occurred at the same rate. This is of interest as the literature review (Ullman & Knight, 1993) pointed to findings on rape and child sexual assault that appeared to indicate that saying no was not especially dissuasive or could even cause offence escalation. This appears to not be the case in stranger child abduction. It is doubly useful in that it validates findings from the sexual grooming resistance literature that endorsed saying ‘no’ as an effective resistance strategy.

Calling for help was even more effective, with every case in the sample being resisted. This was expected as increasing the chance for third party intervention has been associated with successful victim resistance previously (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996; Leclerc, et al. 2011).
Conversely, passive verbal resistance, such as providing a story or giving false information, was found to be particularly ineffective, resisting only 10.00% of the time, and yet was individually the most common resistance strategy utilized by offenders. This finding was somewhat expected since, although not examined exactly in these terms, previous studies imply that any verbal resistance that is not direct and unequivocal will not dissuade an offender or will otherwise be circumvented (Elliott, Browne & Kilcoyne, 1995). However, the extent of the ineffectiveness, which was even lower than not resisting at all, is concerning when coupled with the behaviour’s frequency.

There are a number of reasons why overt, clear and obvious verbal resistance might have proven to be an effective deterrent whereas the far more subtle passive resistance was not. Firstly, overt resistance of this type greatly increases the chances that the victim is going to be able to attract some kind of attention, and, thereby, increase the chances that the offender will be detected or that a suitable guardian will appear. The presence of either of these would cause increased risk to the offender, or disrupt the necessary conditions for routine activity based offending to occur in the first place. The sheer success of this resistance strategy could even act as tentative support for the notion, purported by Boudreaux et al. (1998) that stranger child abduction is a largely opportunistic offence occurring when a would-be offender spots a potential victim when they are carrying out their normal routine. Such offenders are far more likely to become dissuaded from offending against a particular target if they present risk to them, causing them to either displace their offence onto another target, or to forego offending altogether due to the factors enabling or motivating them to offend at that time no longer coinciding.

Secondly, it communicates in no uncertain terms that the victim is not going to comply with the offender. Literature pertaining to child grooming in particular has shown that offenders are much more likely to target children who they believe will go along with their
desires, favouring friendly or vulnerable victims and discounting victims who are deemed less likely to acquiesce (Smallbone & Wortley, 2008). Related to this point, particularly in a ‘lure’ case, such resistance is a clear indication that the ‘lure’ has failed, and that the short term grooming of victims and rapport building that occurs during a ‘lure’ type offence will not be actionable.

Thirdly, this type of clear resistance could well relate to an element of fantasy being broken. It has been found that certain subsets of sexual offenders, including certain types of child molesters, envisage a consensual relationship going on when they engage in sexual activity with children. This is a type of cognitive distortion, and relies at least to some extent on the victim appearing to go along with the offender’s whim. Strong, clear resistance breaks this illusion of consent or complicity, breaking the cognitive distortion or any anticipated positive feedback the offender might have been expecting or wishing to simulate (e.g., Ward, 2000).

Returning to direct verbal resistance overall, the findings seem to strongly endorse the message that saying ‘no’ to invasions of bodily integrity or when an adult tries to make a child do something they do not wish to do is an effective means of resisting abduction attempts by strangers. These findings are also reassuring, in that saying ‘no’ was shown to be effective even with no other accompanying abduction prevention behaviour.

Analysis showed that when calling for aid was the primary form of resistance, there was 100% rate of resistance. There are a few things to note regarding this finding. Firstly, this refers only to cases where that was the only means of resistance. Some ‘Run, Yell, Tell’ cases included calling for help but the abduction still became successful. Secondly, there were only very small numbers of victims calling for help in this sample (only 2), so while none present were abducted, it is not to saying this type of resistance is always successful. Thirdly, there
very likely has to be co-occurrence between calling for aid and aid potentially being present. Related to this, one cannot know from the currently available data if there were cases where a secluded victim called for aid and nobody was there to hear it or it did not come.

In contrast to verbal resistance, direct physical resistance was found to be largely ineffectual, with 70.00% of abductions becoming completed when this was the primary response to offending. Running away from the offender, however, was found to be highly effective. Despite finding that only just over half of running away cases resisted the abduction element, only in 11% was the offender able to escalate their crime when the victim had run away. This may seem elementary, but it is worth highlighting that a victim taking the opportunity to put distance between themselves and an offender who has already successfully abducted them is an effective means of preventing harm.

In only one case did the offender make an effort to pursue a victim who had fled, and they were not successful in catching them since the victim was able to reach ‘safe adults’ who reported the offence and held off the abductor despite their sustained approach. This suggests that, in general, offenders in stranger child abduction are not sufficiently motivated to persistently pursue a specific target, therefore allowing resistance strategies that increase risk or effort to become successful.

It is not clear why physical resistance was a less effective means of resistance. It is possibly due to the fact that, in cases where physical resistance occurs, the offender has already gone hands on with the offence. By this it is meant that the offender has proceeded to a certain point of the crime sequence where they are committed to enacting the offence, making them more likely to persist in the short-term. In other words, it could be posited that they reach a behavioural point of no return. This finding could be explained by physical resistance creating an element of negative reciprocity. This is the process by which the
reaction of the victim causes further and stronger reaction by the offender in order to overcome the barriers the victim is placing (Cusson, 1998; Proulx, Beauregard, Michaud & Cusson, 2008). Physical resistance is more associated with this kind of reciprocity since it is more likely to illicit anger. This phenomenon appears to be replicated in the current sample. Additionally, the age differential can be important here. The offender is likely to be older and somewhat stronger than the victim, particularly since all offenders are male. Indeed, this differential has been identified as a potential contributing reason as to why children are victimized. In addition to various emotional or situational vulnerabilities, they are also relatively weak making them less able to physically resist an advance than an adult target (e.g., Ward, Polaschek & Beech, 2006). As such, a motivated offender can still control and subsequently subdue the physically resistant victim with relative ease.

Physical resistance also seemed to be related to ‘blitz’ attacks, where the offender had attacked or grabbed the victim with little build up. As such, physical resistance may have been the only means of resistance available. Since ‘blitz’ offenders have, by definition, already gone hands on and, as mentioned, are likely to be stronger than the victim, it follows that these efforts to resist are overcome.

Running away was also found to be a highly effective means of resistance. However, this was only after examining the eventual outcome of the case. In fact, most cases where the victim ran away were not resisted at first. The findings pertaining to running away are of particular interest as they most strongly endorse examination of child abduction as ongoing sequence of events and behaviours, rather than as a discrete occurrence focusing only on the abduction incident itself. Considering the victim-offender relationship after the abduction event itself provides a wealth of additional context and information that is lost in a more binary approach. In particular, the tendency for victims to be able to later run away following being initially overwhelmed by a ‘blitz’ attack bears further consideration.
The effectiveness of running away, at the most simple level is likely due to the fact that creating distance from the offender literally stops the offence from being possible. Additionally, running away is a very overt behaviour that visibly demonstrates to passers-by that the victim is in distress, and increase the chances that the offender will be identified as having done something wrong. It also creates additional burden on the offender, requiring them to give chase. Giving chase would require more effort, which has been shown to dissuade offending, and also is a far more overt offensive action that could result in their apprehension, which is compounded by causing the offence to last longer than intended, further increasing the risk of detection.

Victims do not always resist a would-be abductor, sometimes acquiescing entirely, sometimes passively going along with them. This can be because they are not aware an abduction is underway, due to shock at the situation, or due to having been threatened, scared or beaten into submission.

Generally speaking, non-resistance had a poor outcome for victims, resulting in their abduction in 62.50% of cases. However, this left a notable proportion of cases where the victim offered little to no resistance yet was in fact not taken or detained. It was not always clear why this occurred; although a number of intervening factors were observed, including the intervention of an immediate guardian, and the arrival of passers-by. As such, the location and timing of the offence can be pivotal in determining the outcome. This seems elementary, but bears mentioning. In those cases where no discernible external force for discontinuation of the offence was observed, it can be surmised that the offender changed their mind, which could be due to processes described in literature pertaining to rapists and child molesters where the offenders drive to offend is overcome by self-control processes such as guilt, or are reconstituted due to the passage of time lessening the impact of precipitating factors, such as
stress, or precipitating emotions, such as anger (Ward & Beech, 2004; Beauregard et al., 2008).

There are a few implications of these findings. Firstly, overall, this suggests that it is still preferable for victims to enact preventive measures when they can. Secondly, however, there do exist circumstances where it may not be possible for the victim to resist, and in many of these cases, such resistance may not be advisable. It has been found that, especially when the offender brandishes a weapon, that resistance is more likely to increase the risk of physical harm. Finally, it raises questions about what intervening factors exactly are causing these abductions to be interrupted- answering this question may enable us to further improve safety education and direct resources towards, e.g., manipulating environments to promote offender desistance.

In terms of limitations, a number of pieces of information potentially relevant to successful resistance were not available, or was available in such a small number of cases that inclusion was not warranted. These include: the victim’s race; the physical relative size of victim and offender; information relating to the victim’s mental state; and what the victim was wearing. These factors can be potentially relevant when considering how likely a victim will be able to escape an offender and hence impact on the effectiveness of their resistance (Wortley & Smallbone, 2008). Additionally, the sample size is in this study was fairly small. This means that, although this may be the best currently available information, the reality may in fact be far different. Gallagher et al. (2008) and Newiss and Traynor (2013) both showed that a significant proportion, likely a large majority, of stranger child abductions go unreported, meaning that the information available to both police and the media is limited. Even when they are reported, the details can be so limited that any meaningful identification is difficult. The address this deficit of detail, the decision to examine only convicted cases was made, however, this had the effect of further reducing the size of the sample, whilst
skewing the data towards more serious, newsworthy cases that may not be reflective of less reported abduction incidents. In addition, the use of newspaper accounts could mean that only partial accounts have been given. Finally, and most importantly, the conclusions reached and recommendations made in this paper should be treated with caution given the small size of the sample and its limited representativeness.

6.6 Conclusions

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that stranger child abduction is indeed a highly interactional offence, and that the behaviour of the victim can play an important role in determining case outcomes.

By far the most effective types of resistance were identified as saying ‘no’, running away, and calling for help. Conversely, physical resistance was found to be fairly ineffectual as a form of resistance; however, its association with ‘blitz’ style attacks may mean that this is the only means available for victims in those circumstances.

The effective measures appeared to effectively deter offenders who not only used ‘lures’, but also those who primarily employed a ‘blitz’ attack. This indicates that it may be worth modifying current curricula to include more examples of ‘blitz’ attacks and to teach children to continue to run, yell and tell in these scenarios and not to give up. That said, given the possibility for negative reciprocity and indications that delayed resistance can be effective in these cases, it may be fruitful to consider how to design lessons that can teach this nuance to children without being overly confusing. Additional research on this would be useful.
Although the more effective techniques were represented reasonably often, work remains to be done in order to encourage children to utilize the more effective, pro-active resistance techniques. In particular, given that the presence of indirect resistance implies that the child is indeed feeling threatened and is trying to resist, the barriers that render a child unable to directly resist must be examined, i.e., do children feel unable to directly resist due to politeness, or because they are waiting for an overt sign of ill intent? Answering these questions should become a research priority.

A particularly stark finding was the incredibly low rate at which male victims, and also younger victims, appeared to offer resistance against offenders. The mechanisms by which male victims are prohibited from enacting resistance strategies bears further examination. Plausible explanations for this phenomenon, such as the possibility of males being victimized more by ‘blitz’ attacks where resistance can be precluded, proved to be inadequate. In fact, re-examination of the figures found that females were victimized by ‘blitz’ attacks slightly more often than males were.

Additionally, this project has implications for how stranger child abduction should be thought about in a more conceptual sense. It was very useful to think of abduction as more of a sequence of behaviours than as a discrete event. This enables us to focus on the extent to which harm to the child, as described by the concept of ‘escalation’, was resisted or not, rather than on whether an abstract offence took place in law. There were a number of cases where the victim was abducted in a legal sense, but was still able to resist or avoid further harm or prevent escalation. A resistance measure might not prevent an abduction, but it might prevent a more serious offence being completed in that instance or facilitate escape. Viewing abduction as a discrete event rather than as a continuous series of actions does not reflect this dimension of resistance.
The findings also have implications for child safety education. They provide a strong endorsement for continuing to teach children that immediate and direct verbal resistance, running away, and calling for help, should be encouraged, whilst indirect resistance ought to be avoided. This is particularly true given that indirect verbal resistance was the most common method utilized by victims. It may be necessary to focus on breaking down barriers and social conventions that encourage children to be polite even in situations in which they feel uncomfortable in order to enable them to utilize the more effective methods.
Chapter 7: The Role of Guardianship, Accompaniment and Surveillance in Stranger Child Abduction.

Chapter Summary

Key child safety lessons communicate that, in addition to children themselves taking preventive action, that being accompanied by others and being in areas with high levels of surveillance can have an important role in preventing or mitigating stranger child abduction and that children ought to remain in situations where these elements are present. This communicates that the level of “guardianship” can influence whether an instance of stranger child abduction is attempted or completed.

The Routine Activity Theory construct of capable guardianship is used to examine the features of the main study sample of 78 cases of stranger child abduction, using an outcome based approach to establishing the effectiveness of various potential sources of guardianship in preventing abduction attempts from becoming completed, and to test widely held and taught beliefs on this subject. These include whether the child is accompanied by an adult or by other children, whether there are third party witnesses, and whether there are other surveillance features such as CCTV or “natural surveillance” such as overlooking windows.

Results show that only direct oversight provided by an adult who sees themselves as personally responsible for a child to be a very effective means of abduction prevention, both dissuading and disrupting offences. Guardianship provided by other actors, such as peers and third party passers-by, were not effective. Accompaniment by other children could dissuade offending, but failed to disrupt offences in progress. Sources of natural surveillance were ineffective. The finding regarding the ineffectiveness of peers was particularly surprising. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.
7.1 Introduction

This study conducts an inquiry into the effectiveness of various sources of “guardianship” in resisting or diminishing stranger child abduction, examining not only how well various types of guardianship dissuade offending in the first place, but also asking how much protection is offered once an offence is underway. The key impetus behind this study is to assess the accuracy of messages that are being communicated to children and their custodians as part of educational programs intended to keep children safe from being abducted by strangers (see Newiss, 2014). Such lessons commonly contain messages encouraging children to keep themselves in situations where they are being monitored to some extent. A key problem with this body of work is that it implies that there exists a solid foundation of knowledge or research on which to base these lessons (see, e.g., Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). However, should one inquire further, they will find no such research base; to date, no structured study has analysed stranger child abduction in such a way as to draw any conclusions regarding the efficacy of any practical advice that can be offered to children or caregivers. It can, therefore, be argued that, at present, certain child safety messages are rooted in common sense rather than research.

The most overt advice refers to accompaniment. To reduce the risk of abduction, children are usually encouraged to travel with adults (e.g., Gross, 2013; National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), 2015b; Kids Health, 2015), or with other children (e.g., NCMEC 2015; Missing Kids UK, 2015). As recently as 20th July 2015, Exeter police issued advice that children “Do not go off on your own. Always play with other children” (Exeter Press and Echo, 2015). In addition, types of guardianship besides direct accompaniment are also cited as being potentially useful. Members of the public, or “safe adults”, are mentioned as a source of protection that children can turn to or seek out when
they are being victimized (Newiss, 2014). Greater Manchester police (2015) advises children than such adults to seek out would include teachers and police officers. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is conflicting information as to whether being accompanied can or cannot dissuade a stranger from abducting a child. It is the aim of this study to assess various types of guardianship that could be potentially useful in preventing offences, emphasising whether each has any kind of statistical association of whether an offence of stranger child abduction becomes completed or remains an attempt.

To facilitate this assessment, a Routine Activity Theory (RAT) perspective will be used. RAT is a theory of offending which posits that where there is a convergence of motivated offender, suitable target, and a lack of capable guardianship, an offence will occur (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Clarke & Felson, 1993). There are a range of criminological theories that emphasise offending opportunities and which could potentially be utilised to examine stranger child abduction, including rational choice theories and crime pattern theories, however, this thesis will focus on RAT, as this theory has been found to be of particular relevance to stranger child abduction by Boudreaux, Lord and Dutra (1999), who posited that a child aged 10 is more vulnerable to stranger abduction as a result of being granted greater autonomy, thus being less supervised whilst also retaining childhood naiveté that makes them less able to resist an offender’s advances or recognize a prejudicial situation (Boudreaux, Lord, & Dutra, 1999; Heide, Beauregard & Myers, 2009).

RAT is additionally particularly well suited to the current research question exploring what can protect a child from stranger abduction, as it relies on the concept of “capable guardianship”. This construct will be used to explore and assess the effectiveness of various sources of potential guardianship in preventing stranger child abduction incidents from being completed that are currently thought to protect children from such harm. The other available theories tend to focus largely on offender decision making without particular reference to the
environment, and do not specifically focus on the presence of other actors. While part of the larger RAT model, capable guardianship has increasingly been used to examine and assess factors that are purported to prevent crime (E.g., Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003; Boakye, 2009; Reynald, 2011; Smith & Jorna, 2011; Reynald & Elffers, 2016).

