Examining the role of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women

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Abstract

Guardianship is a core principle of situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1997). Through their presence and supervision, guardians discourage offending by increasing an offender’s risk of detection and/or apprehension and manipulating the perceived costs and rewards associated with the criminal opportunity. It is in this way that guardianship may be a mechanism for reducing the incidence or severity of sexual offences against women – particularly now that it is understood sexual offenders, much like any other individual, are capable of engaging in cost-benefit analysis as part of their decision making (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007).

Existing research exploring sexual offences against women through the lens of the criminal event points to a potential association between the presence of other persons, besides the offender and victim, and sexual offence avoidance. Less is known about who these guardians are, what they do during the crime event, and the real-life conditions under which guardianship is more or less effective against sexual offences. To build on these gaps, this thesis examined the role of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women. Specifically, and by means of three individual studies, it identified to what extent and under what circumstances the presence of guardianship affects the likelihood of disruption in sexual offences against women. Study 1 evaluated all the literature on guardianship in incidents of sexual offending to establish what is currently known about how guardians can be effective in controlling sexual offences against women. This established that while guardians do play a role in prevention, the likelihood and type of intervention by available guardians varies across situational contexts. Study 2 focused on the tradition of offender-based research, and presented a self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework. This allowed for a first-time comparison of completed versus disrupted sexual offences at each stage of the crime
commission process and results indicated that guardianship intensity is one of two dominant mechanisms operating in the disruption of sexual offence opportunities. With a view to beginning the construction of the evidence base for prevention, Study 3 turned attention to empirical insight and the extent to which guardianship affects the likelihood of the disruption of sexual offences against adult females. Using self-reported crime event data collected from adult men convicted and incarcerated for a sexual offence against female, analyses showed that the guardianship intervention is a fundamentally important factor in sexual offence disruption. Offender decision making in the context of sexual offences against women is, however, a highly dynamic process impacted by the micro-situational context of the crime event. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) … ……… ………

Alana Cook (Candidate)
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To be named as an author, a researcher must have made a substantial scholarly contribution to the creative or scholarly work that constitutes the research output, and be able to take public responsibility for at least that part of the work they contributed. Attribution of authorship depends to some extent on the discipline and publisher policies, but in all cases, authorship must be based on substantial contributions in a combination of one or more of:

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- Acknowledge all those who have contributed to the research, facilities or materials but who do not qualify as authors, such as research assistants, technical staff, and advisors on cultural or community knowledge. Obtain written consent to name individuals.

Included in this thesis are papers in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 which are co-authored with other researchers. My contribution to each co-authored paper is outlined at the front of the relevant chapter. The bibliographic details for these papers including all authors are:

This is a RoMEO green journal – the author can archive post-print (i.e. final draft post-refereeing)


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Appropriate acknowledgements of those who contributed to the research but did not qualify as authors are included in each paper.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of the Thesis

The problem of sexual violence against women has long been a concern within Australia. As defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017a), sexual assault is “any act of a sexual nature carried out against a person's will through the use of physical force, intimidation or coercion”. Also included under this definition are any attempts to engage in sexual contact under non-consensual or coercive conditions. National surveys of victimization experiences consistently indicate that women, irrespective of age, are disproportionately more likely to be sexually assaulted than men. A recent publication by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), for example, reported that 81.8% (n=18,861) of all recorded sexual assault victims during 2016 were female (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b). Further to this, nearly one in five women (compared to 1 in 20 men) have reported an experience of sexual violence on at least one occasion since the age of 15 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017a). Importantly, these observed patterns in female victimization are also not unique to the Australian population. Similar rates of sexual assault against women can be observed in self-report data collected in both the US and UK indicating the extent of the problem on a global scale (Office for National Statistics, 2017; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017).

Studies exploring the impact which unwanted sexual contact has on female attitudes about safety illustrates that, for many women, sexual assault is both a major cause of anxiety and a powerful inhibitor of normal daily functioning (Lane, Gover & Dahod, 2009; Fisher & Sloan, 2003). Victims often experience prolonged psychological, physiological, behavioural and health implications in addition to feelings of degradation, guilt, embarrassment and self-blame (Ullman, 1996). Because victims of sexual assault are often known to their attacker (e.g. intimate partner) which may lead to further harm in the form of potential retaliation, it is also not uncommon for victimization experiences
to be left unreported. This means there exist fewer opportunities to take reparative action and reconcile the damage inflicted upon victims.

In light of these challenges, there has been significant attention given, in recent years, to what constitutes best practice for responding to and preventing the occurrence of sexual offences against women (see, for example, Cook & Reynald, 2017; Chiu & Leclerc, 2016; Leclerc, Chiu, Cale, & Cook, 2016). The problem surrounding the subsequent response strategies however, is that due to the extensive media attention given to the most heinous and devastating of these offences, it is believed by many that all sexual offenders must be similarly deviant and predatory (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney & Baker, 2007). This has resulted in the adoption of overly inclusive criminal justice policies which focus on identification and incarceration practices that seek to disrupt sexual offender’s ‘supposed’ criminal careers and effectively isolate them from wider society (e.g. community notification laws, increased sentence length) (Harris & Socia, 2016). Because these approaches are also driven by moral panics rather than evidence, they fail to acknowledge that sexual recidivism is relatively rare and that most sexual offenders also commit nonssexual crimes (Lussier, 2005). As result, there is a scarcity of clear and demonstrated evidence to show these “one size fits all” punitive approaches effectively reduce sexually violent behaviours (Tewksbury & Jennings, 2010).

The socially-constructed justifications underpinning these highly punitive responses (i.e. all sexual offenders are irredeemable predators) are also challenged by the recognition that crime, and criminal involvement, can be explained by the interaction between offender disposition and opportunity (Clarke, 1997). With respect to sexual offending in particular, research shows that situational factors play a key role in the decisions which offenders make regarding crime commission (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Leclerc, Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). As result, it has been established that sexual
offenders are much like any other individual in that they are capable of engaging in cost-benefit analysis as part of their criminal decision making (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). To more effectively address rates of sexual offending, it is therefore possible that prevention strategies should instead be focused on reducing opportunities through increasing risk and effort and reducing reward – an approach referred to as situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1997). Strategies driven by this approach have the capacity to prevent sexual crimes during perpetration and, of more importance for effective prevention, also restrict the opportunity for sexual offending in the first place. One particularly promising strategy by which this can be achieved is through increasing the presence of other persons – a term referred to as guardianship.

The concept of guardianship was first introduced as one of the three central elements underpinning Cohen and Felson’s (1979) Routine Activity Approach. At the core of the routine activity approach is the idea that criminal opportunities are not evenly distributed. Rather, people’s legitimate routine activities within society influence the availability of viable criminal opportunities by affecting the spatial and temporal intersection of the three necessary conditions of crime. These are a motivated offender who has the ability to commit a crime, a person or object which provides a suitable target for the crime, and the absence of a capable guardian who might otherwise be able to stop the crime from occurring. In this sense, capable guardians can be understood as everyday citizens who are present when an offender in search of crime opportunities intersects with a potential crime target (Felson, 2006).

Guardians reduce crime opportunities by increasing the risks of completing the offence. The mechanism behind this is explained by Cornish and Clarke’s (1985, 1986) rational choice perspective which breaks down offender decision making and argues that criminal behaviours are purposeful actions which provide a ‘good enough’ means for
satisficing returns and needs in the pursuit of an identified goal. Subsequently, from the perspective of an offender the choice to commit a crime will depend on how the anticipated rewards of the behaviour (i.e. benefit) compare to the perceived risk of apprehension and effort involved (i.e. cost). With respect to the influence of guardianship, this presence of other people ultimately heightens the offender’s belief they will be detected and/or caught. By manipulating perceived risks in this way, guardians act as a specific situational feature which can be extended or increased in order to block opportunities for offending.

The presence of potential guardians holds enormous power for assisting in the prevention of sexual offences against women. The ability of guardians to identify warning signs and high-risk markers suggests they may be able to act as prevention agents at multiple points during the crime commission process (e.g. immediately preceding the sexual assault, during the event). In the instance that an active guardian is able to identify and report an offender who they witness perpetrating a sexual crime, it can also be argued that guardianship could play a role in reducing incidents of re-victimization (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). The problem is that without clear empirical research which explains the role of guardianship against sexual offending under real-life conditions, it is difficult to determine how guardians might best be able to discourage the commission of these behaviours. While the small number of studies which have looked at guardianship as part of the sexual crime event suggest guardianship may play a role, they offer no insight into who these guardians are, their monitoring and/or intervention capabilities, and the ways that their availability affects crime commission under different situational contexts (Hart & Miethe, 2008). A further limitation is that the majority of the work to date is based on victim narratives, case reports, and self-report victimization data. With a relative absence of research which conversely draws on offender perspectives of the crime event, we have
little to no understanding of the lived experiences of individuals who have actually engaged in sexually aggressive behaviours, and the tangible ways in which guardianship influences their subjective assessments of risk versus reward.

1.1 Research Objectives

This thesis examines the role of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women. Specifically, it identifies the extent and specific circumstances under which the presence of guardianship affects the likelihood of disruption in sexual offences against women. To help guide us to these new understandings about how guardianship can function to help control sexual violence, this research also showcases an innovative methodological approach which captures sexual offender’s direct perceptions of guardians as potential prevention agents. The methodology, a self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework, breaks down the crime commission process of offenders to generate insight into not only if guardianship is a factor in sexual offences involving adult female victims but also the specific situational conditions under which a guardian is perceived to be an effective or ineffective prevention agent.

To effectively achieve these objectives and start unpacking the role of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women, this thesis conducts three studies. The first study assimilates and evaluates all the literature on guardianship in the form of bystander intervention in incidents of sexual offending. The purpose is to establish what we know about how guardians can be effective in preventing, disrupting or reducing the severity of sexual offences against women through intervention. By drawing together this information, this study also draws attention to the current gaps in knowledge and the critical need for research which explores, in detail, the concept of capability in terms of guardianship in sexual offences. The second study examines how guardians and guardianship are perceived from the offender’s perspective. This study
therefore shifts focus to the tradition of offender-based research and showcases the unique methodological approach employed in this thesis (self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework). This study complements the review provided in study one by providing insight into how the gaps in current literature can start to be addressed by the new understandings of offender decision making which this crime script framework generates. Study two also demonstrates the utility of this crime script approach by providing a first-time comparison of disrupted and completed sexual offences. In doing this, study two starts to unpack the key mechanisms responsible for explaining why some sexual offences are aborted while others are not – one of which is guardianship. Finally, study three builds on the insight generated by the previous studies and focuses on developing an empirical understanding of the extent to which guardianship affects the likelihood of the disruption of sexual offences against adult females, using data provided by sex offenders themselves.

By examining the opportunity structure of sexual offences committed against adult women and the role of guardianship in these crimes, this thesis makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the opportunity-based theoretical framework surrounding the commission of interpersonal offences. This has implications for the rational choice perspective as it provides insight into offender decision making in the context of sexual violence (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). Moreover, this research furthers knowledge around innovative methods for preventing sexual offences involving adult female victims by examining the role regular citizens can play in disrupting, and ultimately preventing, the occurrence of sexual and violent offending. In this respect, this thesis is also important for the routine activities approach in terms of unpacking capable guardianship and generating knowledge around what makes victims, and sexual crime opportunities, suitable (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Taken together, this research presents a
crucial empirical development in better understanding what is promising in the prevention of sexual offences against women within an Australian context – particularly with regards to the potential protective influence of capable guardianship.