As Groff (2007) points out, the motivation of an offender is often assumed in discussions involving RAT. For the purposes of discussion, this article assumes that the stranger child abductors discussed in this study were motivated offenders, and that they saw their victims as suitable targets. Given this paper’s focus on guardianship and child protection, this approach is felt to be justified.

7.2 Capable Guardianship

To preclude an offence from taking place, the mere presence of other actors or sources of surveillance watching over the target is insufficient (Clarke & Felson, 1993). These sources of potential guardianship must be in some way able to protect the victim, if not by directly intervening then at least by being perceived to increase the risk faced by a would-be perpetrator (Kennedy & Ford, 1990). The qualifier “capable” is extremely important, recognizing that not all forms of guardianship actually prevent offences from occurring.

7.2.1 Sources of Guardianship

Hollis, Felson & Welsh (2013) embarked on an in-depth consideration of the construct of the capable guardian. Their review defined capable guardianship as “the presence of a human element which acts – whether intentionally or not – to deter the would-be offender from committing” (Hollis, Felson & Welsh, p. 76). This would seem to exclude any non-human source of guardianship. However, Felson defines guardianship as “being
exercised by those who serve by simple presence to prevent crime and by absence to make crime more likely” (Felson, 1995, p. 53, cited by Hollis, Felson & Welsh, 2013, p. 66). Capable guardianship could therefore include any factor that engenders a feeling of an illicit activity being watched, and the accompanying perception that this will increase the risk of offending. In this view, any kind of surveillance could potentially disrupt or discourage an offender, although this depends entirely on the offender’s perception. Indeed, Hollis-Peel, Reynald, van Bavel, Elffers and Welsh (2011, p. 55) refer to “human guardianship”, implying that other sources of guardianship exist.

This leads to the question of which actors or objects can actually provide capable guardianship. There are varying opinions on this matter. Some sources seem to indicate that capable guardians ought to be a directly present individual (Felson, 1986). Others suggest that capable guardianship can be implied by the environment, i.e., that an object or geographic layout increasing the risk of subsequent intervention can be characterised as a form of guardianship (Jefferey, 1971; Newman, 1972).

This latter, broader perspective has become strongly associated with the practice of designing environments to imply that the area is well defended. This is encapsulated in the concept of “natural surveillance” (Clarke, 1995: Felson, 1995; Felson & Clark, 1998). Theoretically, this rests on the notion that the mere feeling of being watched can prevent offending. For instance, a building’s windows or entrances come with the possibility that occupants could see a public area, and thus provide natural surveillance (Desyllas, Connoly & Hebber, 2002; Reynald & Elffers, 2009), while the presence of CCTV cameras implies that an individual is monitoring footage of the area (Welsh & Farrington, 2006). Such features of the environment can also be useful as they increase the “opportunities for capable guardianship”, i.e., by increasing line of sight (Reynald, 2011, p. 136).
7.2.2 Requirements for Capable Guardianship

It has been found that in order to actually dissuade or disrupt crime, and be considered “capable”, a guardian must possess a number of requisites (Felson, 1986). The first of these is capacity to intervene, i.e., a physical ability to increase the likelihood of interruption. If an offence or suspicious event occurs, the guardians must be able to take effective preventive action. Secondly, human guardians must be able to recognize an offending situation if they are to effectively intervene (see, e.g., Coker, Cook-Craig, Williams, Fisher, Clear, Garcia & Hegge, 20110; Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart, 2013). Reynald (2010) argues that, in addition to these, a capable guardian must also be willing to supervise in the first place.

Reynald (2011) makes the important point that an actor’s possession of these pre-requisites can often be contingent on external, situational, or environmental factors. For instance, a householder is motivated to monitor their house and surrounding vicinity, but may not be so willing if placed outside of that context.

Similarly, willingness to intervene can be contingent on a variety of factors. It can depend on actor’s self-perceived effectiveness, which could relate to their training, physical size or strength, and so on (Reynald, 2010). Feelings of social cohesion that would engender a feeling of obligation to take action for the “greater good” have also been linked to increased likelihood that a guardian will take preventive action (Reynald, 2011). This latter point is likely very relevant for stranger child abduction, which tends to occur in public spaces with high levels of transient foot traffic (Miller et al, 2008), which could result in limited feelings of social cohesion or obligation to safeguard other actors present.

If a guardian fails to effectively recognize an offending situation, it is unlikely that they will be able to intervene. When identifying offences, guardians have been found to look for certain types of behaviours or characteristics, ranging from clothing and ethnicity
Citing Madriz (1997), Reynald (2010) makes a point that is potentially of extreme relevance to stranger child abduction. When detecting would-be criminals, the judgements of would-be guardians are subject to widely held stereotypes about what a criminal or a crime might look like. Stranger child abduction is subject to a large number of these widespread but misleading stereotypes, i.e., a dirty man in a trench-coat, luring children with candy (see Shutt, Miller, Schreck & Brown, 2004), which could potentially preclude a potentially useful guardian from recognizing an offence in progress.

In addition to these requirements, there is debate as to whether a guardian can be considered effective based purely on whether they are perceived to be capable. Hollis, Felson and Welsh (2013) suggest that guardianship need only be capable to the extent that it be provided by a human source that could intervene in some way. The mere perception of this in dissuading crime increases a guardian’s capability. Tilley (2009) contends that an offender’s perception of a guardian’s capability is likely more important than their actual material ability to repel an offence. The simple appearance of capability could be sufficient to deter crime (Cass, 2007; Tillyer & Eck, 2010). However, this also means that even potentially useful guardianship can be dismissed by an offender if they believe it can be circumvented (Farrel, Philips & Pease, 1995).

Finally, a potential guardian’s relative sense of responsibility has been linked to their likely effectiveness (Felson, 1986). The more invested the guardian feels toward protecting a space or person, the more intensely they will monitor their charge, which in turn makes them more likely to prevent, detect and disrupt crime (Reynald, 2010). The level of effort a guardian exerts towards providing monitoring or intervention is tied to their self-perceived responsibility (Reynald, 2011). The key debate on this issue regards whether specific, assigned responsibility over a target makes a guardian more discerning than if they had...
generalized responsibility (Mayhew, 1981; Clarke, 1992), i.e., as Felson posits, those with general responsibility (passers-by, visitors) have no personal interest or professional duty in protecting a target, and therefore may not always do so.

However, following a meta-review Hollis, Felson and Welsh (2013) noted that actors can provide effective guardianship over targets even if they do not feel actively responsible towards them. Whether a guardian intends to dissuade crime is irrelevant, rather, the key factor is whether the actor can be perceived to be capable of effective intervention by would-be offenders (Hollis et al., 2013). It has additionally been hypothesized that adults might be more likely to intervene if the subject in distress is a child (Christy & Voigt, 1994). However, it has been found that bystanders are no more likely to intervene if a child was in distress than another adult (Ross, 1971), and this is particularly true if other bystanders were present as well, i.e., if responsibility is diffuse (Ross, 1971; Christy & Voigt, 1994). Nevertheless, although there is little direct research on the issue, it could be hoped that adults would be likely to attempt to intervene to prevent an offence as universally feared and demonized as stranger child abduction were to occur (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996).

This debate raises important questions for stranger child abduction. The general public, as well as sources of natural surveillance, potentially provide useful guardianship over children, yet it remains uncertain whether they would be capable of sufficiently monitoring areas or intervening in offences in such a way that would enable them to disrupt or dissuade offending and be considered “capable” guardians.

7.2.3 Research Questions

Given the contradictory findings and perspectives identified above, this article seeks to test the impact of various potential sources of guardianship in stranger child abduction cases, by examining the extent to which their presence had a relationship with the outcome of
a series of real world offences that occurred in the UK. By doing so, the limits of various
types of guardianship can be ascertained.

In order to account for both human and environmental sources of guardianship, the
key sources of guardianship to be examined are accompaniment by adults, accompaniment by
other children, the presence of sources of natural surveillance, and the presence of members
of the public, i.e., those with generalized responsibility.

Particularly with accompaniment, it is necessary not only to examine how often
victims are targeted in the presence of various types of accompaniment, but also to ask, when
targeted, whether these types of accompaniment having an impact on case outcome. This will
allow us to ascertain whether the accompanying guardian can successfully disrupt offending,
in addition to just dissuading it.

The research questions are therefore: To what extent are various forms of victim
accompaniment associated with whether an abduction is attempted or completed; and to what
extent is the presence of other sources of surveillance over a victim or area associated with
whether an abduction is attempted or completed?

7.3 Method

As with the previous two studies, the analytical process utilised by this study is detailed
in Chapter 4. This study draws on the same set of 78 cases of attempted and completed
stranger child abduction, utilising descriptive statistical analysis and chi-square tests
delivered via IMB SPSS 22. The specific variables used in this study are as follows:

Variables pertaining to accompaniment and surveillance were first identified utilizing a
review of literature and materials relating to child safety. These were nominally per variable,
with an additional layer of coding according to which type of victim resistance most characterised the case in question. This extra layer was done in order to ascertain frequency of behaviour.

The variables in this section of the study pertained to the level to which there was oversight over victims and crime sites. Information pertaining to this was mostly gathered utilizing the secondary documentary sources, with attention being paid to area lay out and witnesses. Variables included whether the victim was accompanied and by whom, and the type of environment in which the offence took place, which was used to ascertain if there was any oversight in fact, and if the area was one in which oversight was likely.

Proximity to pathways was taken to mean that there was a chance that passers-by could become witnesses; proximity to roads was taken to mean that there was a chance that those in vehicles could become witnesses; proximity to buildings, doorways or common areas was taken to infer natural surveillance. Actual surveillance was only inferred if the documents made reference to clear witnesses who were present as the offence was initiated.

In a number of cases, it was possible to identify the exact location of the offence from the documentary source, which enabled the access of area maps to examine the area more closely. This was used to gain additional information on relative proximity of environmental features that have oversight effects. Where there was no information about the environment, it was assumed that surveillance providing environmental features or witnesses were not present, and so were coded negatively.

Data was coded for this study utilizing a total of 17 variables. This included the victim’s age, victim’s sex, offender’s age, and whether the offence was completed or
attempted. Guardianship variables were divided under the headings of accompaniment and surveillance. Accompaniment included 4 variables: whether there was accompaniment of any kind; accompaniment by other children under 18; accompaniment by an adult, which refers to a person aged over 18; and accompaniment by a group including both children and adults.

Surveillance was split into two groups, intended to compare guardianship types implied by the environment, and the offence actually being witnessed:

*Potential surveillance* included 7 variables, and recorded sources of surveillance regardless of whether the abduction was witnessed, and included: obvious third party surveillance by individuals not accompanying the victim but who could potentially directly observe the crime site; overlooking windows, doors and other portals through which a witness could potentially observe the crime site, which were recorded under the umbrella term “natural surveillance”; the presence of CCTV; crime sites situated in publicly accessible areas; crime sites in crowded locations; direct daylight; features that raise the possibility of pedestrian traffic, such as paths and pavements; features that raise the possibility of vehicle traffic, such as roads.

*Actual surveillance* referred to cases where there was evidence that the offence had actually been observed or witnessed, and included two variables: The offence was witnessed by a third party who had not been directly accompanying the victim; and the offence was recorded on CCTV.

The power of guardianship is tested by measuring and then comparing the sources of potential guardianship present in completed abductions, and those present in attempted abductions. This enables the guardianship profiles of successful and unsuccessful abductions to be measured against one another and for conclusions as to the preventive power of each guardianship feature to be drawn. Additional analysis is carried out by examining abduction
completion rates within each guardianship feature in order to account for possible biased produced by offender victim selection strategy, and to measure how often abductions are interrupted in the face of each guardianship source once the offence is underway. This approach will allow examination of the dissuasive power of each source of guardianship in preventing offences occurring in the first place, and to examine their disruptive power against offences in progress.

7.4 Results

7.4.1 Sample Features

The sample consists of 78 offences. 32.50% (n=25) were attempted abductions and 67.50% (n=53) of offences were completed abductions. Some cases involved more than one victim, with 5 cases having 2 victims, and 1 case having 3 victims.

83 victims in the sample were aged between 2 and 17 years, with an average age of 10.582 years (SD=3.020). 46.90% of victims were male, and 53.10% were female. 42.50% were aged between 0-10, 48.80% were between 48.80%, and 8.80% were aged 15-17.

Offenders (n=53) were exclusively male, and were aged between 19 and 59 years with an average age of 35.05 years (SD=10.582). 49.10% were aged 18-30 years, 38.20% were aged 31-49 years, and 12.70% were aged 50 years or over.

7.4.2 Victim Accompaniment

In terms of frequency of accompaniment in all cases of stranger child abduction, 67.90% (n=53) of victims were not accompanied at the time of the offence. 20.50% (n=16)
were accompanied by children, 6.40% (n=5) by adults, and 5.10% (n=4) by a combination of children and adults. Data was not available for 5 victims.

A comparison of the proportions of accompaniment present in completed cases measured against attempted cases enables analysis of the dissuasive power of various accompaniment sources.

Table 7.1 - Accompaniment in Completed and Attempted Cases of Abduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Accompaniment</th>
<th>Proportion of Completed Cases</th>
<th>Proportion of Attempted Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied</td>
<td>74.00% (n=37)</td>
<td>61.54% (n=16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Children</td>
<td>22.00% (n=11)</td>
<td>15.38% (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Or Guardian</td>
<td>2.00% (n=1)</td>
<td>11.54% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults and Children</td>
<td>2.00% (n=1)</td>
<td>11.54% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (n=50)</td>
<td>100% (n=26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data on accompaniment was available for 50 completed cases. Table 7.1 shows that, of these, 74.00% of cases featured unaccompanied victims (n=37), with a combined 26.00% (n=16) featuring accompanied victims. Within the accompanied cases, a large majority of 84.60% featured other children only.

In attempted cases, a marginally smaller number of cases featured unaccompanied victims at 61.53% (n=16). 15.38% (n=4) featured accompaniment by only other children, which is a slightly lower rate than that observed in completed cases, however, a relatively large number of attempted cases featured accompaniment by adults (11.54%) or by adults and other children (11.54%). Within accompanied cases, proportionately half as many cases (40.00%) featured accompaniment by peers alone, while 60.00% featured an adult guardian.

This comparison reveals that a largely similar profile of accompaniment is shared between completed and attempted cases. There is a large preference for lone victims in each
group. Somewhat similar rates of offenders will target victims accompanied by peers alone, with this occurring marginally more often in completed cases. The most notable variation is that offenders in completed cases are very unlikely to target victims accompanied by an adult, whereas offenders in attempted cases will do so in a fifth of cases.

This analysis reveals little that is not already known about stranger child abduction and accompaniment, speaking mostly to their relative proportions and to initial target selection. These results simply confirm that children are likely to be unaccompanied when they are targeted for abduction, and that peers are less effective guardians than adults.

In order to provide a more thorough analysis, it is necessary to examine the variations of abduction completion rates within each type of accompaniment. This is necessary as purely comparative rates may be skewed by the offender’s initial target selection strategy. The success of each accompaniment type once the abduction is underway is necessary to analyse their ability to disrupt offence that is being enacted.

**Table 7.2- Completion Rates within Each Accompaniment Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accompaniment Type</th>
<th>Unaccompanied</th>
<th>Accompanied</th>
<th>Other Children</th>
<th>Parent or Guardian</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>69.81% (n=37)</td>
<td>56.57% (n=14)</td>
<td>68.75% (n=11)</td>
<td>20.00% (n=1)</td>
<td>25.00% (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted</td>
<td>30.19% (n=16)</td>
<td>43.43% (n=11)</td>
<td>31.25% (n=5)</td>
<td>80.00% (n=4)</td>
<td>75.00% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (N=53)</td>
<td>100% (N=25)</td>
<td>100% (N=16)</td>
<td>100% (N=5)</td>
<td>100% (N=4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2 shows the results for case outcome within each type of abduction. In cases where the victim was not accompanied, the abduction element of the offence was completed in 69.81% (n=37) of the time. Moreover, when other children were present, the abduction was completed in 68.75% of cases (n=11). However, when a parent or guardian was present, the abduction was completed in only a single case. When accompanied by both children and
adults, the offence was completed 25.00% of the time (n=1). The form of accompaniment was found to significantly interact with case outcome via linear-by-linear association (p=0.017), however, the numbers of offences were too small to give statistically significant readings for individual forms of accompaniment.

7.4.3 Potential Surveillance

Table 7.3- Surveillance in Stranger Child Abduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Surveillance</th>
<th>Presence in All Cases</th>
<th>Presence in Attempted Cases</th>
<th>Presence in Completed Cases</th>
<th>Completion Rates Where Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Traffic</td>
<td>33.80%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
<td>37.5%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Surveillance</td>
<td>72.70%</td>
<td>81.50%</td>
<td>68.00%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Area</td>
<td>97.40%</td>
<td>96.30%</td>
<td>97.40%</td>
<td>65.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded Location</td>
<td>24.40%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>19.60%</td>
<td>52.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTV Cameras</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passers-by</td>
<td>93.50%</td>
<td>96.29%</td>
<td>92.00%</td>
<td>63.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Actual Surveillance    | Witnessed             | 38.50%                     | 77.78%                     | 17.60%                       | 30.00%**                     |

\( *X^2(1, N=77) = 8.827, p=0.003, Cramer’s V=0.339 \) \( **X^2(1, N=78)= 26.969, p<0.001, Cramer’s V= 0.588 \)

Table 7.3 shows that, of the potential sources of surveillance, only pedestrian traffic at the abduction initiation had a significant relationship with case outcome (p=0.003). This was present in 33.80% of cases overall, appearing in far more attempted cases (55.56%) than completed ones (22.00%). This appears to indicate that pedestrian traffic can be an effective means of dissuading offenders in stranger child abduction. This of particular interest as this was the only type of potential surveillance to appear useful, and, it is the only one that directly involves human actors as the source of supervision.