1.2 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. To contextualize the aims of this research project, Chapter 2 discusses the criminal behaviour of sexual offending. Focusing specifically on those studies which explore offences committed against adult female victims, this chapter discusses what we define as a sexual offence against a woman and the individual-level characteristics of both the offenders and victims implicated with these offences. Discussion also extends to the situational characteristics of the sexual offending event by exploring where, when, and how sexual offences against women are typically committed. This chapter concludes with a brief foreword into what has been established regarding the presence of bystanders, who in the context of this work are viewed as potential guardians, within the sexual offending criminal event.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework for this thesis. Guided by the model of situational crime prevention, the chapter introduces both the rational choice perspective and routine activity approach. Both of these can be seen to offer support for the utility of guardianship in the context of sexual offending events by illustrating, from the offender’s perspective, the capacity that the presence of others has for altering the outcome of a sexual offence involving an adult female victim. The chapter concludes by reiterating the unique contribution this thesis will make to better understanding how and in what contexts potential guardians can be utilised in order to more effectively respond to, and ideally prevent, the commission of sexual offences against women.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the three studies undertaken to address the aims of this thesis. Each study answers a discrete research aim by providing a literature review,
method, results, and discussion. Ethical approval for each of the studies was obtained from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approved number: CCJ/12/13/HREC), and all costs involved with data collection were covered by the ARC Discovery Grant (DP130100501). In accordance with the multi-site data collection, these studies have also been approved by the Queensland Police Service Research Committee (Queensland), Justice Human Research Ethics Committee (Victoria) and Northern Territory Department of Correctional Service Executive Directors Group (Northern Territory). Each of the three studies has either been published, or is currently under review, in an international peer-reviewed journal.

In terms of their focus, Chapter 4 expands on the bystander (guardianship) literature by providing a detailed review of what is currently known about the presence of potential guardians at the scene of sexual offences against women. Through highlighting current knowledge on the situational correlates of contexts in which potential guardians are found to be present and active, compared to situations in which they are absent or passive, this chapter draws attention to the critical gaps in current literature. It also frames the significant contribution which this thesis makes in terms of developing a more sophisticated understanding of the role of guardianship against sexual offending. Chapter 5 introduces the reader to the methodology used to understand the empirical role of guardians in sexual offences. It also provides a first-time comparison of disrupted compared to completed sexual offences, at each stage of the sexual offending script, to start unpacking the situational measures which explain why some offences are completed while others are aborted. Chapter 6 then uses self-report data collected through the instrument presented in the previous study, to explore adult-victim sexual offenders’ direct experiences of guardianship focusing on the micro-situational contexts which characterize guardianship.
The final chapter (Chapter 7) draws together the dominant findings of the three studies by discussing what they mean in terms of advancing knowledge around innovative methods for preventing sexual offences involving adult female victims within an Australian context. Implications for theory and practice are presented, followed by the limitations of this thesis before concluding with recommendations for the direction of future research.
Chapter 2: Sexual Offences against Women

When presented with the question ‘what constitutes a typical sexual offence against a woman’, it is not uncommon for people to envisage a scenario involving a stranger male committing a violent assault against a young female in an isolated setting (Levenson et al., 2007; Dowler, 2006). This depiction, shaped largely through visual media representations and other news reporting, encourages the public to view sexual offenders as possessing some unreasoning disorder which underlies their propensity to rape (Dowler, 2006). The media focus on stranger incidents has also, arguably, facilitated a heightened fear of crime amongst many young women who have been led to view themselves as potential victims for this type of behaviour (Soothill & Walby, 1991). In reality, however, the general public’s perception of sexual offending against women is quite uncharacteristic of the situational contexts reported in empirical literature (Harris & Socia, 2016). It is also not the case that all men who engage in these behaviours are driven by inherently deviant and sociopathic pathologies. Support for this notion is drawn from empirical research which has recurrently been unsuccessful in classifying a single representative sex offender profile. Instead, it has been observed that sexual offenders are a diverse and heterogeneous population (Robertiello & Terry, 2007; Rosenberg & Knight, 1988).

To provide background to the thesis and position the reader with an empirical understanding of what typifies sexual offences against women this chapter reviews the current empirical knowledge on the circumstances surrounding sexual offences against women. Focusing predominantly on studies which have explored sexual offences against women through the lens of the criminal event as opposed to the offender’s psychological state, this chapter will first outline current empirical knowledge on characteristics of male sexual offenders, characteristics of adult female victims, and characteristics of the sexual
offence. Second, the chapter outlines the motivations which drive men to commit these offences against women, the modus operandi strategies adopted, and the predominant situational contexts of the offence. Finally the chapter concludes with a brief introduction to what is known regarding the presence of other persons besides the offender and victim in the commission of sexual offences against women.

2.1 Characteristics of Offenders

Given the vast underreporting of sexual offences against women, there are widely acknowledged difficulties in drawing definitive conclusions about the true incidence of sexual crimes and the individual-level characteristics of those who both commit, and are a victim of, such behaviours (Ullman & Knight, 1991; Clay-Warner, 2003; Bachman, 2000). This is because the reporting rate for women who are subject to an episode of sexual victimization is extremely low – estimated to lie somewhere between 15-30% (see Lievore, 2003). Notwithstanding this limitation, research into the circumstances surrounding the commission of sexual offences against women does dispel the stereotype that most assaults are committed by a stranger. That is, sexual offences committed against women are more commonly reported to take place between a victim and a known perpetrator (Ullman, 2007).

Closer analysis of offender-victim relationship patterns in sexual assaults committed against adult women indicates that perpetrators of these behaviours are more often an intimate male partner, casual acquaintance or date, or close friend (Leclerc et al., 2016). In each of the most recent National Crime Victimization Survey (US), National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (US), and Crime Survey for England and Wales (UK) for example, over two-thirds of all female rape victims reported that at least one perpetrator was known to them through an acquaintance or intimate context (Smith et al., 2017; Office for National Statistics, 2017; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013).
Recent figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017a) and Australian Institute of Criminology (2016) further support this pattern with most female survey participants who experienced sexual assault in the 12 months preceding reporting the involvement of a known person. The most common type of known perpetrator was a cohabitating intimate partner and the most infrequently reported known perpetrator type was a family member.

In reviewing the range of offender-victim relationship contexts identified in empirical work, it is important to note that not all studies have produced comparable descriptive results regarding the proportion of assaults committed by male intimates and acquaintances. In particular, it is evident that studies which draw on self-report victimization experiences (such as the national-levels surveys) suggest higher volumes of known perpetrator assault, compared to those which utilize official police or correctional data. The reasoning for this is that the self-report methodology allows for the analysis of a wider cross-section of events that may not have previously been brought to the attention of authorities (i.e., intimate victimization). In contrast, police data reflects only those offences which have been officially reported and, as such, it is not uncommon to note higher rates of stranger offending given the increased number of these cases which proceed through the criminal justice system (Lievore, 2003). This point is well illustrated in the findings of an Australian study by McCabe and Wauchope (2005), where it was found that among a sample of men officially charged with the sexual assault of an adult woman, the majority (42.3%, n=55) had no prior relationship with their victim. Similarly a paper by Ullman (1998) using rape cases reported to the police, found that 71.9% of attacks were committed by strangers. Evidently, the proportion of offenders who are reported as knowing their victim prior to the offence deviates according to the type of data used. Regardless of these differing sample compositions however, offenders are still
more likely to know their victim before the event as reflected in nationally representative self-report datasets.

Considering these established offender-victim relationship patterns further, it is interesting to note that compared to the body of research exploring sexual offending within a familial and particularly ‘date rape’ context, there is a dearth of empirical data on men who use sexual violence against an intimate romantic partner (Basile, 2002; Bergen & Bukovec, 2006). According to Johnson and Sigler (1997), the key reason such little research has been conducted with this population is that men who offend within an intimate partnership often view sexual contact as an entitlement and subsequently view the use of force to attain sex as appropriate. As such, they do not view themselves as committing a sexual assault and do not classify themselves as offenders.

Support for this position is evidenced in the work of Bergen & Bukovec (2006). Among a sample of men enrolled in an intervention program for abusive behaviours, these scholars found only 8% answered positively when asked if they had ever sexually abused their partner. This was despite the majority answering affirmatively when questioned about other activities legally considered to be sexual assault. Forty percent of the sample also reported having used emotional coercion to engage their partner into having sex against her will. Interviews with females victimized within the parameters of a romantic partnership are similarly found to reflect this high use of emotional coercion. That is, many women report that marital commitments make them feel obligated to submit to any pressure applied by their partner (Basile, 2002; Logan, Cole & Shannon, 2007). As such, these women are less likely to define their experience as a legitimate occurrence of rape and report their victimization to police (Basile, 2002; Koss, 1985; Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003).
2.1.2 Offender motivations.

Analogous to the suggestions raised by Johnson and Sigler (1997) to explain the relative absence intimate partner victimisation studies, literature exploring the reasons men rape also suggests that in many cases the offending individual perceives the act of sexual contact to be a male entitlement (Scully & Marolla, 1985; Hale, 1997). When the woman therefore denies them this entitlement (i.e. she says ‘no’), the rape is determined to be an appropriate way of gaining access to what they perceive as rightfully theirs. Common scenarios in which this justification has been found to operate include a woman agreeing to go on a date with a man, or engaging in flirtatious conversation at a social gathering but then later denying the man’s sexual advances. In these situations, males report viewing the woman’s attendance to be a direct reflection of her sexual availability with this interpretation of events underpinning their belief that the rape was justified (Scully & Marolla, 1985; Muehlenhard, 1988).

In addition to emphasizing the deliberate nature of sexual assault, these findings suggest that whilst sexual gratification may be one part of an offender’s reasoning for committing these acts, it is not the only contributing factor. Reflecting, in part, stereotypic gender differences in the socialization of men compared to women, these outcomes indicate that showing dominance and maintaining status hierarchy are equally important motivations underlying men’s decisions to sexually assault women (Chiroro, Bohner, Viki, & Jarvis, 2004). Support for this alternate explanation of sexual offending has been well expressed by Groth (1979, p. 13) who reasoned that rape is a “sexual behaviour in the primary service of non-sexual needs”. This conclusion was drawn after Groth (1979) found that anger and power emerged as the two main motivational drivers among a sample of convicted rapists.
More recent evidence to validate the importance of power in men’s expression of sexual aggression has been raised in the work of Mann and Hollin (2007) and Beech, Ward and Fisher (2006) who found hostility leading to revenge was the most frequently reported reason for offending. This motivation for rape, characterized by any situation where the offender felt he had been wronged by a woman and used forced intercourse as a means of getting even, is consistent with what Black (1983) termed “collective liability”. Simply put, this perspective suggests that offenders seeking revenge may victimize someone other than the woman who angered them as all women are perceived to be collectively liable for their problems (Black, 1983; Scully & Marolla, 1985). Additional motivations cited in empirical work to explain sexual offending against women include the alleviation of negative feelings (e.g. loneliness), a marked fear of intimacy, influence of drugs and alcohol, impulsivity, and a belief that victims enjoy the experience (Beech et al., 2006; Mann & Hollin, 2007; Hale, 1997; Reid, Beauregard, Fedina, & Frith, 2014; Martin & Tardif, 2014). Based on the wide range of motivations cited as driving these behaviours it might therefore be proposed that in many cases sexual gratification is a secondary, rather than primary, motive in the commission of sexual offences against adult women.