The presence of natural surveillance such as overlooking doors and windows was not strongly associated with case outcome. Such ambient surveillance was present in a majority
of cases overall (72.70%), although observed somewhat more often in attempted cases (81.50%) than completed ones (68.00%).

A number of other features that represent potential sources of surveillance that might be expected to dissuade offenders were found not to have a significant association with case outcomes. These included: daylight; offence site in public area; crowded crime site; CCTV coverage; potential for passers-by (i.e., roads, pavements, thoroughfares near to crime site).

This suggests, then, that natural surveillance and other types of guardianship implied by the environment is not effective at discouraging stranger child abduction incidents, making for a surprising refutation of natural surveillance literature as it pertains to this type offending.

### 7.4.4 Actual Surveillance: Being Witnessed Or Being Caught On CCTV

The offence being witnessed by a party other than the victim or someone directly accompanying them had a strong association with whether the offence was attempted or completed ($X^2(1, N=78) = 26.969, p<0.001, \text{Cramer's } V=0.588$). In attempted cases, the offence was witnessed by another party 77.78% of the time, compared to completed cases which were only witnessed 17.60% of the time. Thus, cases that were witnessed had a low completion rate at only 30.00%. Based on this, the offence being witnessed is one of the most discerning protective factors in determining case outcome.

### 7.5 Discussion

Concepts from RAT help us understand stranger child abduction in a number of ways. Firstly, the findings from this study indicate that the matter of offender perception can be
particularly important in stranger child abduction, and that offenders are unlikely to perceive a number of potentially dissuasive sources as being capable. Secondly, the findings indicate that, as implied be Felson (1995) and Hollis et al. (2013), that human guardians are best able to defend children, and that their effectiveness is related to how responsible they feel for defending the child in question. Thirdly, they show that, once the offence is underway, some forms of guardianship, particularly that provided by other children, are not capable of further disrupting or preventing the offence, even if they do appear to dissuade a large proportion of offences from occurring in the first place.

In terms of the power of accompaniment, the findings (see Table 7.2 above) showed similar profiles of accompaniment between attempted cases and completed cases. Attempted and completed cases both featured predominantly lone victims, with relatively low levels of accompaniment by adults or by children present in cases that do go ahead. The most important implication of this is, since offenders appear to favour targeting victims who are not accompanied, that accompaniment dissuades offences from being enacted in the first place. Accompaniment of any kind appears to prevent offences from occurring, and these possess dissuasive properties.

However, the findings also indicate that accompaniment by adults is more successful in preventing offences than accompaniment by other children. Offences are enacted against victims accompanied by their peers alone at a far higher rate than against those with an adult present. Furthermore, when comparing attempted and completed cases, when an abduction offence was enacted in the presence of an accompanying adult, victims were six times as likely as when accompanied by child peers, to escape and thus be successfully guarded. Conversely, accompaniment by children appeared to lack disruptive qualities, indicating that children are not capable guardians over their peers should an abduction attempt be enacted.
7.5.1 Victim Accompaniment and the Role of Offender Perception and Motivation

The findings regarding the effectiveness of different types of victim accompaniment had important implications for RAT. In particular, they indicated that capability of guardianship in stranger child abduction is highly contingent on offender perception (Yar, 2014), and that this can vary depending on how determined an offender is.

As one might expect, the results show that lone children were targeted more often than children who had any form of accompaniment. This has the relatively straightforward implication of suggesting that direct guardianship over a child, regardless of who provides it, has a strong role in dissuading offending in the first place, whereas its absence appears to encourage motivated offenders to take an offending opportunity. Similarly expected was that these lone targets are at high risk of the abduction attempt against them being successful.

The findings regarding the role of adult accompaniment were also fairly straightforward. Abduction cases involving accompaniment by adults were rare, indicating that most offenders would be unlikely to try to abduct a directly supervised child at all. In the rare cases where such abductions were undertaken, accompaniment by an adult was strongly associated with an offence being prevented, suggesting that adults in charge of children will recognize a prejudicial situation and intervene effectively, thus making them capable guardians in most cases.

However, the results pertaining to children accompanied by their peers, i.e., by other children, were somewhat more complicated. The results indicate that offenders do appear to prefer lone victims, indicating that the presence of peers can dissuade offending from occurring in the first place. However, should an offender decide to undertake an offence in the presence of a child’s peers, they will encounter little resistance and be able to complete the offence a large majority of the time. This indicates that children should still travel in
groups, but that additional measures ought to be taken to encourage children to more effectively protect one another, i.e., by calling for help, saying no to the offender, or by encourage one another to run away. This finding is also interesting in that children can be effective guardians even though they lack the capacity to intervene; the perception that they might take preventive action, even though they often do not, is sufficient to deter most offenders.

With regard to RAT and the concept of guardianship, there is a potentially interesting contrast when one considers how often children accompanied by their peers are successfully abducted, compared to how often they are targeted at all. When compared proportionately to other forms of accompaniment in terms of how often they helped resist an offence, children who were accompanied by peers were successfully targeted by abductors at a similar rate as lone victims. This suggests that, in fact, children are not capable guardians and they are rarely able to disrupt abduction incident once it is initiated by the offender.

However, when considering how often victims accompanied by their peers are targeted in the first instance, a further conclusion can be drawn. The present findings suggest that children accompanied by peers are targeted less often than previous studies indicate, contrasting most notably with the rates found by Gallagher et al. (2008), who showed that children were targeted whilst accompanied by peers in 66.00% of all stranger child abduction cases, whereas the present findings found a rate of approximately 33.00%, or half as often. This suggests that accompaniment by other children may be providing some level of perceived guardianship, since offenders still appear to favour unaccompanied victims where possible.

In terms of the applying the concept of capable guardianship to stranger child abduction, then, this means that a source of guardianship, despite being a provably ineffective
source of protection over a target, can still be a capable guardian if they are perceived as such by offenders. In other words, they can stop an offence from being initiated in the first place, but become far less useful once the decision to offend has been made. This highlights the importance of an offender’s perception of guardianship in stranger child abduction, affirming suggestions made by authors such as Tilley (2009), Cass (2007) and Yar (2014).

7.5.2 Surveillance and the Role of Direct Supervision

Overall findings for victim surveillance also had important implications for RAT. They appear to demonstrate a number of key points. Firstly, the results indicate that all of the effective types of guardianship involved human actors, whilst non-sentient forms of guardianship were not determinative or dissuasive. Secondly, the results showed that guardianship provided by direct supervision over a child was more effective than that provided by passers-by or other more general sources.

Hence, the primary finding was that anything short of direct, clear and obvious surveillance by a third party would not be influential in determining the outcome of the case. The main theoretical implication of this finding, in terms of capable guardianship, is that offenders do not perceive anything short of direct guardianship to be effective. Indirect or potential guardianship is not effective in stranger child abduction. As such, natural surveillance principles do not seem to be in effect for this offence, with Felson’s (1986) and Hollis, Felson & Welsh’s (2013) perspective that capable guardianship ought to involve the presence of a human seemingly in effect. This further supports Hollis-Peel & Welsh’s (2014) notion of differentiating direct and indirect intervention.

In practical terms, this is particularly concerning considering that the vast majority of cases were found to be initiated in locations with at least some base level of natural surveillance, tending to move to secluded areas later as offences progressed.
In stranger child abduction cases, therefore, the perspective that perception of effective guardianship can be effective appears to be mostly untrue. The guardian must be literally capable in order to adequately prevent offending.

Furthermore, the level of passer-by intervention, even when the offence is observed, is quite low. It seems, then, that passers-by would fall into the category of either unmotivated guardians who are unwilling to intervene, or unaware guardians who cannot tell an offending incident from a benign event, or some combination where they will not exert the effort required to discern one from the other, preferring to dismiss the event or leave it to other, more directly responsible caregivers. In either case, the findings suggest that generalized guardianship is ultimately quite ineffective in preventing stranger child abductions, with offenders willing to proceed with an offence in face of such supervision over the target, and not being stopped or challenged when they do so. To be effective, guardians must have a greater level of direct involvement with the target, i.e., be more personally responsible. It would be very useful to find a means by which to encourage third-party intervention, or to increase the extent to which adults feel obligated to recognize and monitor potentially suspicious incidents (see Reynald, 2010; Leclerc & Reynald, 2015).

Even direct guardianship is not always effective, particularly if that guardianship is provided by another child. Guardianship provided by other children was neither perceived to be effective by offenders, nor was it proven to be effective in practice. In other words, based on these findings, in most cases it appears as though children cannot be conceptualized as offering capable guardianship over their peers.

That said, there was a trend towards offenders preferring to target victims who were not directly supervised, even if said supervision was ineffective. Most victims were alone and
not being obviously observed, even if they were in locations featuring natural surveillance or with high risk of pedestrian traffic.

It is not entirely clear from the data, but it is likely that a large number of offences were observed by third parties, who are potential guardians, but were not reported to authorities. It can therefore be suggested that a noteworthy proportion of third party guardians, who would be considered to be general guardians using Felson’s types (1995), do not understand that what they have observed is a serious criminal offence.

This is particularly interesting at it would be hoped that in situations where a child is at risk, general members of the public would feel mandated to intervene in some manner. It could be hypothesized that this effect would be even stronger in the presence of a stranger child abduction incident, which is a widely feared offence type. The current findings, however, support previous studies (e.g., Ross, 1971; Christy & Voight, 1994) that have found that bystanders are not likely to intervene in such situations. From this, it can be concluded that the assumption that third party bystanders will intervene to protect children in the face of stranger child abduction is not a safe one, and that such actors should not be relied on to defend children, and that the mere fact a child is at risk is not normally sufficient to motivate such bystanders to intervene. This also supports Reynald’s (2011) point that more invested guardians are likely to monitor their charge with increased intensity and, therefore, provide more capable guardianship.

### 7.5.3 The Varying Effectiveness of Accompaniment

The findings leave us with another pressing issue, namely that of why some offenders are prepared to attempt to abduct a child who is ostensibly well guarded. This raises questions as to whether and why offenders do not perceive the presence as sufficient to constitute capable guardianship in these cases. The findings regarding victimization type can be used to
answer this, specifically by comparing attackers who use coercive means such as assault and threat, and those who use non-coercive means, such as lures and manipulation (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996; Hanfland et al., 1997).

The findings also indicate that, while there is a general preference towards lone, vulnerable victims of opportunity, there exists a smaller sub-set of highly motivated or fixated offenders who are driven to target and abduct a victim even in the face of strong adult supervision. The question of how to dissuade or resist these offenders is difficult.

### 7.6 Concluding Remarks

The findings from this study suggest there are few true “capable guardians” against stranger child abduction that are likely to be actually present at an offence in progress. Any guardianship short of direct adult supervision with immediate responsibility towards a child is highly inconsistent in its effectiveness. Furthermore, the notion that surveillance ought to be from an animate source, i.e., a human, is supported by the current study. Natural surveillance seems to play a very limited role in stranger child abduction. Felson’s (1995) hierarchy of guardianship is also supported, as guardians with greater responsibility towards a target proved to be more effective at preventing stranger child abductions against them.

While it was shown that surveillance and monitoring can sometimes be perceived to be effective and thereby reduce offending, this occurs with little consistency, and should an offender proceed with their abduction attempt, they are unlikely to be challenged. These findings are of particular concern as they indicate that a number of assumptions that have been made regarding child protection, especially the lesson that accompaniment by peers is an effective form of guardianship, are false and inappropriate. Going forward, it will be useful to acknowledge this difference between the softer prevention by perception, and more
direct prevention by intervention when considering sources of guardianship in stranger child abduction.

With this in mind, it should be emphasised that, since stranger child abduction is an extremely heterogeneous type of behaviour, it is extremely difficult to make specific, pro-active recommendations to reduce the success rates of stranger child abduction. Advice that could be useful in one instance of stranger child abduction may put the victim at greater risk in another. As such, even recommendations that might seem obvious and intuitive based on these findings, such as increasing the chances that members of the public or other general custodians, such as store clerks, will intervene in possible cases of stranger child abduction, or improving the effectiveness of children in defending their peers, must be made with great caution and consideration. For this reason, this paper makes no practical recommendations beyond simply stating that the presence of motivated adult guardians decreases the risk of stranger child abductions becoming completed, and even then there are some cases where a highly motivated offender will not be adequately deterred.

It should be kept in mind that this research examines offenders who have tried to abduct a victim, so does not reflect the extent to which offenders who wished to carry out such a crime were dissuaded from doing so. This raises the possibility for future research examining the extent to which varying levels of offender motivation or fixation interact with guardianship features.
Chapter 8: Modus Operandi in Stranger Child Abduction

Chapter Summary

The final study in this project focuses on the behaviour of offenders, with a specific emphasis on examining their overall approach to offending and the strategies that are used to facilitate abductions. This chapter argues that existing inquiries purporting to study and describe offender behaviour in stranger child abduction have utilized an overly narrow definition of modus operandi (MO), focusing only on the offender’s method of approach and the very outset of the offence and failing to reflect the continuous nature of offending. In response, this research examines additional features of offender behaviour to establish MO, comparing attempted and completed cases of abduction with a view to ascertaining the extent to which MO influences the outcome of the offence. Specifically, the study examines the extent to which offenders change their approach during the offence, and whether they utilize multiple approaches.

This study examines the MO utilized by offenders in the sample of 78 cases of stranger child abduction. Descriptive analysis was used to determine which types of behaviour were present, with multi-dimensional scaling being used to group these behaviours to establish whether there were any clear patterns or associations between strategies, and whether these varied between attempted and completed cases. It was found that offender MO broadly fit two key themes that describe how the offender tried to exert control over the victim: manipulative control, and coercive control. In terms of relevance to case outcome, it was found that offenders who utilized multiple means of control, who were more aggressive, and who shifted their MO from one theme to another, were more likely to complete the offence. The implications of these findings for research and policy are discussed.
8.1 Introduction

As established, a large proportion of studies dealing with stranger child abduction have been concerned with establishing overall incidence of the offence or relative frequencies between stranger abduction and other abduction offences (Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak, 2002; Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson, 2008). Coverage of behavioural information tends to be broad and descriptive (see Noor-Mohammed, 2013). Only very recent studies have examined these offenders and their behaviours in any greater detail (e.g., Tillyer, Tillyer & Kelsay, 2015), but such studies have not used the opportunity to consider the implications of these details for offender MO.

The aims of this study are therefore twofold: first, it intends to conduct a thorough examination of modus operandi utilized by stranger child abductors with a view to ascertaining whether currently used offending themes are appropriate; second, it compares the modus operandi utilized by offenders responsible for attempted cases and for completed cases, with the purposes of ascertaining whether there are key trends in behaviour that can determine how a case will end. A ‘stranger’ is defined as referring to a situation in which the victim and offender have had no prior contact or familiarity (Newiss & Traynor, 2013). This distinguishes this offence from acquaintance abductions and “known, not related” cases where there has been some prior awareness between parties (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Newiss & Traynor, 2013); A ‘child’ is anyone under the age of 18 (Home Office, 2010; Eales, 2015). Abduction refers to an act intended to remove a child from the control of their lawful guardian, whether attempted or completed (Child Abduction Act, 1984). For the purposes of the present analysis, an ‘abduction’ is deemed to have been completed when the offender gains control over the child, i.e., the child is moved or detained.
8.1.1 Modus Operandi

Modus Operandi has been defined as “all of the behaviours that are requisite to a particular offender successfully perpetrating a crime” (Hazelwood & Warren, 2004, p. 308), clarified as equating to the “how to” of an offence, or how was it carried out. Turvey (2008, p. 658) refers to MO as “the manner in which a crime has been committed”. Douglas, Burgess, Burgess and Ressler (1997, p. 353) defined MO as “the actions taken by an offender to perpetrate the offense successfully”. The core of MO, therefore, refers to what an offender does to carry out the crime in question. Although primarily examining offender action, an MO can also refer to the way in which an offender achieves their goal, i.e., it can include reference to use of tools and weapons, or to what an offender says (Leclerc, Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). Importantly, MO can also refer to the sequence of actions taken by the offender as the crime progresses and whether they exhibit any behavioural change; it is not purely a snapshot of what they were doing at the outset of the offence (Beauregard, Stone, Proulx & Michaud, 2008). As such, an examination of MO ought to be dynamic and account for change (Leclerc, Proulx, Lussier & Allaire, 2009). Existing studies of stranger child abduction have not examined MO fully, but rather have focused entirely on the offender’s initial method of approach (Lanning & Burgess, 1995; Tedisco & Paludi, 1996; Finkelhor, Hammer & Sedlak, 2002). The method of approach to offending is but one aspect of the MO, and does not reflect the full complexity of offender behaviour. This is problematic as existing studies on stranger child abduction purport to describe offender MO in full, despite only doing so in limited fashion.

Modus Operandi (MO) was initially became well known as a means of linking multiple crimes to a single offender. As Bennell and Jones (2005, p. 24) explain, MO can also be a useful way to look for offending patterns generally. From a research perspective, these
patterns can, in turn, be helpful for categorizing offenders and identifying offender typologies (Turvey, 2000). Such an approach has been used to identify typologies for a variety of offence types, including homicide (see Santtila et al., 2008), arson (e.g., Canter & Fritzon, 1998), sex offenders (e.g., Elliott & Ashfield, 2011) and others.

This paper argues that while discussions of MO as they pertain to other, similar offences have developed to include consideration of a full range of offender strategies and behaviours, discussions of stranger child abductor MO continues to be simplistic. In particular, literature on child sex offending has developed considerations of how an offence develops and how it concludes, indicating that offences ought to be viewed as continuous events and not restricted to a snapshot approach that considers only the first actions an offender takes (Beauregard, Stone, Proulx & Michaud, 2008). It is argued that a more thorough consideration of how offences develop, and how they conclude, is required to bring perspectives on modus operandi in stranger child abduction in line with those relating to these other, similar offence types.

8.1.2 Modus Operandi and Stranger Child Abduction

As outlined in previous chapters, there is evidence to suggest that stranger cases differ from acquaintance and parental cases to (Asdigan, Finkelhor & Sedlak, 1995). The most notable MO variation relates to the location of offending, with stranger cases occurring predominantly in outdoor locations, whereas acquaintance and parental abductions are far more likely to occur in private (Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson, 2008; Boudreaux, Lord & Dutra, 1999). The way in which an offender operates outdoors and in public is likely to be highly at odds to how they behave in a private setting. Additionally, this paper focuses on incidents of stranger child abduction carried out by male offenders, as it has been
recognized that female perpetrated stranger child abduction is of a unique character that ought to be studied in isolation (see Ankrom & Lent, 1995; Baker, Burgess, Rabun & Nahirny, 2002).

There is evidence that stranger child abduction is, by and large, a sexual domain offence that shares common features with other sex offences. Asdigian, Finkelhor and Sedlak (1995) made this connection very early in the development of stranger child abduction literature, finding that although abduction could occur for a variety of reasons, sexual motivation was the typical reason for such offences taking place. This perspective, which has been assumed by subsequent studies (e.g., Hanfland et al., 1997), was recently reaffirmed by Newiss and Traynor (2013) and by Tillyer, Tillyer and Kelsay (2015). For this reason, this paper assumes that stranger child abduction can be considered a sexual domain offence, unless there is evidence that a given offence has an alternative motive.

Although stranger child abduction is assumed to be a sub-type of sexual offending (see Newiss & Traynor, 2013; Tillyer et al., 2015), there is evidence to suggest that stranger child abduction is a distinct type of offence typology that is separate from other types of sex offence, and indeed also from other forms of child abduction (Asdigian et al., 1995; Miller, Kurlycheck, Hansen & Wilson, 2008). As a result, although theories and findings relating to general sex offending and to other forms of child abuse are likely relevant to stranger child abduction and can be used to discuss it, such literature does not overlap perfectly. It is the aim of this study to establish offender MO as it applies specifically to stranger child abduction, which can then be compared to general MO trends observable in other types of offence, including general sex offending.

The most commonly occurring terms that refer to MO in stranger child abduction are “lure” and “blitz”, which have been borrowed from literature pertaining to other offences
(Tedisco & Paludi, 1996; Hanfland, Keppel & Weis, 1997), and were discussed at length in Chapter 3. Although the terms blitz and lure can both be considered as overarching descriptions of an MO, they do not tell us about or describe actual, practical actions an offender utilized in each case. In fact, within either typology, there exists a multitude of ways in which a would-be offender might try to abduct a child (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). To identify these underlying methods of approach, it is possible to delve deeper into the existing literature on these MO typologies in order to examine the types of behaviour that one might expect to observe in each, and that have been associated with the commission of stranger child abductions. This study intends to interrogate whether the use of these terms adequately describes MO in stranger child abduction cases, and asks whether any alternative terms or explanations ought to be adopted instead.

8.1.3 Lures

The term ’lure’ describes a general approach used by the offender where some tactic or pretence was utilized in order to convince the victim to go with or accompany them. Leclerc, Proulx & Beauregard (2009) identify the key features of the lure as involving the replication of “pro-social behaviours”, demonstrating “love, attention [or] appreciation” towards the intended target. The examples they give include spending time with the victim, taking them places, or giving them a lot of attention”. The power of the lure has been connected to exploiting the natural or socially encouraged subordination of children to the authority of adults (Johnson et al, 2006) as well as the predisposition of certain children to trust, a trait which offenders learn to identify, nurture and exploit (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006; Webster, 2008 ). The main feature of every lure, then, is likely to be non-coerciveness.
In terms of delivery, although most lures are likely to involve some degree of speech in order to gain compliance, it is possible for a lure to be non-verbal. An offender can use non-verbal cues, such as smiling, or actions, such as beckoning a child, gently taking their hand, or holding up an incentive, in order to facilitate movement (Wortley & Smallbone, 2008).

Tedisco and Paludi (1996) identified three key themes that relate to the underlying rationale behind the use of the lures used in child abduction. Appeals to authority rely on the assumption that, in general, children tend to defer authority to adults, following and trusting in their word (Warden, Moran, Gillies, Mayes & Macleod, 1997). Appeals to empathy exploit the fact that children are usually taught to be kind and to help others (see Newiss, 2014), and to render aid when possible. This is particularly true when the person seeking help appears to be particularly vulnerable. Appeals to familiarity describe attempts by the offender to make it seem as though the victim knows or should know them, either directly or indirectly. Warden et al (1997) note that children are far more likely to comply with an adult who is familiar to them, whilst also having difficulty in differentiating strangers and non-strangers.

While these can be considered as over-arching themes in the methods utilized, the actual, practical strategies utilized by offenders have been identified largely from child safety literature. This is a collection of studies that are aimed at improving the responses of children to dangerous situations via education and training, and also includes child safety materials such as pamphlets (NCMEC, 2015). It should be noted that this type of literature contains little to no evidence of these particular offender strategies being used, and reference to them is based on either assumption or on unstructured observations from recent cases, with little to no verification of the veracity of said materials having been performed (see Boudreaux, Lord & Etter, 2000, p. 63). The key lures identified, and that one might expect to see in the present
study, are as follows: Simple lure, where the offender simply asks the child to accompany them (Johnson et al., 2005), with no other underlying context (Olsen-Woods, Miltenberger & Foreman, 1998); Incentive lures, where the offender offers some kind of enticement for acquiescence, such as material gifts, although can involve an offer to do something, such as to play a game, to play with a pet, or to be shown something of interest (Poche, Brouwer & Swearingen, 1981; Moral et al., 1997); Offers of assistance, where an offender offers aid of some kind, most commonly transport (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996); Requests for aid, where the offender asks the child for assistance (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996); an authority lure, which exploits a child’s tendency to trust in and defer to adults, generally via giving a command or asserting seniority (Poche at al., 1981; Tedisco & Paludi, 1996, p. 48); and false emergencies, where an offender attempts to gain a child’s compliance by pretending a loved one has been an accident (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996; WCOT 2009). Other lure tactics that have been mentioned include communicating a common interest (Webster et al, 2012) and leading a victim away whilst making conversation (Newiss, 2014; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006; Tedisco & Paludi, 1996).

8.1.4 Blitz

The alternative type of approach identified in stranger child abduction has been referred to as a “blitz” attack (Hanfland, Keppel & Weis, 1997). Burgess and Holstrom (1984) defined a blitz attack as being one where the offender appears and attacks the victim suddenly. Burgess later defined the blitz as an attack where there was “no previous interaction of any kind between the assailant and the victim (p. 392). A blitz has been characterized as being intended to surprise and overwhelm the victim using sudden aggression (LeBeau, 1987). The blitz style of offence has also been associated with suddenness and the use of weapons by an assailant (Bondurant, 2001), and the threatening of
physical violence (Kahn, Mathie & Torgler, 1994). The key feature of “blitz attacks” can therefore be seen to be coerciveness.

In terms of particular strategies used, blitz attacks have been characterised as including “surprise attacks”, defined as occurring against an unaware victim where the offender attacks from behind or from concealment (Hauffe & Porter, 2009, p. 489). A particular brand of blitz has been identified as involving a “confidence approach” which is used to “gain access then launch a sudden, overpowering assault” (Cheshire, 2004, p. 673), referring to a trend in assaults where the offender briefly asks the victim a question- often something innocuous such as asking for the time- for the purpose of causing the victim to stop walking in order to create an opportunity for attack. Other less common types of aggressive strategy have been identified in “child safety materials”, which are teaching materials aimed at children and carers in the form of pamphlets (NCMEC, 2013; 2015) and educational videos (e.g., Greater Manchester Police, 2015). The strategies identified include the “feigned injury” or “accident trick” (e.g., by WCOT, 2009), where it is suggested that the abductor might pretend to be seriously injured or otherwise debilitated, and then wait for the child to approach them offering assistance, whereupon they will grab the child.

8.2 Research Questions

As mentioned above, the existing “typologies” associated with stranger child abduction are based on very limited considerations of what constitutes an MO. Most problematically, they offer only a snapshot of what the MO was like at the outset of an offence. A chronological approach to examining changes in an offender’s behaviour and circumstances have been shown to be very important in an emerging research trend (e.g., Stone, Beauregard, Proulx & Michaud, 2008). This means it is desirable for changes that
occur during an offence sequence to be reflected. With this in mind, this study utilizes an outcome based approach, where the impact of the offender’s initial approach to crime is analysed in light of whether the offence becomes completed or not. This study will reflect changes in MO, analysing whether offenders utilized more than one strategy throughout their offence, or whether they changed their initial approach.

In addition, it is acknowledged that the fullest consideration of MO ought to take into account as many factors relevant to the completion of an offence as possible (see e.g., Kloess, Seymour-Smith, Hamilton-Giacchritsis, Long, Shipley & Beech, 2015). There are a range of factors that are potentially relevant to MO: researchers studying MO for other crime types examine not just method of initial approach, but also factors such as the use of weapons and level of planning (e.g., Beauregard, Lussier & Proulx, 2005; Beauregard, 2015). This study will reflect this by including additional data on use of tools by offenders, whether offenders prepared for the offence in advance, and what was said by offenders.

Additionally, it can be argued that the “lure” and “blitz” paradigms have been applied to stranger child abduction without any real consideration, and may not accurately reflect how stranger child abductors conduct offences. This has occurred in spite of alternative MO models and descriptions that could plausibly be utilized, i.e., Beauregard et al. (2007) identify offenders who utilize coercive and manipulative scripts, while Wortley and Smallbone (2006) distinguish predatory, opportunistic and situational offenders. This paper will ask whether any such alternative models would better describe stranger child abduction than “lure” and “blitz”.

The primary research questions for this piece of work are whether existing explanations of MO used to describe stranger child abduction offences adequate; whether
style of MO influences the outcome of cases; the what extent do offenders change their approach during an offence; and the extent to which the MO features and offending strategies commonly identified in literature represented among the sample.

8.3 Methodology

As detailed in Chapter 4, this study made use of Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) to analyse key offending behaviours, supplemented by descriptive statistics. Variables were identified by a combination of open coding, literature-based coding and thematic analysis of the dataset of 78 offences of stranger child abduction, and are as follows:

To identify the variables used in this study, multiple layers of coding and analysis took place. It was felt necessary to treat the data in multiple ways in order to account for the relatively small sample size, and to ensure that any phenomenon were recognized and accounted for.

In this section, variables were coded nominally, i.e., according to whether they were present or not. For instance, if there was evidence that an incentive had been used (the victim being offered something as a means of gaining compliance, see Chapter 8), this was coded as present. The offender’s MO, termed as “grab” or “manipulative” was coded based on their initial approach to the offence, with any changes to that MO being coded as a shift. Grab offences referred to those where control was exerted using hands-on, aggressive means, whereas manipulative offences occurred when control was carried out using verbal or other means that appeared non-antagonistic. The only exception to this was the “single line before attack”, which referred to cases where the offender would get the victim’s attention before launching an attack- this was deemed to be a grab type attack, since the small amount of verbiage was intended to facilitate an otherwise aggressive approach. The presence of other
variables, such as tool use or whether the offender said anything, was coded based on simple presence. A tool was deemed to have been “improvised” if the item in question was not used for its normal intended purpose, i.e., a stone being used as a weapon; a piece of clothing being used as binding or ligature. Similarly, tools were coded as not having been brought if they were found at the scene rather than having been in the offender’s possession. The offender’s approach was coded depending on the initial strategy utilized, with a change in approach being used as evidence of a transition.

The first layer of coding was conducted following a literature review which identified factors commonly associated with stranger child abduction and similar offence types. From this, the data was examined to test for the presence of these variables.

The next layer of coding involved a thematic analysis of the data, intended to identify any additional trends or behaviours that the initial coding process had not captured. This resulted in identification of two additional key variables, namely “front loaded control” and “shift”. The data-set was then re-examined so that these factors could be coded in quantitative fashion, allowing for statistical tests to reflect these factors.

Variables were coded nominally, i.e., according to whether they were present or not. For instance, if there was evidence that an incentive had been used (the victim being offered something as a means of gaining compliance, see above), this was coded as present. The key variable was whether the offence pertained to a completed or attempted abduction. This was assessed based simply on whether the offender in question had successfully taken control of the child during their offence sequence. If they had, the offence was considered to have been a completed abduction.
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### Table 4.4: Variables and MDS Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>Physical Assault occurred</td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>The offender purported to know the victim or be related to them in some way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FrontLoaded</td>
<td>Front Loaded Control, i.e., control techniques used at offence outset</td>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Evidence that the offence was sexually motivated</td>
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<tr>
<td>MultiVictim</td>
<td>Multiple Victims</td>
<td>ImprovisedTool</td>
<td>Improvised tool found at the scene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shift</td>
<td>Offender MO changed during the offence</td>
<td>BroughtTool</td>
<td>The offender brought a tool to the scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative</td>
<td>Offender’s first action was manipulative</td>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>A weapon was used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab</td>
<td>Offender’s first action was to grab the victim</td>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>Ties or Restraints were used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>The offender appealed to Authority</td>
<td>MultiOffender</td>
<td>There were multiple Offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>Incentive was used to facilitate abduction</td>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>A vehicle was used during the commission of the offence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RequestAssistance</td>
<td>The offender asked for assistance from the victim</td>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>The offender threatened the victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OfferAssistance</td>
<td>The offender offered assistance to the victim</td>
<td>ActedOnThreat</td>
<td>The offender both threatened the victim and followed up on the threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>The offender engaged the victim in conversation</td>
<td>Tool</td>
<td>A tool or aid of some kind was used to facilitate the offence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OneLiner</td>
<td>The offender spoke one line before initiating attack</td>
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</table>

Inter-rater reliability was established by having the second author evaluate the coding frame by examining each code and its parameters, and checking with the first author what these meant in the event of any uncertainty. Subsequently, the coding frame was used to recode every 5th case in the sample, utilizing the narrative vignettes and original media articles and legal transcripts. No disagreements were found.
8.4 Limitations

It should be noted that stranger child abductions are by no means heterogeneous. Each case has a multitude of factors unique to themselves that cannot be adequately reflected, especially by quantitative work. As discussed above, an ideal coverage of MO will reflect as many pertinent factors as possible. However, due to the nature of the data available, there were a number of pertinent aspects of modus operandi could not be adequately examined and, as a result, remain unexplored. The most notable gaps are that this study could not analyse the exact behaviour of offenders at the crime scene, nor spatial information, such as how far offenders moved between crime sites. These are important elements of Modus Operandi, and future studies should focus on gathering data on these factors that can be used to analyse stranger child abduction.

The authors recommend caution when reading the conclusions of this study. The data gathered in this study is from second hand media and legal sources. These may have reporting biases. This type of data also tends towards more serious, newsworthy cases, meaning the sample is not representative of stranger child abductors overall. In addition, a selection of the media sources used may be prone to sensationalised reporting techniques. These limitations are unavoidable at the time of writing given the limited availability of information on these offenders, and due to the need to corroborate information via the presence of a confirmed criminal conviction of an identifiable offender in the UK courts. The potential bias of reports is mitigated by the study’s focus on offender action, and by the need for these actions to be corroborated across multiple outlets and by more reliable legal proceedings.
It is not possible to be completely certain of the victim-offender relationship in any given case. It is a possibility that the victim and offender may have had some previous awareness of one another that goes un-reported in the media or to the court. However, during the coding process care was taken to ensure, as far as possible, that such familiarity was absent. The first measure was to specifically search for cases that included the term “stranger” in the headline, report, or case report. As a result, most of the cases included contained indications that there was no previous relationship. Secondly, the study had very narrow inclusion criteria that would accept only cases where there was no evidence of familiarity at all. Any case where there was indication of familiarity was immediately excluded from the sample. Anecdotally, a sizable proportion of discarded reports specifically mentioned the presence of familiarity or proximity should there have been any such evidence. Thirdly, as a result of having multiple sources for each case, the chance that an outlet or legal case would mention any previous contact was increased. It is accepted that the sources used, particularly the media sources, may have misrepresented the victim-offender relationship, or been using a loose definition of “stranger”.