2.2 Characteristics of Victims

Descriptive analyses of sexual assault cases consistently suggest that age is one of the strongest predictors of sexual assault risk (Lievore, 2003). In particular, females between the ages of 16 and 24 are more likely to be victimized than adult women of any other age (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b; Fisher, Daigle & Cullen, 2010a). For this reason, there has been an abundance of research carried out on the prevalence of sexual victimization among college-aged students in relation to other sub-populations of victims (Hart & Miethe, 2011). Compared to other age brackets, younger females (i.e. 20-
24 years) also experience a higher proportion of stranger assaults (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2016). Considering young women are more commonly in positions where they might encounter an opportunistic offender (e.g. spending time in public places after dark) and may be less experienced in identifying and avoiding potentially dangerous situations, it is likely that both these findings are a reflection of the group’s routine or lifestyle activities (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Shwartz & Pitts, 1995). This suggested association between victim availability and victimization risk might similarly explain the higher rates of sexual assault among women who are unmarried and women who are unemployed (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Within the Australian context it is also important to recognize that the rate of sexual assaults committed against indigenous women is estimated to be three times higher than the rate for non-indigenous women (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Furthermore, women who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are at a greater risk of victimization by an immediate member of their family compared to women of other cultural backgrounds (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004).

2.3 Characteristics of the Modus Operandi (MO)

Given the heterogeneity amongst sexual offenders in terms of motivations and victim preferences, it is not surprising to find a wide range of modus operandi strategies are used in the commission of these crimes. Referring to the particular patterns of behaviour which are exhibited before, during and after crime commission, there is currently no uniform classification system to distinguish between the varying approaches which offenders take to carry out offences successfully. Furthermore, while some modus operandi features have been explored in great detail (e.g. use of force) others have been largely neglected (e.g. disclosure strategies). In part, this is due to the fact that very few known studies have applied a crime script framework to articulate the specific event sequence adopted by sexual offenders who have adult female victims (Beauregard,
Proulx, Rossmo, Leclerc, & Allaire, 2007a; Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard, 2010; Chiu & Leclerc, 2016). The studies which have taken this approach are also somewhat limited in that only a small number of offender-victim contexts have been explored in any detail. This has implications for the generalizability of such findings and clearly indicates there are still significant gaps remaining in this body of work. Nonetheless, in the absence of definitive event sequence information for all offender-victim contexts specifically, key themes can still be extracted from the available literature to provide some insight into the crime commission process of offences against women and the broader tactics which perpetrators use.

2.3.1 Method of approach.

The most simple classification system used for grouping the attack strategies adopted in sexual offences committed against adult women is ‘blitz’ and ‘con’. Blitz tactics, frequently associated with incidents that are motivated by anger and hostility, involve sudden interactions in which the offender uses direct force to confront and then control their victim (Ullman & Knight, 1991). Sexual offences in which this strategy is adopted are usually violent however it is not always the case that the victim is a stranger. That is, although studies do tend to report a more frequent use of this approach among offenders who select a stranger victim (see, for example LeBeau, 1987; Ullman & Knight, 1991; 1992), it has also been found that sudden and aggressive tactics can be used to facilitate interactions between acquaintances and intimates (Clark & Quadara, 2010; Logan et al., 2007).

The ‘con’ approach, in comparison, is characterized by the use of deceptive or coercive tactics to get the victim to take part in sexual contact. As previously discussed, men will often use these types of strategies within the context of an intimate relationship so they can gain sexual access to an unwilling female partner (Chiu & Leclerc, 2016). In
the work of Logan and colleagues (2007) for example it was reported that amongst a
sample of women who had experienced forced sexual contact with an intimate, the
majority had been subject to accusations of having an affair (93.5%), threats that the man
would seek sex elsewhere if they did not concede (71%), directions that it was their duty
to provide sex (74.2%), and episodes of guilt until they gave in to sex (87.1%). Research
by Woodhams and Labusdchagne (2012) has also highlighted the increasing prevalence
of deception and trickery in the modus operandi of stranger offenders and, in particular,
serial rapists. Through a descriptive analysis of sexual offences (n=119) committed by
serial rapists in South Africa, the authors identified six unique strategies which were
characteristic of the con approach. These involved offering the victim assistance in
gaining employment (n=48), pretending to be in need of help themselves (n=15), bribing
the victim to follow them (n=4), engaging the victim in conversation (n=4), offering to
assist the victim in some way (n=3), and pretending to be an authority figure (n=3). Based
on this diversity in approach tactics, Woodhams and Labusdchagne (2012) subsequently
concluded that the method of approach used by a sexual offender is to some extent a
reflection of evolving environmental cues. These include location of the victim, the
activities the victim is engaged in prior to the crime, and the offender’s own physical and
mental state (Beauregard et al., 2007a; Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard, 2010; Rebocho
and Silva, 2014).

The work of Beauregard and colleagues (2007a) and Deslauriers-Varin &
Beauregard (2010) add to this literature on offender approach strategies by proposing that
the tactic an offender relies on to make initial contact with the victim is the product of an
interaction between both situational context and personal attributes. Through an analysis
of the hunting processes employed by serial sexual offenders for example, Beauregard
and colleagues (2007a) identified three crime scripts which were each distinct from one
another in terms of both offending behaviour and their geographic components. Nested within each script were also a number of tracks which highlighted the specific circumstances and actions that sub-groups of sexual offenders adopt in order to carry out sexually aggressive acts. These scripts, and their respective tracks, were: (1) coercive script consisting of home-intrusion track and an outdoor rape track, (2) manipulative script consisting of a sophisticated rape track and a family-infiltrator rape track, and the (3) non-persuasive script consisting of a direct-action rape track. In addition to providing further evidence to support the broad ‘con’ and ‘blitz’ classification system, these results are also consistent with an interaction between offending location and the specific approach strategies used. Moreover, they highlight the relevance of the person-situation interaction in discussions of sexual offending modus operandi.

In more recent literature, Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard (2010) contributed to the discussion on the geographical/situational interaction in sexual offending behaviours by exploring the target selection scripts of serial sexual offenders. Using data from the same serial group of sexual offenders as Beauregard et al. (2007a), Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard (2010) identified three unique target selection scripts which were each comprised of two tracks. These were: (1) home script involving an intrusion track and an invited track, (2) outdoor script involving a non-coercive track and a coercive track, and the (3) social script involving an on-site script and an off-site script. The findings of this study were largely congruent with the work of Beauregard et al. (2007a) in that the types of offending strategies adopted were generally mediated by the location in which an offender encounters their victim. Furthermore, this research identified that the target selection process is heavily influenced by the routine activities of a victim which helps emphasize the importance of situational context in understanding the criminal event.
This notion that the decision making of sexual offenders is mediated not only by individual characteristics, but equally by the situational context, is also evidenced in the recent work of Chiu and Leclerc (2016). In particular, this work flags the unique differences in the modus operandi observed in those events involving interactions between acquaintances. The circumstances surrounding these particular offences, whereby the offender and victim have a previously established relationship, is noted to result in offence scripts which are characterized by lower levels of violence and physical force, a relatively lesser usage of multiple offence locations, and a greater likelihood of post-action interaction between the offender and victim. Further, the scholars found that “offender reaction, victim reaction and sexual acts formed an interactive relationship with each other” (Chiu & Leclerc, 2016, p. 13). The emergence of this cyclical process has important connotations for how offender decision making in sexual events is understood as it suggests that offenders do not specifically rely on a pre-determined sequence of actions. Rather, it might be that sexual offender modus operandi is instead a fluid process in which offenders make strategic decisions based on a variety of choice-structuring properties.

2.3.2 Use of weapons.

Consistent with the observation that a person’s use or threatened use of a weapon is driven largely by their motivation to secure a desired goal or outcome (Safatali & Taylor, 2006; Dawson & Goodwill, 2013), empirical studies of sexual offending against women suggest that the main function served by a weapon in this context is gaining victim compliance (Leclerc & Cale, 2015; Canter, Bennell, Alison, & Reddy, 2003; Beauregard

1 As stated by Chiu & Leclerc (2016, p. 13) “post actions completed by the offender … included a variety of behaviours, ranging from telling the victim not to tell anybody what happened, to apologies, threats, comforting the victim, stealing money from the victim, asking the victim on a date or telling the victim not to move so the perpetrator could avoid apprehension.”
& Leclerc, 2007). The use of a weapon for instrumental purposes (e.g. gaining access to a property) has also been cited in some offender accounts of the sexual crime event (Beauregard, Leclerc & Lussier, 2012). As explained by Luckenbill (1980), sexual offenders are less likely to use a weapon for the primary purpose of maiming or incapacitating their victim as this could jeopardize their chances of gaining sexual contact. When looking at the patterns of weapon use in sexual offences against women, stranger interactions tend to report much higher prevalence rates than interactions between known persons (Ullman & Siegel, 1993; Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988). Drawing on what is known about the reasons weapons are used (i.e. affords the offender some control of the situation), this trend is not surprising given that the reaction of a stranger person will be less predictable than the reaction of an acquaintance or intimate. Empirical support for this line of reasoning is offered by literature which indicates that women assaulted by strangers are more likely to employ self-protective actions and resist sexual advances compared with women assaulted by intimates (Ullman, 2007).

The strategic use of a weapon to secure a victim’s involvement in sexual acts, rather than inflict injury, can also be argued to reflect an element of rational pre-planning given that the presentation of a weapon is found to positively relate to the completed performance of forced sexual behaviours by the victim on the offender (Leclerc & Cale, 2015; Safatali & Taylor, 2006; Dawson & Goodwill, 2013). A study of weapon enabled sexual offenders in the UK also found this population were significantly more likely to display forensic awareness and use precautionary measures to protect their identity (Dawson, Goodwill & Dixon, 2014). These observations lend themselves to the suggestion that offenders consciously choose to use weapons in these contexts because they assist in maximizing potential rewards (e.g. completed sexual contact) whilst minimizing risks (e.g. victim drawing attention) (Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). Support
for this suggestion is further evidenced by the fact that majority of physical injuries which are sustained during a sexual offence are inflicted by opportunistic weapons including glass bottles and sticks (Ullman & Knight, 1991; Skogan & Block, 1983).

2.4 Characteristics of the Place

2.4.1 Spatial characteristics.

In concordance with the statistic that women are more likely to be assaulted by a man they are acquainted with then they are by a stranger, research into the location of sexual offences against adult women suggests that these crimes are most commonly committed indoors (Ullman, 1998; Balemna & Beauregard, 2013; Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). More specifically, private residences generally emerge as the most favourable offending environment with just under two-thirds (63%) of all reported sexual assaults against women in Australia during 2013 occurring in a private dwelling (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Nationally representative data collected within the United Kingdom further supports this clear spatial patterning in sexual offences with most female rape victims in the survey assaulted in either their own home (55%) or the offender’s home (20%) (Myhill & Allen, 2002). Interestingly, offences which are committed in indoor or isolated locations have also been linked to high likelihoods of rape completion. This falls in line with the findings of Beauregard and Leclerc (2007) who found that a favourable offending environment, such as an isolated location, was characteristic of what offenders perceived to be a low-risk, and high-reward situation. It also suggests sexual offenders are capable of engaging in rational thought processes in that they purposefully select crime locations which are more likely to generate positive criminal outcomes (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014; Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard, 2014).
Findings from these self-report victimization surveys clearly reflect the increased likelihood of sexual assault in a private compared to public location, but it should be noted that not all empirical research has produced comparable results. As suggested in the work of Gibson and colleagues (1980), the types of locations at which sexual offences occur varies according to the composition of the sample and the extent to which the victim and offender know each other. Studies dominated by stranger adult offences for example, generally report a much higher risk of victimization in outdoor, public spaces (Ullman & Knight, 1991). In contrast, research from the United States exploring the event of acquaintance rape suggests a stable prevalence for completed rape both on and around the college campus given the regularity of interactions between offenders and potential victims (e.g. dorm parties, abuse in college dating relationships) (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003). It is also interesting to note that a number of studies have identified that the offending location may change throughout the criminal event depending on the offender’s needs (Beauregard et al., 2007a; Beauregard, Rossmo & Proulx, 2007b; Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). These results suggest that sex offenders are, to an extent, ‘situationally aware’ and draw on cues within their immediate environment when carrying out risky behaviours (Rebocho & Silva, 2014).