It is also possible that the existence of cases with multiple victims, multiple offenders, and offenders who were responsible for more than one incident will have skewed the findings. The power of these effects could not be ascertained, but should be kept in mind.

8.5 Results

8.5.1 Multi-Dimensional Scaling Results and Preliminary Analysis

Multi-dimensional tests were carried on attempted cases and on completed cases, providing a snapshot of these offences. These tests were intended to examine the various behaviours that stranger child abductors exhibit, and to ascertain the extent to which these
correlate with one another. This will enable groupings of behaviours most associated with attempted and with completed cases to be examined.

**Figure 8.2: Multidimensional Scaling for Attempted Cases**

Figure 8.1 displays the MDS output for behaviours present in attempted cases. There was good fit, with an s-stress score of .0134 (Dugard, Todman & Staines, 2010). How well the MDS output represents and accounts for the dataset is represented by the measure of stress. As Sturrock and Rocha (2000) illustrate, stress depicts the "sum of inaccuracies" present in an MDS test, which come about as a result of the test attempting to represent data
in two or more dimensions (p.19). Kruskal and Wish (1978) explain that the value of the stress score represents how well or how poorly the data meets this fit, with a higher stress score indicating a poorer fit than a lower score, with a score of 1 representing a total lack of fit, and a score of 0 representing a perfect fit. In other words, the closer the stress score is to 0, the better the fit, and the closer it is to 1, the poorer the fit. Kruskal and Wish (1978) suggested that a score of lower than 0.10 would account for an adequately close fit.

Additional measures relevant to fit are provided. Tuckers coefficient of congruence showed a score of .994, with the variance accounted for showing a score of 0.989. Dugard et. al (2010, p. 275) explain that these values should be as close to 1 as possible. These scores are very close to that indicating a good fit.

The multidimensional scaling test for attempted cases of stranger child abduction carried out 57 iterations, with a final normalised raw stress value of 0.010. The IBM SPSS Statistics program carries out iterations of the test until doing so stops yielding improvements to the fit. This is quite a high number of iterations, indicating an uncertain initial fit which was improved dramatically via iteration, with a final good fit.

The scatterplot shows the similarities between variables, and is a representation of correlation coefficients. In other words, shorter distances between variables represent higher similarity, and a greater likelihood of co-occurrence in the same case (see Wickelmaier, 2003). Furthermore, where variables are clustered together in particular areas of the graph, this indicates homogeneity between those variables, and distinguishes them from variables appearing elsewhere on the plot.

From this, the first notable finding is that offence tactics were grouped in a distinct manner with characteristics representative of manipulative MO tending towards the right of
the graph, and those relating to an aggressive approach tending towards the left. Themes were identified by examining the proximity of variables to one another, with particular importance being placed on the positioning of the manipulation variable and grab variables, which can be considered to broadest explanations of offender approach. There was clear clustering around these variables, indicating that manipulation was achieved using mostly verbal means, whereas forceful movement was facilitated by physical means or threatening behaviour. Efforts to grab the victim were particularly closely clustered with making threats and weapon use, whilst manipulative means were correlated with a conversational approach.

As expected, the use of a “one liner” was grouped closer to aggressive means, supporting the idea such an approach is a precursor to an assault despite being verbal. The groupings indicate a greater reliance on specific tools by aggressive offenders, whereas manipulative offenders are more likely to improvise equipment or to rely on verbal means alone. The clustering allowed for a natural divide to be drawn between behaviours where the victim is controlled using manipulative, benign, seemingly friendly strategies, and those where the victim is controlled coercively. These types of behaviours broadly reminiscent of the lure and blitz paradigms respectively. The finding that these factors are grouped fairly closely lends support for the belief that there are identifiable overarching strategies utilized by stranger child abductors.

Although this analysis reveals no clear associations between particular strategies and attempted cases, it does appear to show that offenders responsible for attempted cases were less likely to use a variety of strategies at once, evidenced by their being rather loose clustering of factors. For instance, the strategies associated with blitz are mostly spread out, suggesting each offender utilized only one or two items to facilitate their offence. There was limited use of tools and other items that might indicate advanced planning.
Figure 8.2 shows the behaviours correlated with completed offences. There was a reasonably good fit, with an s-stress score of .0423 (Dugard, Todman & Staines, 2010). The multidimensional scaling test for completed cases of stranger child abduction carried out 14 iterations, with a final normalised raw stress value of 0.028. Tuckers coefficient of congruence showed a score of 0.985, with the variance accounted for showing a score of 0.971. Being close to 1, these represent a good fit (Dugard et. al, 2010).

The groupings of variables is even clearer in this output, with aggressive means being strongly clustered. The high level of related variables here reflects offenders using multiple means to control victims, supporting the notion that offenders will front load their efforts to control victims. The most immediately apparent feature of this output is that completed cases
were more likely to involve highly coercive, controlling behaviours. Offenders who became violent were more likely to carry out an abduction to completion, as were offenders who used multiple means of control up-front. Additionally, indicators of offender preparedness, such as bringing weapons and tools to the scene, were associated with case completion. The use of aids, particularly tools, were strongly indicative of completion. Conversely, more manipulative means appeared to be less associated with offence completion, especially strategies that are identifiable with “lures” such as appeals to authority, requests for assistance and offers of assistance. This plot, when compared to Figure 1’s representation of attempted abductions, together with strong grouping, appears to indicate that use of incentive is more the manipulative strategy most likely to result in a completed abduction attempt, with requests for assistance also being effective, while more varied approaches to manipulation tend to result in the abduction being completed only. Additionally, factors such as having more than one victim or more than one offender were less associated with abduction completion.

A further examination of the frequencies of the presence of coercive control factors appears to support this position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
<th></th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab</td>
<td>40.60%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40.40%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Loaded Control</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42.10%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single line before attack</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49.10%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvised Tool</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brought Tool</td>
<td>18.80%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.30%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon</td>
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<td>22.80%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>24.60%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>42.10%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Attempted</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>49.10%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Victims</td>
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<td>17.50%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal to Authority</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.30%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer of Assistance</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>21.90%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.6: Manipulative Control Factor Frequencies

As frequency tables 8.5 and 8.6 illustrate, completed cases involved proportionately far more instances of weapon and tool use than attempted cases, as well as the presence of multiple, aggressive approaches to victim control. Offenders utilizing all means at their disposal are, and who resort to overwhelming physical, coercive control tactics, more likely to abduct victims.

Within the cases characterized by a manipulative control, the primary strategy utilized by offenders were use of incentives (34.15%), offer of assistance (24.38%) and request for assistance (17.07%). The primary strategies utilized by offenders in cases characterized by coercive control were grabbing the victim and controlling them by purely physical means (38.71%), briefly engaging in conversation before grabbing them and launching an assault (32.26%) and a combination of grabbing the victim and utilizing threats (22.58%).
Overall, there is a clear divide between the types of behaviour displayed by offenders. These have tentatively been categorized by the themes of “manipulative control” and “coercive control”. Manipulative control has been termed as such as the theme is characterized by the offender utilizing non-aggressive, mental means of gaining the victim’s compliance, with the offender often appearing to be friendly or at least passive. Coercive control is characterized by clearly antagonistic actions by the offender, with the victim being threatened, powered or otherwise subdued into submission. Bear in mind that these are themes rather than typologies. The constituent items in themes can overlap, as occurs here. These themes appear to be a better way of grouping the tactics present in stranger child abductions than the traditional lure and blitz archetypes, as they contain less overlap, and are a superior reflection of the core differentiating features of these tactics.

8.5.2 Shifts in Modus Operandi

There was an additional process that could not be captured by multidimensional scaling. There were some cases where offenders changed their overall theme of behaviour during their offending sequence. This change in modus operandi, herein referred to as a “shift” (n=17). 70.50% of cases featuring a shift were completed.

Such a shift occurred predominantly from offenders initially partaking in benign, manipulative mental control, who then progressed to aggressive, physical control and generally coercive tactics (96.20%). An example of this involved an offender who convinced the victim to come with him into a secluded wooded area, out of sight from any pathways, who then launched a sudden, violent assault.

Only one case (5.80%) saw the reverse: this was an attempted abduction where the victim escaped an initial grab. The offender then followed the victim, attempting to convince her (and nearby third parties) that she ought to accompany him.
The high levels of completion among offenders who shifted from manipulative control to coercive involved appears to further support the findings from the MDS that aggressive tactics, as well as multiple means of offending, result in higher rates of offence completion. This additionally helps to explain why coercive and manipulative strategies become more associated in completed cases: this may be a reflection of those offenders who make a transition from one approach to the other during their offence sequence.

8.6 Discussion

This study has shown that taking a more complete approach to studying modus operandi in stranger child abduction than has previously been undertaken reveals additional complexity to the offence, and brings into question the level of reliance on placed on previously identified abductor archetypes. The study finds only limited support for the lure and blitz archetypes of stranger child abduction. Although it was true that a number of the individual strategies utilized in these stereotypical models were present in most stranger child abduction cases, multidimensional tests revealed that the superior way of grouping these tactics was according to whether the offender was coercive and antagonistic, or whether they were non-threatening and friendly. There is far less problematic conceptual overlap between these emergent thematic paradigms than is present between “blitz” and “lures”, and they address limitations of the previous archetypes, i.e., that not all aggressive offences actually involve a full, assaultive attack that can be defined as a “blitz”. Manipulative and coercive offender types were identified by Beauregard et al. (2007), and this study indicates that their model ought to be applied to stranger child abduction rather than the existing use of lure and blitz.
The most important practical finding is that the results from the multi-dimensional scaling appear to show that highly aggressive offenders who utilize multiple means of coercive control are more likely to be carry out a completed abduction than those offenders utilizing manipulative means, or those offenders who rely on one or two tactics in approaching a child. Factors that imply offence planning also appeared to correlate with completed offences. Of particular interest, those offenders who “front loaded” their control, i.e., who used multiple methods of control at the outset of the offence to ensure victim compliance, were most likely to carry out an offence. A large number of lure cases quickly escalated to more coercive, dominating means once the victim was at a secluded location. These cases were very likely to end in a completed abduction. This form of offence is concerning for several reasons. Firstly, it points towards a dangerous, diverse sub-type of abductor. Secondly, the ways in which children are taught to resist child abduction and similar offences assumes that offenders will utilize either coercive or manipulative means, meaning that children are likely to be unprepared to face offenders of this nature.

The findings also indicate that, of the manipulative means available, that use of incentive and requests for assistance are more likely to result in a completed abduction. Such a finding is not unexpected, supporting the notion from the literature that offenders will exploit basic child psychology to gain control over them. From a prevention perspective, this finding indicates that abductions can be better prevented by educating children to be aware of the dangers of such advances.

The finding that offenders who became aggressive and physical were more likely to abduct their victims than those utilizing purely manipulative strategies has implications for child safety. This is a particularly alarming finding, particularly since most literature that intends to teach children to defend themselves from stranger child abductors places a great
deal of emphasis on recognizing and resisting the more manipulative offender strategies (E.g., Johnson et al, 2006; Newiss, 2014). From a research point of view, these findings lend support to the perspective that examining factors that indicate behavioural change, such as shifts in MO or changes in aggression, is a useful way in which to analyse this type of offence, being just as relevant to stranger child abduction as it is to similar crimes such as sexual homicide of children (Beauregard et al., 2008).

The results of the Multidimensional scaling appear to provide support for the assumption that has been previously made that the majority of stranger child abduction cases are sexually motivated (i.e., by Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Sexual assault were strongly correlated with completed cases of abduction, indicating that carrying out a sex attack is a common factor in stranger child abductions. This is doubly interesting when considered alongside the core themes that emerged from the multidimensional analysis, which showed that offender actions appear to be highly related to control. From this, it seems that stranger child abduction is strongly characterized by notions of dominance over the victim. This becomes increasingly true when considering that completed cases were characterized by aggressive coercion and use of multiple means intended to exert influence over the victim, and by more manipulative means that appear intended to move victims into vulnerable positions, thereby allowing dominance of the environment as well. It is beyond the scope of this paper to ender an in-depth discussion of the psychological and profiling implications of these points, however, they represent fertile ground for future research to examine.

It was also shown that the offender tactics featured in the review of academic and child safety literature were, for the most part, represented in this study. This usefully confirms that existing literature, although still largely based on supposition, somewhat reflects the realities of stranger child abductions. This is encouraging since this indicates that
policy and other subsequent work based on these earlier findings are based on sufficiently accurate foundations. The findings from this study mean that there is now verified data indicating that offenders are likely to either utilize a very simple lure, a lure involving an incentive, an offer of assistance, or a request for assistance. Incentive based abductions were a particularly common form of manipulation. However, the findings also show that certain types of offender strategy that have been linked to stranger child abduction (e.g., by Tedisco & Paludi, 1996) were barely used in practice, most notably the use of candy as a lure, which occurred only once in this sample, and the use of feigned injury to preclude an assault, which did not occur at all.

Additionally, these preliminary findings indicate that the role of tools is potentially extremely important in determining the outcome of stranger child abduction cases. Unfortunately, the approach utilized in this study meant it was not possible to fully analyse this feature of the sample beyond mere tool presence. Future research should examine this dynamic, as a matter of urgency.

8.7 Conclusions

This study has shown that there is a clear divide between coercive and manipulative approaches to offending, and that offenders utilizing aggressive and multiple tactics are more likely to complete abduction. Offenders who change their modus operandi were also found to be more likely to carry out a completed abduction. A number of smaller elements of an offender’s approach, particularly those relating to tool use, were found to have association with outcome. Future research should focus on examining smaller, practical offence features such as these in greater detail. The author particularly recommends examination of how vehicles are used during stranger child abduction cases. The results also indicate that
accounting for changes that occur in the offenders MO are highly determinant, meaning that consideration of factors occurring before, during and after an offence ought to be conducted.

Overall, the study finds support for existing perspectives on the practical behaviours that have been attributed to stranger child abductors, however, the paradigms of lure and blitz were not found to be the most suitable way to characterize the strategies utilized by abductors. Rather, there was a very clear divide occurring between offenders who utilize non-threatening strategies, and those who utilize coercive strategies. It is recommended that these themes, previously identified by Leclerc, Proulx and Beauregard (2009), be adopted in future research.

The study has also shown that more elaborate methods that have been associated with each of these methods of approach are extremely rare in practice, with simpler approaches being predominantly featured. Similarly, the previously recognized rationales (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996) for these behaviours appear to be supported, with the additional perspective that offenders also make substantial use of flattery and delegation when attempting to lure a child (Hedges, 2002).

Future consideration of Modus Operandi as it pertains to stranger child abduction must be broader and more complete than existing studies. In particular, the finding that changes in MO had an important impact show that it is imperative to conceptualize offending as an ongoing, continuous process, rather than a discrete event with focus only on the offender’s initial behaviour.
Chapter 9: Final Discussion and Conclusions

The core aims of this thesis, as stated in Chapter 1, were to compare completed cases of stranger child abduction to attempted cases, with a view identifying factors with a relationship to case outcome, and to assess whether distinguishing attempted and completed cases is a useful way in which to analyse stranger child abduction. In order to achieve these aims, this project has conducted a series of studies that have been intended to compare attempted and completed cases by using a dataset derived from confirmed, convicted stranger child abduction cases that have taken place in the UK. These studies have also been intended to test and challenge core assumptions surrounding stranger child abduction.

This approach has enabled this thesis, with a level of detail that has not previously been possible, to examine cases of attempted stranger child abductions compared to completed stranger child abductions. This is the main original contribution of the thesis to existing research, as this dimension of stranger child abduction has not previously been explored. This examination has allowed for the assessment of the significance of the attempted-completed distinction, as well as enabling detailed analysis of previously unexamined perspectives on stranger child abductions overall. Each study has been able to successfully explore and evaluate persistent assumptions relating to stranger child abduction, while simultaneously evaluating the utility of considering offence outcome as a means for analysis. The research has also been able to address several issues that have caused considerable problems for stranger child abduction research so far by taking measures to properly define terms and by ensuring that the data deals specifically with stranger child abduction offences. The following sections explore the original contributions made by this thesis in each of the four constituent studies.
9.1: Key Findings and Emerging Perspectives

The findings have shown that examining stranger child abduction by differentiating attempted and completed cases is a useful means by which to treat this type of offence, and is a type that should be kept at the forefront of analysis when researching stranger child abduction in future. This provides a strong endorsement for the suggestion made by Gallagher, Bradford and Pease (2008, p. 527) that future analyses take this distinction into account. This most basic finding alone is of strong academic significance. It indicates that this thread of research, abandoned in the 1990s (see Finkelhor et al., 1995), is worth pursuing. The finding is also very timely, as the rate at which stranger child abductions are completed has only very recently been uncovered and the gap in knowledge recognized (Newiss & Traynor, 2013), in addition to abduction rates overall being revealed to be higher than previously thought (Collie & Newiss, 2015; Newiss, 2016).

The particular function of the attempted-completed distinction has been to grant further specificity in examining stranger child abduction. The distinction has been especially useful in examining the nature of victimhood, and analysing “what works” with regard to resisting or otherwise preventing stranger child abduction. Of course, it must be kept in mind that these findings are based on a relatively modest sample size, and research such as this should not overstate the importance of its findings. The results should not be considered as definitive proof that certain factors are truly instrumental in preventing stranger child abduction. Rather, they can be seen as promising indications that certain trends exist, and that the highlighted factors ought to be prioritized for research. The adoption of the attempted-completed distinction should improve the ability of future researchers to better analyse stranger child abduction and, with time, enable the identification of factors and assessment of interventions that are relevant to crime prevention. Key findings from each study chapter are presented in
Table 9.1. As Table 9.1 shows, each study clearly demonstrated that there were distinct differences between the profiles of attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction.

### 9.1.1: Demographic Features

The attempted-completed distinction has contributed much to the understanding of the profile of stranger child abduction cases at a demographic level, with important features being distinguished when outcomes are compared. The profiles of attempted cases were shown to vary in a variety of significant ways from the profiles of completed cases. Most notably, use of this perspective has enhanced the understanding of the role of victim age in stranger child abduction. Previous findings on this point had been mixed, with some indicating average victimization ages of 10-11 years (Boudreaux et al., 1999); with others showing that older victims are more likely to be targeted (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). The present findings go some way to reconciling these disparities, as they showed that victims aged 10-11 years were most likely to be the victim of a completed abduction, whereas victimization was even across all ages when examining all cases of stranger child abduction. This appears to have revealed that while children of any age may be targeted by stranger child abductions, children aged 10-11 are more vulnerable to being abducted successfully by offenders or otherwise being unable to prevent the abduction.

Of equal note, there was shown to be a significant difference in the victimization of male and female victims of stranger child abduction when examined according to the background of the offender. Male victims tended to be targeted by chronic child sex offenders who had a likelihood to be fixated on their particular target, whereas females were targeted more often by generalized offenders who did not specialize in crimes against children. Those from the chronic group are more likely to be determined and experienced.
| Chapter 5: Victim, Offender and Offence Characteristics | •Victims age 10 are more likely to be subjected to a completed abduction; victimisation in general largely consistent across all ages.  
•Older, more experienced offenders appear to persist in an offending attempt for longer before giving up than younger offenders, who are more likely to desist early.  
•Female victims more likely to be targeted by general or first time offenders; male victims more likely to be targeted by offenders with existing interest in children.  
•Most abductions occur in outdoor public areas, with the most common locations being streets and parks. This had no particular association with offence completion.  
•Time of day and day of the week showed no particular association with offence completion. |
| --- | --- |
| Chapter 6: Victim Resistance | •Associations found between direct, verbal resistance, running away, and combined resistance efforts and a case of abduction becoming attempted.  
•Associations found between non-resistance, passive resistance and physical resistance with a case becoming completed.  
•Female victims appear to resist more often than male victims.  
•Older victims appear to resist more often than younger victims. |
| Chapter 7: Guardianship and Accompaniment | •In general, offenders appeared to prefer to target lone victims, indicating that guardianship had a general dissuasive effect.  
•Only adult, human guardians who were directly responsible for a child had a strong association with a case being attempted. This indicates that peer guardians, natural surveillance, and third parties are less associated with offences becoming attempted.  
•Indications that peers and third parties had difficulty identifying dangerous scenarios or intervening when it would be appropriate. |
| Chapter 8: Offender Behaviour and Modus Operandi | •Challenged the lure/blitz model of Modus Operandi, pointing instead towards a coercive/manipulative model.  
•Offenders who utilised aggressive means, means, and those who shifted from one offending style to another were highly associated with completed offences.  
•Offenders utilising single offending means were associated with attempted offending.  
•Found general support for previously assumed rationales behind offender MO, i.e, appeals to authority.  
•Found that several stereotypical approaches to offending were not or were very rarely utilised by offenders in practice. |
offenders, able to select vulnerable targets and overcome resistance strategies, whereas
generalized offenders are more likely to be opportunists who will discontinue an offence in
the face of risk, and be less able to recognize such risks in advance (Wortley & Smallbone,
2006). These differences in victimization profiles between child sexes indicates that it may be
necessary to account for a greater variety of offender strategies when teaching children to
resist abduction, when implementing other prevention strategies, and when studying
abduction in the future.

The final notable finding was that younger offenders appeared to discontinue their
offence sequence more quickly than older offenders. It was more likely for the offences of
younger offenders to end as attempts, and they were less likely to try to enact a further
offence or to make as many movements to different crime sites. This seems to suggest that
younger offenders are more easily dissuaded than older ones, however, it remains unclear
what is causing this effect. Further research is required to triangulate this finding, and to
uncover the processes underlying the effect.

Additionally, it has proven a useful exercise to gather information relating to victim,
offender and offence characteristics from a set of data that has been sufficiently vetted to
ensure that it refers specifically to cases of stranger child abduction. This has been valuable
since existing studies had not taken suitable measures to ensure that cases that would be
better categorized as other types of abduction, or as other offences against children, are not
counted as stranger child abductions (e.g., Finkelhor et al., 2002). This has enabled the
present findings to be used to verify and test existing perspectives regarding the profile of
stranger child abduction cases, and to do so with confidence that the data reflects the intended
subject matter.
9.1.1: Preventing Abduction

At a practical level, examining cases depending on outcome has proven to be a useful means by which to assess the effectiveness of factors intended to protect children against abduction. The research present in this project represents one of the first pieces of work that has been dedicated towards establishing the utility of victim resistance techniques that are being taught to children to enable them to protect themselves from stranger child abduction. Existing studies have largely assumed the effectiveness of these lessons, relying on common sense (see Newiss, 2014) or preferring to assess how well children can replicate desired behaviours (i.e., Johnson et al., 2006). The study produced a number of encouraging findings, particularly the finding that widely taught resistance techniques, such as “Run, Yell, Tell”, running away, and saying “no”, did protect victims from offenders when they were used. However, it was also found that a large number of victims either do not resist at all, or rely on less effective means of resistance such as indirect verbal resistance or physical hitting. Furthermore, male victims tended to resist less often and less effectively than their female counterparts. These findings represent early indications that the way in which children are taught to resist offenders could be in need of thorough evaluation in order to ensure that children make more use of resistance techniques in practice, and that all children are equally able to protect themselves against abduction.

For sources of guardianship, three key findings were made. The first finding was that, as expected, being accompanied by an adult is among the best ways to protect a child from abduction; offenders preferred not to target children who were with an adult, and if they did, the adult was best able to stop the offence from being completed. However, this effect appears limited to adults who are directly responsible for a child, since third party bystanders took few measures to protect children and seemed unable to recognize an offence in progress.
The second main finding, and the most notable, was that while the presence of other children can dissuade an abductor from targeting a child in the first place, children are not well guarded by their peers should an offender attempt to abduct them. This goes against the commonly held and widely taught expectation that children will defend one another from abduction. Thirdly, it was found that guardianship was only effective in dissuading motivated offenders if provided by a tangible, human form of oversight. This indicates that less direct or implied forms of guardianship, such as that provided by natural surveillance, are of limited utility in preventing stranger child abduction.

Based on those findings, it could be concluded that while most of those sources could dissuade an offender from carrying out the offence in the first place, the only source of guardianship that would routinely disrupt those offenders who did target a child were adults who were directly responsible for the child in question. This led to the conclusion that sources of guardianship ought to be considered in light of not only how well they can dissuade an offence from occurring in the first place, but also on how well they can disrupt offences that are underway. As with victim resistance, these findings indicate that the effectiveness multiple sources of guardianship previously assumed to limit the impact of child abduction may have been overestimated. Further research is required to understand why these factors do not disrupt offences, examining both the offender’s perspective and, where possible, the perspective of guardians.

9.1.3: Understanding Offender Behaviour

This thesis is among the first pieces of empirical research to examine how stranger child abductors, as a specific class of offender, carry out their crimes. Previously, understanding of the approaches these offenders take to abducting children was based on anecdotal accounts and common sense, rather than on any systematic analysis of data (e.g.,
Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). This has been a particularly unfortunate oversight, as an entire
genre of research on teaching child safety has come to take it as read that offenders rely
entirely on certain lure based approaches to abduction (e.g., Poche et al., 1981).

It was found that, on the whole, the expectations held as to the behaviour of stranger
child abductions were supported. Several of the key strategies that have been attributed to
stranger child abductors are indeed used by them in practice, for example, appealing to
authority to gain compliance, or offering incentives. However, a number of strategies
purportedly utilized by stranger child abductors, particularly the more elaborate strategies,
were not represented at all in this sample (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). Even among the cases of
stranger child abduction that this author encountered and could not include in the study, no
examples of these strategies were observed. Practically, in order to ensure that preventive
measures are being developed to meet the reality of stranger child abduction, references to
these extremely rare offender tactics ought to be de-emphasized. Future research should
establish patterns of offender behaviour in as much detail as possible to ascertain exactly
which strategies are being used.

The analysis from this study was also able to verify and assess the rationales offenders
have for relying on certain tactics in the first place. Again, existing perspectives were largely
supported. It was additionally found that perspectives relating to child sexual exploitation and
acquaintance abduction had overlap with a significant proportion of stranger child abduction
cases, with offenders utilizing tactics that were intended to gain victim compliance via
flattery, delegation, and making the victim feel like an adult, with the distinction being that
they did this in a short term fashion, rather than grooming their victim over a long period.
The most notable, original finding from this study was that offenders who utilized multiple means of control over their victims, and those who were most aggressive, were the most likely to complete an abduction. Offenders who transitioned from a manipulative style to an aggressive style were even more likely to complete the offence, seemingly as a result of overwhelming the victim and overcoming potential resistance strategies. In addition to uncovering this new dimension of offender behaviour, these findings further vindicate the approach of comparing attempted and completed cases, and represents one of the most useful findings based on such analysis.

Also of significance, this study found that the previously utilized offending “types” of lure and blitz, while somewhat representing stranger child abductors and their behaviour, were not a perfect fit. Following multidimensional scaling of the dataset, it was found that offender approaches were characterized best by considering whether their strategies relied on manipulation on one hand, or coercion on the other. The key element here is with regard to how the offender presents themselves to the victim, rather than on the strategy: manipulative offenders appear friendly, passive, or benign, i.e., non-antagonistic; coercive offenders are clearly in an antagonistic position. While somewhat similar to what had been referred to as lure and blitz, these new themes contain less overlap, and more clearly describe the core features of the overarching offender approaches. For instance, not all coercive attacks involved the high levels of overwhelming coercion, surprise, or hands-on aggression that would enable it to be referred to as a “blitz” as that term has been used by other authors (e.g., Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014).

It should be noted that even though this study was able to provide an expanded examination of offender Modus Operandi, some relevant factors could not be examined. Future research should consider additional factors, particularly spatial and temporal
information, i.e., the duration of the offence. It will also be useful to examine offender behaviour before and after the offence in order to establish the level of planning or spontaneity involved in each case.

9.1.4: Utilizing the attempted-completed distinction

The findings made by this thesis point towards a promising future for analysing stranger child abduction according to whether the case is attempted or completed. The most tempting use of such findings would be to immediately begin to direct policy and practice. However, the findings from this study ought to be considered preliminary indications of trends and associations between various factors present in stranger child abduction and the outcome of the offence. As such, the best way in which to utilize the attempted-completed distinction in the short term will be for researchers to carry out more studies testing these effects. Most importantly, future research should attempt to retrieve data from a variety of alternative sources in order to triangulate and test the present findings. It will also be important to identify other factors relevant to stranger child abduction, other than those studied in this thesis, which can be similarly analysed and interrogated in order to test for the existence of additional effects that influence case outcomes. Once a sufficient amount of work has been done, research findings can be used to direct policy, and answer the question of “what works” in preventing or disrupting stranger child abduction.

In addition to carrying out more quantitative work, it will be extremely desirable for qualitative research to be done as well. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the original intent of this project was to interview offenders responsible for instances of stranger child abduction, with a view to ascertaining whether there was a difference between the decision making processes of those who carried out attempted abductions and those who carried out completed abductions. The positive findings from this thesis regarding the utility of the attempted-
completed distinction indicates that following this line of inquiry would be useful. It is anticipated that utilizing the attempted-completed distinction will be of extremely high utility when used to examine qualitative data from stranger child abductors pertaining to their decision making processes during the offence and what factors influenced their crime-phase behaviour, as well as their experiences in the lead-up to the offence. To this end, it would be highly valuable for future work to carry out in-depth qualitative work with offenders.

9.1.5: Developing Theory

At a broader, criminological level, this thesis has helped to show that stranger child abduction is a relevant means by which to examine and evaluate contemporary criminological theory. The attempted-completed distinction, with its focus on offence outcomes, enabled the effective application of routine activity perspectives on capable guardianship. In particular, this thesis was able to recommend that the ability of a guardian to disrupt an offending event, in addition to being able to dissuade it, is key to assessing whether that source of guardianship can be considered capable. This exercise allowed for useful development of the theory of capable guardianship itself, in addition to providing practical results pertaining to effective means of guarding children against strangers who intend to abduct them. This finding is particularly exciting as it helps to raise the profile of Missing Persons as a relevant sub-field of study within criminology that is useful at all levels of analysis. It was possible to utilize stranger child abduction as a means by which to nudge forward perspectives on routine activity theory itself, indicating that it is useful to distinguish between guardianship that deters offences from happening in the first place, and those that can also disrupt and prevent the completion of offences that occur in their presence.

At a broader level, the findings appear to largely validate existing theoretical positions surrounding stranger child abduction. In particular, stranger child abduction appears to be a
sexual domain offence, with most offences appearing to have a sexual motive, which affirms the connection made by authors such as Newiss and Traynor (2013) and Beauregard, Stone, Proulx and Michaud (2008). This is further validated given that Chapter 8 found that, even though the lure/blitz typology did not appropriately reflect stranger child abduction, that another existing typology of sexual offending, the coercive/manipulative model, did. As such, this thesis appears to find support for the existing approach of treating stranger child abduction as a sub-type of sexual offending, and demonstrates the usefulness of concepts from that body of literature in developing knowledge of stranger child abduction.

It has been part of the intended aim of this thesis to demonstrate that the study of Missing Persons issues can be credibly analysed in light of, and be used to develop, criminological theory and perspectives. Given the success of Chapter 7 in discussing routine activity theory, it is argued that this aim has been met.

9.1.6 Generalizability of Findings between Jurisdictions

As outlined in Chapter 2, most of the research that has been carried out regarding stranger child abduction emanates from the UK and from the USA, with a small amount of research from other jurisdictions (e.g., Dalley, 2003). This raised the question of whether the different samples produced by each jurisdiction would create significant differences between studies carried out in each region. It was possible in this thesis to compare results and trends from this UK based study to those that had been conducted utilizing samples of US offenders.

The findings from this study appear to show support for basic trends that have been observed in both UK studies as well as studies from the USA. This project had a sample featuring UK offenders, and made several findings mirroring those from studies featuring
samples of US offenders. The general features of victim profile and offender behaviour appear to be consistent across studies.

This allows for the tentative conclusion that stranger child abduction offences share similar general characteristics in both jurisdictions, as studies from both regions appear to be examining the same basic phenomena. As such, findings from one jurisdiction can be used to inform research in the other. Furthermore, it will be useful for US researchers to utilize the attempted-completed distinction in their future work.

However, this is not to suggest that there is no difference at all between regions. It is very likely that cultural, demographic and geographic differences will still have an impact on the nature of stranger child abduction, and, by extension, how those factors differentiate between attempted and completed cases. It would be useful, therefore, to conduct comparative studies to examine how factors that vary between each jurisdiction, such as ethnic composition or distances travelled, impact stranger child abduction.

9.1.7 A Novel Method of Approaching Stranger Child Abduction Research

This thesis has been able to utilize a novel method of gathering data on stranger child abduction cases. Namely, it has drawn on data utilizing archival sources that are publicly available. This application of this method to this particular type of offending is unique as existing studies on stranger child abduction have not utilized such a dataset. Given that the findings from this study verified a number of points that have been derived from studies utilizing more traditional data sources, such as police database information or offender interviews, it can be suggested that archival data usefully compliments and triangulates these more typical sources. Although there are some challenges in using such
data, this approach has been increasingly recognized as a viable data gathering strategy that is particularly useful when data from authorities is limited, or if there are likely to be problems with official information (LaFree, 2010). The use of this approach for the current study has proven very useful. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are significant issues with the way in which police records are recorded, with stranger and acquaintance cases of child abduction being conflated, and with rules of primacy obfuscating occurrences of abduction. This has been a major problem for stranger child abduction research, with numerous pieces of work going on to inappropriately treat distinct types of offence as though they were interchangeable (e.g., Finkelhor et al., 2002). Utilizing archival data meant that the researcher could scrutinize the material and eliminate, as far as possible, such conflation or obfuscation. This helps to provide a level of assurance, absent from some previous studies, that the data and conclusions are reflective of stranger child abduction specifically.