2.4.2 Temporal characteristics.

Current research on sexual offences against women indicates that these crimes are more frequently committed at night. In their investigation of the protective actions used by female rape victims for example, Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, and Santana (2007) found that 40.3% of all analysed events took place between 6pm and midnight and a further 53% occurred between midnight and 6am. Similar results have also been reported in studies by Atkenson, Calhoun & Morris (1989), Tark and Kleck (2014), and Hart and Miethe (2011) providing evidence to suggest that sexual offences exhibit temporal
clustering with respect to time of day. Less clear in current literature, however, is the extent to which sexual offences exhibit patterning during particular periods of the week.

To illustrate this point, the work of Santilla, Junkkila & Sandnabba (2005) reported that majority of offences took place on weekends. In comparison, both Woodhams and Labuschagne (2012) and Hewitt & Beauregard (2014) found over three-quarters of assaults were committed between Monday and Friday. Taken together these findings suggest that unlike time of day, where diminished levels of guardianship during evening hours facilitate crime, opportunities for sexual offending remain relatively consistent across the course of the week. Likely, this is because (a) day of week has minimal bearing on an offender’s ability to gain access to potential targets (e.g. adult women) and (b) the non-monetary nature of expected sexual offending gains (e.g. sexual gratification, releasing aggression) means they remain constant across time. Interestingly, it was found by Hewitt and Beauregard (2014) that offences committed during the week were more likely to be performed by ‘forensically aware’ offenders. That is, individuals who undertook extra precautions to avoid apprehension. However, given this study also found an association between ‘forensically aware’ offenders and offences committed outdoors, it is possible that the increase in offender awareness between Monday and Friday was a reflection of the increased pedestrian movement (and heightened likelihood of people witnessing and/or intervening) that we might expect to see in public spaces during the week.

2.5 Characteristics of the Event

2.5.1 Victim resistance.

The use or non-use of resistance strategies by the victim in a sexual offence is regarded to be one of the strongest predictors of sexual assault outcome. When looking at the broad patterns of resistance, research has consistently shown that the likelihood of
a rape being completed is significantly increased when the victim offers no resistance compared with when the victim engages in some form of self-protective action (Fisher et al., 2007; Clay-Warner, 2002; Ullman, 2007; Guerette & Santana, 2010). To further explore how, and particularly when, the use of self-protective strategies is most effective, Clay-Warner (2002) and Guerette and Santana (2010) analysed data from the National Crime Victimization Survey and found that among those women who engaged in self-protection, the use of direct physical resistance (e.g. hitting, kicking) and forceful verbal resistance (e.g. screaming to attract attention) offered the best chances for rape avoidance. In comparison, non-resistance and unforceful verbal resistance were found to relate to the completion of unwanted sexual contact. This is largely congruent with the other work exploring the association between victim self-protection and sexual assault outcomes (Ullman & Knight, 1992; Clay-Warner, 2002; Ullman, 2007; Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2010b). Also of significance in the work of Clay-Warner (2002), was that the effectiveness of physical resistance did not change even after controlling for situational variables. This outcome is consistent with Levine-MacCombie & Koss (1986) who found that the physical strategies deemed to be most useful for avoiding stranger rapes could similarly be generalized to acquaintance rape. In line with the principles of target hardening, which propose that visible defences reduce opportunities for offending, these findings therefore suggest there may be benefit in raising women’s awareness of the general effectiveness that physical resistance can offer against a sexual assailant (Clay-Warner, 2003).

Following this increased support for the adoption of physical resistance, there have been concerns raised about whether women who employ forceful actions might in fact be putting themselves at an increased risk of injury (Ullman, 2007). Early work exploring this potential, unintended consequence indicated that women who physically
fight back in response to rape were more likely to sustain physical injuries (Marchbanks, Lui, & Mercy, 1990; Bart & O’Brien, 1985). However, these studies were limited by several factors – namely that they did not take into consideration whether it was the resistance which led to injury, or if the injury was inflicted before resistance. Drawing on this weakness, Ullman and Knight (1992) examined the temporal sequence of victim and offender actions in sexual assaults and identified that women who used an immediate and forceful resistance tactic (e.g. screaming, kicking) did not exacerbate their likelihood of sustaining a physical injury. Interestingly, self-protection was also found to do little for reducing a person’s chances of injury suggesting that it might rather be the initial aggression of the offender, as opposed to the reaction of the victim, which is the most important determinant of victim injury (Siegel, Sorenson, Golding, Burnam, & Stein, 1989). The outcomes of Ullman and Knight (1992) highlight the importance of assessing the entirety of the criminal event when making recommendations about self-protective and preventative measures.

2.5.2 Substance use.

The use of alcohol and/or drugs has been demonstrated to have a disinhibiting effect in the commission of unwanted sexual contact. Ullman (2003) suggests that when men and women engage in heavy drinking episodes they put themselves at an increased risk of perpetrating, or being victim to, a sexual assault. This is supported by the observation that approximately half to two-thirds of all sexual assaults involve the consumption of alcohol by either the victim or offender (Ullman, 2007; Wall & Quadara, 2014). Further, research into the impact of visceral states, such as intoxication, within the decision making process indicates that experiencing one of these states can serve to focus an individual’s attention on servicing their own needs (e.g. sexual gratification) at the cost of considering their impact on others and other potential consequences (Lowenstein,
1996; Bouffard, 2014). Under these conditions, an individual who has recently consumed a reasonable volume of alcohol might have a heightened potential for committing a sexually aggressive act because of their altered cost-perception (Leclerc & Lindegaard, 2017).