9.2: Challenges with Stranger Child Abduction Research

This thesis has highlighted a number of ongoing problems with research relating to stranger child abduction, all of which have to do with consistency in research. These can be considered to be endemic issues which have been limiting the effectiveness and efficacy of work in this area.

Firstly, stranger child abduction research has had ongoing problems with defining key terms. Each of the constituent words “stranger”, “child” and “abduction” have been treated inconsistently across various pieces of research, as well as by organizations that deal with such cases. This thesis has made an attempt to create a clear, concise definition of stranger child abduction, which is intended to acknowledge and effectively compromise between the existing perspectives that have dealt with the subject. It is hoped that future studies can utilize
these definitions, or at the very least explain how the definitions they use have been arrived at. The lack of a consistent definition has led to uncertainty surrounding stranger child abduction, and it is strongly recommended that researchers, practitioners and policy makers undergo a consulting exercise with the aim of reaching a workable, uniform definition that can be utilized in future.

Secondly, stranger child abduction has been, and still often is, treated alongside cases of acquaintance abduction. This has occurred despite repeated reaffirmation that these types are distinct, and ought to be dealt with as such (Asdigian et al., 1995), with a number of authors continuing to refer to non-family cases (Beyer & Beasley, 2003), or failing to adequately differentiate such cases when reporting findings (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). This has proven to be a highly problematic issue that has limited the ability of subsequent researchers to identify which findings pertain to stranger child abductors specifically, and which conflate stranger abductors with acquaintance abductors or other types of offender. This was showcased especially in Chapter 5, where the amount of information available on demographic features relating to stranger child abductions, its victims and its perpetrators was extremely limited, with a sizable amount of information rendered unusable due to this uncertainty. As stated in the initial objectives, this project has had the goal of utilizing data only from cases that involved stranger child abduction, in order to limit the type of contamination that has been problematic in other studies. Although this has been difficult and has limited the amount of data available for analysis, the author feels that this has been a successful and useful endeavour, with the benefit of enabling the conclusions made throughout this project to be linked specifically to stranger child abduction. From this point onwards, this author calls for all subsequent research dealing with child abduction to denote the relationship between the victim and offender, and to be clear which type of offences are
being referred to. Furthermore, it is very likely that this issue stems from authorities still utilizing alternative terms in their recording, which in turn constrains researchers. With this in mind, it would be extremely useful for recording practices of UK police and any other agencies dealing with child abduction to be reviewed in order to promote consistency.

Thirdly, related to the second point, and with reference to the attempted-completed distinction, this thesis has revealed the distinct possibility that existing work on stranger child abduction has reported inconsistent findings due to a failure to distinguish attempted and completed cases, which have been shown to be distinct from a typological standpoint. Again, future practice should make every effort to record whether the cases of stranger child abduction they refer to are attempted or completed cases. To further assist with achieving such clarity, it would be extremely useful to arrive at a consensus on a working definition of what constitutes an attempted and completed case that is easy to comprehend and implement in future work, and by authorities. As highlighted in Chapter 2, it is not always straightforward to determine at which point a case of child abduction crosses the threshold to become a completed offence.

9.3: Implications for Research Practice

The findings from this research project heavily endorse treating attempted and completed cases separately from here forward. The literature review repeatedly showed that other research has consistently fallen short due to inappropriate conflations in the child abduction literature, most notably a failure to distinguish stranger and acquaintance cases. Such conflation, either of attempted and completed cases or of stranger and acquaintance cases, should be avoided.
It should be acknowledged that, despite the advancements from these studies, understanding of stranger child abduction remains limited. The author in no way supposes that the attempted-completed distinction is the last word on stranger child abduction, which remains a complex and largely unexplored topic. Future researchers should be alert for any further types that remain overlooked that can help to further distinguish and differentiate offences. The practical recommendations made in this thesis should be considered provisional, representing indications that changes in practice or evaluations may be required subject to additional research verifying the current findings.

9.4: Implications for Practitioners

The present findings alone will have limited immediate impact on the investigation of missing persons cases. More work needs to be done before practical changes of this nature can be recommended with the necessary degree of certainty. As has been iterated throughout this thesis, these results should be treated as exploratory indications of trends that are potentially relevant to the outcome of stranger child abduction incidents, and not as guides for practice. That said, there are a number of ways in which these results might become useful for practice in the future.

Findings from the thesis may be useful in helping to prioritise offenders. Chapter 5 found there to be clear gender differences in relation to victim preference among stranger child abductors, meaning that should a male child be abducted police ought to prioritise suspects who have a previous offending background against children or a pre-existing interest in children, and that when a female child is abducted police should focus on suspects with a more general, diverse offending background. In general, offenders who successfully abduct appear to be more committed or experienced overall, so prioritisation of offenders with a
prior record seems logical, although it was found that some offenders, particularly against female victims, had no prior record. Additionally, the results of Chapter 8 clearly demonstrate that offenders utilising multiple, aggressive means are most likely to produce a completed offence, further pointing towards the types of prior offending behaviour that ought to be looked for in suspect histories. This type of information can also be used to assist in streamlining appeals for witness information, and assisting in prioritising leads.

The findings from Chapter 7 indicate that all guardians besides those directly responsible for a child often failed to recognise an abduction taking place. This indicates that practitioners in the private security sector or who are otherwise responsible for spaces rather than people ought to be focused on as recipients of training to help them to recognise and, crucially, to intervene in possible abduction cases. It was also found that tools such as CCTV are not all that effective in disrupting an offence, meaning that offenders are likely to be caught on camera should they offend in a public space. This offers an additional avenue for evidence during investigations. It may even be possible for this to become more dissuasive if such evidence could be used more reliably and visibly to secure convictions, thereby deterring future offenders.

It would be extremely useful if future crime recording practices can be updated to record key information. Of particular interest: whether any given offence involves an attempted or completed abduction of a child; and the relationship between the victim and offender. This should be done regardless of the eventual charge. Such measures would greatly assist in future analysis, and mitigate the amount of information that is lost as a result of rules of primacy causing abduction charges to be consumed by additional charges.
Furthermore, it would be very helpful if court transcripts could be kept in an online archive, rather than being destroyed, regardless of their relevance to legal precedent or whether a request has been made for transcripts to be kept. These records are invaluable sources of information on difficult to research cases such as stranger child abduction.

Currently, policy and practice couches safeguarding responsibilities on parents, educators and police. Similarly, education is directed mostly towards direct caregivers and to children themselves. These findings show that this approach is the most logical. However, there does appear to be potential for expanding on this and enhancing the role of other organisations in helping to prevent stranger child abduction. It may well be possible to take a community crime prevention approach that expands these responsibilities into other sectors, which will involve enhanced training and possible a re-imagining of how the public in general thinks about abduction.

9.5: Implications for Child Protection

The findings endorsed a number of lessons currently aimed at children, whilst exposing gaps in others. There is now empirical evidence that “Run, Yell, Tell”, running away, and saying “no” are useful means of resistance that have been associated with cases being attempted rather than completed, whereas indirect resistance and physical resistance tend to be associated with offence completion. This is largely in line with expectation, and reflects how children are currently being taught.

However, it has also been shown that a large number of children either do not resist offenders at all, or that they utilize less effective forms of resistance should they resist. Work must be done in order to improve not only how well children retain child safety lessons in
situ, but also improve how often and how effectively these are used by victims in real situations.

A large difference between male and female victims of stranger child abduction has also been uncovered in the present analysis. In addition to resisting at different rates, males and females appear to experience different types of victimization when targeted by stranger child abductors. It may be necessary to consider teaching boys and girls to resist stranger child abduction using different means, or broadening the curriculum so that children are taught how to respond to a broader range of offender strategies.

It should be kept in mind that the sample size used in this research was small. The findings ought to be verified using a larger dataset, and ideally triangulated using alternative sources, prior to significant changes in practice being implemented.

9.6: Future Directions

The academic exploration of stranger child abduction remains in its infancy, particularly with regard to this newly uncovered attempted-completed distinction. A vast volume of research remains to be done on this field, with current efforts having barely scratched the surface of what will be required. Nevertheless, there are a number of avenues that should be considered as priorities for research.

The most pressing requirement is for primary qualitative research to be undertaken. It would be extremely useful to test the hypotheses generated from the present thesis against the perspectives offered by offenders themselves, particularly with regard to their reasoning for committing an offence and their decision making when continuing to pursue an offence in the
face of victim resistance or sources of guardianship. It would additionally be extremely useful to conduct interviews with victims themselves in order to ascertain why and how they utilized certain resistance techniques. Following completion of this thesis, the researcher intends to gain access to the subjects of this study, most of whom remain incarcerated in UK penal institutions, with a view to carrying out such research. Ethical approval has been granted by NOMS to conduct this research.

The next most pertinent direction would be to further test the conclusions of this thesis by gathering a larger, more representative sample of stranger child abduction cases. Ideally, recording practices at organizations dealing with such cases will have improved to the point that stranger child abduction cases can be distinguished from other forms of abduction, and will have a greater volume of pertinent information. Alternatively, it may be possible to gain access to police records and hand code the material to fit the coding frame used by this project. In either event, it would be extremely useful to be able to use detailed case files in order to verify or challenge the media and legal study findings from this thesis. Although impossible to do so as part of this study due to restraints of time and because of ethical issues, it will also be useful to carry out victim survey research, as it remains the reality that the existence of information on stranger child abduction, particularly attempted cases, depends entirely on victims or witnesses reporting crime (see, e.g., Young, 1986), with this reality subsequently limiting the number of recorded incidents that go on to result in convictions or even in news reports. Accessing accounts that do not have to have gone through the criminal justice system would therefore be useful.

More complex methods of analyses which examine the interactions between the various factors identified in this thesis, i.e., victim resistance and offender behaviour, would also be helpful in developing models that better reflect the multi-faceted nature of stranger child
abductions, and reconciling the relationship between the various factors that appear to have relevance towards case outcome. Analysing how various combinations of victim age, offender MO and victim resistance lead to varying outcomes will assist in establishing the profile of stranger child abductions with a greater degree of efficacy. For instance, it will be helpful to know what kinds of resistance are typically used by children when they are faced with a coercive offender compared to those faced by a manipulative offender, and to relate these to offence outcome.

As mentioned above, one of the conclusions of this thesis is that there was tentative support for the universality of the current findings, as a result of findings mirroring the phenomena observed by US researchers, and due to the underlying psychology of offenders strongly resembling general theories of offending. This universality should also be verified by carrying out similar exercises in alternative jurisdictions. It will be necessary for such studies to accept a non-legal definition of stranger child abduction to ensure that all research going forward is examining the same behaviour, as a result of varying laws across Europe and elsewhere.

9.7: Limitations

As has been emphasized several times above, there are a number of limitations to the method used. First and foremost, the sample is fairly small, including only 78 cases from a period of over two decades. This is simply due to the limited availability of information pertaining to such cases, exacerbated further by the need to corroborate information as much as possible to assist with validity. These 78 cases represent all of the information that could
be found. The figure of 78 is also roughly in line with the sample sizes utilized by similar pieces of work that have required such detail.

The sample was derived entirely from secondary sources. These came from media and legal outlets, whose reporting may have been skewed, and the representation of information within those sources may have been selective. It is, unfortunately, not possible to assess the extent of these effects, although it is hoped that having multiple sources of information for each case, with at least one report and one legal conviction, mitigates these effects.

It was necessary, for the purposes of corroboration, to examine only convicted cases. This means that the sample is skewed towards more serious, higher profile cases, and may not represent the volume of cases that go unreported. Although regrettable, this limitation was unavoidable, since there is no verifiable information on these unreported cases. Any alternative means of gathering information on these cases, such as by questioning witnesses or carrying out a victimization survey, would be fraught with validity issues, and would have a variety of ethical issues. They would also have been difficult to achieve within the specified three year timeframe.

The researcher feels that the method used was the best possible, given the restrictions present. As mentioned in the methodology section, the original plan was to interview offenders in prison regarding their offending history. On reflection, it seems fortuitous that the present studies were carried in advance of approaching offenders directly. The current findings will enable interviews with offenders, which are a rare opportunity, to be far better directed than would have previously been possible.
9.8: Final Conclusions

It would be no exaggeration to say that the knowledgebase regarding stranger child abduction has always been somewhat limited. It has been hobbled by enduring, widespread public perceptions and stereotypes regarding what constitute stranger child abduction. It is held back by unclear and inconsistent legal terminology and treatment (see Newiss & Traynor, 2013). It has been delayed by an unfocused research agenda which has exerted significant effort into establishing incidence at the expense of utilizing consistent terminology or examining the features of the offence (E.g. Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1992). There has been a heavy over-reliance on framing stranger child abduction based on unstructured anecdotal evidence or findings from other fields, rather than on dedicated, specific research on this type of offence itself (E.g., Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). As a field of study, stranger child abduction has remained shrouded in uncertainty and contradiction until extremely recently.

This thesis has strongly emphasized the importance of lending clarity and consistency to the study of stranger child abduction. It has clearly and consistently laid out terms as to what behaviours constitute stranger child abduction, demonstrating the benefits of such consistency by producing usable findings. It has carried out several studies based entirely on a database of offences that specifically involved stranger child abduction events, resulting in empirical findings directly tied to this type of offence, which is the first step on the road away from relying on spurious, unscrutinised anecdotal information. Importantly, it has tested how well a number of the assumptions surrounding stranger child abduction stand up to critical scrutiny when work is based on a dedicated data-set, in particular examining how well practical resistance strategies prevent real world offending, and critically assessing the extent to which broader criminological and psychological theories of offending relate to stranger
child abductors specifically. This research has provided empirical backing to a number of key assumptions that had previously been lacking a basis in data, such as the effectiveness of “Run, Yell, Tell” as a means of victim resistance, which will enable research and policy in these areas to proceed with added confidence. It has challenged other widely held assumptions, such as the effectiveness of peer-accompaniment in preventing abduction and the utility of the lure-blitz paradigm, which is important in raising awareness of areas that must be re-evaluated. Most crucially of all, the thesis has shown that attempted and completed cases of stranger child abduction are distinct from one another. The differentiation of attempted and completed cases has allowed for the identification of a range of new avenues for research, and has been helpful in testing previously held assumptions surrounding stranger child abduction. Henceforth, studies and discussions of stranger child abduction should acknowledge the division between attempted and completed cases.

Future research should seek to build on the foundation established by these findings, and by the other notable pioneering studies on which the current thesis was based. The attempted-completed distinction should be brought forward, and used to interpret stranger child abduction from here on. Consistent practice from both researchers and practitioners will be essential going forward.
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### Appendices

#### Appendix A: Key for Multidimensional Scaling Figures 8.1 and 8.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>Physical Assault occurred</td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>The offender purported to know the victim or be related to them in some way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FrontLoaded</td>
<td>Front Loaded Control, i.e., control techniques used at offence outset</td>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Evidence that the offence was sexually motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MultiVictim</td>
<td>Multiple Victims</td>
<td>ImprovisedTool</td>
<td>Improvised tool found at the scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift</td>
<td>Offender MO changed during the offence</td>
<td>BroughtTool</td>
<td>The offender brought a tool to the scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative</td>
<td>Offender’s first action was manipulative</td>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>A weapon was used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab</td>
<td>Offender’s first action was to grab the victim</td>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>Ties or Restraints were used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>The offender appealed to Authority</td>
<td>MultiOffender</td>
<td>There were multiple Offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>Incentive was used to facilitate abduction</td>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>A vehicle was used during the commission of the offence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RequestAssistance</td>
<td>The offender asked for assistance from the victim</td>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>The offender threatened the victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OfferAssistance</td>
<td>The offender offered assistance to the victim</td>
<td>ActedOnThreat</td>
<td>The offender both threatened the victim and followed up on the threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>The offender engaged the victim in conversation</td>
<td>Tool</td>
<td>A tool or aid of some kind was used to facilitate the offence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OneLiner</td>
<td>The offender spoke one line before initiating attack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Ethical Approval from University of Portsmouth

Craig Collie  
PhD Student  
ICIS  
University of Portsmouth

REC reference number: 13/14:21  
Please quote this number on all correspondence.

June 26th 2014

Dear Craig,

Full Title of Study:  “A four-stage analysis of factors affecting the decision-making and thought processes of offenders during attempted and completed stranger child abductions.”

Documents reviewed:  
Consent Form  
Interview Schedule  
Letters  
Participant Information Sheet  
Protocol

Further to our recent correspondence, this proposal was reviewed by The Research Ethics Committee of The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. I am pleased to tell you that the proposal was awarded a favourable ethical opinion by the committee.

Kind regards,

FHSS FREC Chair  
Jane Winstone

Members participating in the review:

- David Carpenter  
- Jane Winstone

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10 Features the project’s provisional title
Appendix C: Materials for Original Project

Appendix C1: Participant Information Sheet

Institute of Criminal Justice Studies
Research Student
Craig Collie
Email: craig.collie@port.ac.uk

Research Supervisor
Dr. Karen Shalev-Greene
St. George’s Building
141 High Street
Portsmouth
PO1 2HY
Telephone: 02392843938
Email: karen.shalev-greene@port.ac.uk

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: “A four-stage analysis of factors affecting the decision-making and thought processes of offenders during attempted and completed stranger child abductions.”

REC Ref No: .................................................................

We would like to invite you to take part in our research study. Before you decide, we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear. Thank you.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to understand the decisions made by people who have abducted or tried to abduct a child that they do not know. One way of finding this out is to hear the story of the person’s
life from the year preceding the offence, right through to their experience after the offence up until after their arrest.

This allows the researcher to gather information about what the person thought and how they felt about their situation, and what problems they might have faced leading up to their offence that might have made them behave in the way that they did. It also helps to understand what things in the surroundings the person was thinking about, and how they thought about them, during the offence.

This information will be help make future studies more useful, and to help think of new ways to protect children.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to take part because your conviction is for the same type of offence that the study is about.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary- it is up to you to decide to whether to join the study. The rest of this information sheet will tell you about what will happen if you decide to take part.

If you agree to take part, we will then ask you to sign a consent form.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part in the study, you will be interviewed by a researcher. You will be asked a series of questions about:

- A brief summary of your early life and background
- Your life from the time around one year before the offence in question
- Your activities, thoughts and feelings in the two days before the offence
- Your activities, thoughts and feelings in the two hours prior to the offence,
- Your activities, thoughts and feelings during the offence itself. This part will focus on why you acted in a certain way
- Finally, your thoughts feelings and activities in the period following the offence.

Questions will include things like what your surroundings were like, what things in your surroundings you noticed, how much you thought about getting caught, why you chose a particular approach to do something when there might have been another way, and how you felt about these things.

Your answers to these questions will allow you to tell the researcher about the most important events and factors that have had an influence on how and why you made decisions.

It is asked that you answer these questions as honestly and in as much detail as you can. It would be most helpful if you can answer all of these questions, but if you decide during the interview that you would prefer not to answer a question, you do not have to answer it.

You will be free to stop the interview at any time. You do not have to give a reason for doing this.

The interview is expected to take around 2 hours. Breaks can be taken as and when required.
Normally, the interviews will be recorded on tape. If you prefer, the researcher can take written notes of the interview instead of recording it. Please keep in mind that this will cause the interview to take longer as the interviewer will be required to write down everything that is said word-for-word. Where this is done, notes will be read back to you to make sure they are correct, and you can sign them to confirm you agree with what they say.

Your permission is also asked to allow the researcher to access your records, particularly records held by the criminal justice system about your arrest for the child abduction the study is examining. This information, which is about your arrest and background, will be used to help build a case study, and give the researcher information about your case before meeting with you, which will save time in the interview.

**Expenses and payments**

It should not cost you anything to take part in the study, aside from around 2 hours of your time.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to offer payment for participation. This includes any credit or privileges should your prison use this system.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Taking part in the study may change your routine on the day of the interview, and you will be required to move to an interview room.

The answers you give to questions are likely to be quoted in the report of the study. Every effort will be made to ensure you cannot be identified.

Please be aware that if you tell the researcher about any offence you have carried out that authorities do not yet know about, the researcher will have to stop the interview and report this information. This includes unknown offences carried out by someone besides you.

You will be reminded about this during at the start of the interview, and after any breaks. The interview recording will be stopped if the researcher believes you are starting to tell him something that he cannot keep confidential, and he will explain this to you.

The researcher will also have to report information you give that can be used to protect children on your release. This may have an impact on your release conditions or on your treatment program.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You are unlikely to personally benefit from the study, however, it is hoped that the information you provide will be used to build up what researchers know about child abduction, which can help to protect children.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes, your participation in the study will be kept confidential. Your name will never be used outside of the interview. You will be assigned a number. When reporting the findings, you will be referred to only by your number. For example, you might be known as “Participant 4”. The only way to identify you will be by use of a key that links the names of participants to their numbers, and this will be kept locked away and will be known only to the researcher and his supervisor.

Audio recordings will only be used by the researcher, with the final reports being made in text format.
Any personal information that could be used to identify you—such as place names or names of people you know—will be changed.

Please note however, that what you say in the interview you will be quoted. The measures above are intended to make it so that what you said cannot be linked back to you.

**What will happen if I don’t want to carry on with the study?**

You are free to stop the interview at any time. If you decide to do so, you can ask for the interview up to that point to be deleted, or you can allow the information gathered up until that point to be used as data in the study.

Following the interview, data analysis will begin. Unfortunately, once this process is started, it will not be possible to withdraw.

Any data gathered will be stored and anonymised by use of a key, which will be stored separately. Any future access to this information will require your consent.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher or their supervisor, who will do their best to answer your questions

Researcher- Craig Collie- 07595627479- craig. Collie@port. Ac. Uk

Supervisor- Dr. Karen Shalev-Greene- karen. Shaley-greene@port. Ac. Uk

If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the University of Portsmouth complaints department.

**Samantha Hill**  
**Title:** Information Disclosure and Complaints Manager  
**Tel:** +44 (0)23 9284 3642  
**Email:** Samantha. Hill@port. Ac. Uk

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

Results of this research will be published as a PhD thesis. It is also likely to be published, in parts, as academic journal articles.

A summary of the results will be sent to you if you wish. If you would like to receive a copy of the thesis or any reports/articles produced from it, please inform the researcher and these will be sent to you.

You will not be identified in any of these reports.

Data gathered will be stored according to the Data Protection Act 1998. Your consent forms will be securely stored for up to 30 years as required by University of Portsmouth ethics protocol.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research is sponsored by the University of Portsmouth.
Who has reviewed the study?

Research in the University of Portsmouth is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by _____________ Research Ethics Committee.

Concluding statement

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you decide to participate you will be given a copy of the information sheet to keep. If you would like to participate, please fill out the accompanying consent form and return it to:

Craig Collie  
Postgraduate Office  
Park Building  
King Henry 1 Street  
Portsmouth  
PO1 2DZ
Appendix C2: Consent Form

Institute of Criminal Justice Studies
Research Student
Craig Collie
Email: craig.Collie@port.Ac.Uk

Research Supervisor
Dr. Karen Shalev-Greene
St. George’s Building
141 High Street
Portsmouth
PO1 2HY
Telephone: 02392843938
Email: Karen.Shalev-greene@port.Ac.Uk

Consent Form

Study Title: .. “A four-stage analysis of factors affecting the decision-making and thought processes of offenders during attempted and completed stranger child abductions.”

REC Ref No: .................................................................

Name of Researcher: Craig Collie

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and that I understand the information sheet dated ................. (version............) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to think about the the information, to ask questions, and am satisfied with the answers to these questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, up to the point when the data is being used by the researcher to write their report.

3. I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from the University of Portsmouth and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre who are assisting with project. I give them permission to have access to an anonymised version of my data when they are assisting in completion of this project.
4. I agree to being quoted word-for-word (except for identifying information)

5. I agree to my interview being audio recorded.

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: Date: Signature:

Name of Person taking consent: Date: Signature:
Appendix C3: Participant Information Form

Institute of Criminal Justice Studies
Research Student
Craig Collie
Email: craig.Collie@port.ac.uk

Research Supervisor
Dr. Karen Shalev-Greene
St. George’s Building
141 High Street
Portsmouth
PO1 2HY
Telephone: 02392843938
Email: Karen.Shalev-greene@port.ac.uk

Study Title:  ............................................................................................................

REC Ref No: ....................................................................................................

Dear Potential Participant,

I am a research student at the University of Portsmouth, and am studying for a PhD in Criminal Justice.

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. The study is about the decisions made by people who have abducted a child that they did not know.

My project will ask child abductors about the periods of time before, during and after the abduction. This is with the aim of asking the individual themselves about their lives and feelings in the lead-up to the abduction, and also to ask them what they felt was most important in causing them to behave in the way that they did.

You have been identified as being able to take part in this study as your case was mentioned in newspaper reports and legal cases in the UK about child abductions by strangers.

You will find attached an Information Sheet, as well as a Consent Form. If you are interested in participating in the study, please take a moment to fill out these forms. They can be returned to [relevant address].

The decision to take part is entirely up to you, and should take up no more than a couple of hours of your time. If you decide you would like to stop being involved, you are free to do so. However, after you have been through your interview, it will not be possible to withdraw as the information will be in use after that.
If you would rather not participate, simply do not respond to this letter. If we do not hear from you by [relevant date], we will assume that you will not be participating. If you receive another letter, please ignore this letter as well if you do not wish to participate.

If you would like to contact me and have any questions at all, please feel free to do so. My contact details can be found on the Information Sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Collie

Research Student
Appendix C4: Draft Interview Schedule

Personal Information and Background

[This introductory section will take the form of a short survey that requires only short answers, or responses to multiple choice questions]

["Name" is not asked here in case any unauthorized person sees the questionnaire. Instead the participants assigned number will be designated and used in place of their name.]

Participant Number:

________________________

Age:

_______________________

Marital Status:

Please tick relevant box

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Partnership</td>
<td>Widower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Has this changed since being in prison? Yes/No

If yes, I am now ______________________________

Children:

Yes    No

If Yes, how many? ______

Are the children from the same partner? Yes    No
Education:

*Please tick all relevant boxes*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O level/GCSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other qualifications: _______________________________________

Any other training: _______________________________________

**Residence History**

Where Raised: _______________________________________

How long did you live there: _____________________________

Current Residence: ______________________________________

How long stayed there: _____________________________

Other places lived: ______________________________________

**Family Background**

Who did you mostly live with during your childhood? Please tick the relevant box.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother and Step Father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father and Step Mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Children’s or Community Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If Other, please specify: ______________________________________

**Employment History**

Most Recent: ______________________________________

Occupation History: ______________________________________
Driving

Do you have a driving licence? Yes/No

Are you disqualified from driving? Yes/No

If yes, what for and how long? _______________________________________

Have you ever owned a vehicle? No / Yes. How many? ________

If yes, which one(s)? (Please tick where relevant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car</th>
<th>Van</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Bicycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other: ____________________

Conviction History

Any Previous Convictions: Yes/No

If Yes, how many? ____________________

What were they for? ____________________

Alcohol Consumption

Do you drink alcohol? Yes/No

In an average week, how often do you drink? ______________

When you drink, how much do you drink? ______________

What type(s) of alcohol do you normally drink? ______________

Drug Use
Based on the following 5-point scale, please rate how often you have engaged in this behaviour in a typical week prior to beginning your prison sentence?

(Please circle answer that applies best)

1. Never
2. A few times (not more than 10 times)
3. Quite often (between 10 and 50 times)
4. Often (between 50 and 100 times)
5. Very often (more than 100 times)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Rating 1</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoked marijuana (grass, weed, pot, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sniffed glue, petrol or other solvents (tippex, thinner, etc.)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken barbiturates (downers) without prescription</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken speed (uppers) without prescription</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken ecstasy</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used heroin</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used cocaine</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken methadone</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the prompts will only be used should the main question not lead to any kind of discussion. They may not be used in order, depending on the particular interviewee and what has been discussed up to that point.

Pre-crime Phase

-How would you describe your life in the year leading up to the offence?

  Prompt-routine (typical week)

  Prompt-anxieties and stressors

-Please describe the two days leading up to the offence.

  Prompt-anything out of the ordinary, sudden changes, growing anxieties?

-In as much detail as you can, take me through the two hours leading up to the offence

  Prompt-events- what happened, what did you do?
**Crime Phase**

- Please describe the moment where you became aware that you were about to commit the offence?

  *Prompt*-what, if anything, happened to prompt the offence?

  *Prompt*-how did you select your target? Was there anything about the target that prompted you to select them specifically?

- Please describe the preparations and plans you made to help carry out the offence.

  *Prompt*-what did you expect would happen

  *Prompt*-what did you intend to do or say? Did you bring any props or tools?

  *Prompt*-what place(s) did you intend to go? Why there? How would you get there?

- Please describe what actually happened. Please take me through moment by moment and describe what you did, why you did it, and what you thought about?

  *Prompt*-awareness of surroundings, environment, other people? Familiarity with area?

  *Prompt*-did anything cause you to change your plan, or do something in a way you did not intend?

  *Prompt*- [in attempted cases] what did you notice or what happened that caused you to stop?

  *Prompt*-to what extent did you think about the possibility of being caught or seen?

  *Prompt*- [In cases where the victim was released] Where did you release the victim? Why did you release them there? To what extent did you consider the location of release?

  *Prompt*-To what extent did you think about whether the child might tell others what had happened? Did you take any action to control this? If so, what did you do?

**Post-Crime Phase**

- Please describe, with as much accuracy as possible, what you did after the crime [what constitutes the actual end of the crime will depend on the case].

  *Prompt*- How out of the ordinary would these things be compared to your usual activities?

  Was there any change over time?

- After the offence, describe how you felt about what you had done.

  *Prompt*- how did these feelings change as time went on?
-Describe your experience and circumstances following your arrest [or surrender]?
Appendix D: SPSS Outputs

Appendix D1: Multidimensional Scaling for Attempted Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Coordinates</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FrontLoad</td>
<td>-.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MultiVictim</td>
<td>.567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulate</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab</td>
<td>-.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>.037</td>
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<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>.129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>.122</td>
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<tr>
<td>RequestAssistance</td>
<td>1.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OfferAssistance</td>
<td>.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OneLiner</td>
<td>-.732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool</td>
<td>-.302</td>
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<tr>
<td>ImprovisedTool</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BroughtTool</td>
<td>-.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>-.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>-.256</td>
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<tr>
<td>MultiOffender</td>
<td>.431</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>.176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
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<tr>
<td>ActionedThreat</td>
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<td>Sexual</td>
<td>.857</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
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### Stress and Fit Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Normalized Raw Stress</td>
<td>.01035</td>
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<td>Stress-I</td>
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<td>Stress-II</td>
<td>.24607</td>
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<td>S-Stress</td>
<td>.01347</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dispersion Accounted For (D. A. F.)</td>
<td>.98965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker's Coefficient of Congruence</td>
<td>.99481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROXSCAL minimizes Normalized Raw Stress.

a. Optimal scaling factor = 1.010.

b. Optimal scaling factor = 1.002.
Appendix D2: Multidimensional Scaling for Attempted Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dimension 1</th>
<th>Dimension 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FrontLoad</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>-0.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MultiVictim</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulate</td>
<td>0.398</td>
<td>0.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab</td>
<td>-0.600</td>
<td>-0.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td>-0.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>1.492</td>
<td>-0.499</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>0.538</td>
<td>0.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RequestAssistance</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>-0.113</td>
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<tr>
<td>OfferAssistance</td>
<td>0.192</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
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<td>OneLiner</td>
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<td>-0.868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool</td>
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<td>-0.007</td>
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<tr>
<td>ImprovisedTool</td>
<td>-0.325</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
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<tr>
<td>BroughtTool</td>
<td>-0.307</td>
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<td>Weapon</td>
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<td>0.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>-0.440</td>
<td>-0.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MultiOffender</td>
<td>-0.469</td>
<td>0.629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
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<td>ActionedThreat</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.066</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
</tr>
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<td>Assault</td>
<td>-0.180</td>
<td>-0.207</td>
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### Stress and Fit Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Stress-I</td>
<td>.16776a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress-II</td>
<td>.35108a</td>
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<td>Tucker’s Coefficient of Congruence</td>
<td>.98583</td>
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</table>

PROXSCAL minimizes Normalized Raw Stress.

a. Optimal scaling factor = 1.029.
b. Optimal scaling factor = 1.002.
Appendix E: From UPR16 Research Ethics Review Checklist

FORM UPR16
Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Postgraduate Research Student Handbook for more information)

Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information
Student ID: 706799

PGRS Name: KRAI JUAN ROBERT COLLIE

Department: ICJS
First Supervisor: Dr. Karen Shaleh Greame

Start Date: 1/10/2013
(or progression case for Post Doc students)

Study Mode and Route:
- Part-time [ ]
- Full-time [X]
- MPhil [ ]
- PhD [X]
- MD [ ]
- Professional Doctorate [ ]

Title of Thesis:
A Critical Examination of Recent Differentiating Attempted and Completed Cases of Sexual and Violent Violence Against Girls and Children

Thesis Word Count:
77,685
(excluding ancillary data)

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:
(if you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at http://www.ukr.io/what-we-do/tods-of-practice/ethics-research/)

a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame? [ ]

b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged? [ ]

c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship? [ ]

d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration? [ ]

e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements? [ ]

Candidate Statement:
I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):

If you have not submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered ‘No’ to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

Signed (PGRS): [Signature]
Date: 22/09/2016
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Code Title</th>
<th>OffenderName</th>
<th>VictimActivityPreAbduction</th>
<th>PreviousChildSexOffence</th>
<th>CCTV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>PreviousAbuseImagesOffence</td>
<td>Season</td>
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<td>AgeAtOffenceGroup</td>
<td>ReturnedVictimToAbductionSite</td>
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<td>DisguiseOrConcealingFace</td>
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<tr>
<td>EthnicityOffender</td>
<td>FledScene</td>
<td>PreviousRestrainingOrder</td>
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</tr>
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11 Unlike the final study, not all of these were coded nominally, i.e., several had multiple possible responses that could have been used.
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