In considering the relationship between intoxication and sexual offending, it is important to highlight that alcohol consumption preceding a sexual assault has also been found to share a correlation with other factors related to offence outcome (namely interactions in a public setting) (Ullman, 2007). As such, it is not necessarily the case that alcohol plays a causal role in sexual offences against adult women. Evidence for this is offered by the mixed conclusions within current literature regarding the extent and direction of the relationship between victim and offender pre-assault alcohol use and rape completion (See for example Brecklin & Ullman, 2001; Brecklin & Ullman, 2002). It is clear that more research is needed exploring the role alcohol plays in sexual offending events. However until this becomes available, one possible explanation based on available studies is that alcohol use interacts with risky social contexts to increase risk of sexual victimization (Ullman, 2007; 2003).

This suggestion is particularly well supported in research involving college-aged populations which indicates that alcohol-involved sexual assaults more often occur between casual acquaintances who met at either a party or a bar (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAuslan, 1996; Ullman, Karabatsos & Koss, 1999). Analyses of assault characteristics in sexual offences against adult women also suggest that alcohol consumption by victims and offenders tends to co-occur. This is seen to be consistent across all types of victim-offender relationships (Ullman & Brecklin, 2000).
2.5.3 Guardianship.

When considering characteristics of the immediate situation in which sexual
oxences against women occur, there is evidence to suggest that the offender and victim
are often not the only people present across the crime commission process. This presence
of third-parties (who may be considered as potential guardians) and the ways in which
these people respond to witnessing sexual offences involving adult female victims is the
particular focus of the current research. With a more critical discussion of the knowledge
on guardianship to feature in the following chapter, it will be said here that very little is
known about the role and significance of guardians in the commission of sexual offences
against women. At best it can be inferred from current research that offence completion
is less likely when guardians are available and present (Ullman, 2007; Guerette &
Santana, 2010). Beyond this, limited detail is available regarding who these guardians
are, or should be, and the intervention behaviours, if any, that are needed to either prevent
or disrupt an offence (Hart & Miethe, 2008). Drawing together this existing, albeit
limited, understanding of guardianship in sexual offences against adult women, what can
tentatively be suggested is that the presence of other persons beyond those who typically
commit and are victim to sexual offending, offers significant potential for increasing the
likelihood of disruption.

2.6 Conclusion

Presented in this chapter was an overview of the current state of the sexual
offending literature, focusing particularly on those studies which have explored sexual
offences against women through the lens of the criminal event. It was identified that while
there is a sizeable body of knowledge regarding characteristics of the offenders and
characteristics of the victims, there is less known about characteristics of the sexual crime
event – particularly the availability and role of guardians. This is a significant knowledge
gap in terms prevention opportunities as it is known that the presence of other persons (i.e. guardians) during the crime commission process can increase risk to deter or disrupt offending (Clarke, 1997). For this reason, this thesis examines the role of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women. The following chapter presents the theoretical framework for this thesis and discusses guardianship, as a situational crime prevention mechanism, in the context of the routine activity approach and rational choice perspective.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Orientation of Guardianship

Within the study of criminology, there has been a tendency among scholars to focus on generating knowledge around offender criminality (Clarke & Felson, 1993). Concerned with understanding how factors such as genetics, social ecologies, and developmental experiences converge to explain individual offending behaviours, the prevalence of this perspective within empirical literature has had a significant impact on the typical direction of crime response efforts (i.e. reducing crime through rehabilitating the offender). It has only been in more recent scholarship that the focus of this ‘what works’ research, and subsequent criminal justice responses, has broadened. Informed by the observation that there may be other factors, beyond those specific to the individual, which explain offending behaviours, a new view of crime reduction has emerged which is focused not on curing offenders, but rather on preventing crime (Wortley & Mazerolle, 2008).

Referred to as the environmental criminology perspective, the focus of this approach is on the crime event rather than the criminality of the individual. Environmental criminology views crime and criminal behaviour quite differently to conventional approaches as the offender is seen to be only one component of the offending event (Wortley & Mazerolle, 2008). The division between environmental criminology and traditional approaches to explaining crime is illustrated through the three central premises upon which the perspective is based. These are that (i) crime is greatly influenced by features of the immediate situation in which it occurs, (ii) crime is patterned in both time and space, and (iii) recognizing that the immediate environment influences crime patterns offers enormous value for crime prevention. Together, these premises purport that crime, and subsequent criminal involvement, is heavily shaped by the availability of offending opportunities within a specific environment (Wortley & Mazerolle, 2008). To address
crime problems, therefore, measures should focus on reducing opportunity through increasing risk and effort and reducing reward – an approach referred to as situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1997).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the specificities of the situational crime prevention approach and in particular, the mechanism of guardianship as one of the core conceptual pillars around which situational crime prevention techniques are often designed. To position the reader with an understanding of how guardians and their monitoring and intervention capabilities came to play such a significant role in the crime event prevention model, guardianship in the context of the routine activity approach and related empirical literature will be reviewed. To further illustrate how situational strategies such as monitoring and intervention by guardians can either directly or indirectly reduce the occurrence of sexual victimization, the rational choice perspective will be introduced. Finally the chapter will conclude with a re-iteration of the current project, drawing attention to the ways in which the outcomes of this research will advance the theoretical framework with regards to the role of guardians as crime controllers in the context of interpersonal offences.

3.1 Situational Crime Prevention and Guardianship

Situational crime prevention seeks to eliminate criminal behaviour by manipulating those factors within the immediate environment which create or enable criminal opportunities (Clarke, 1980; 1997). Stemming from the proposition that crime is just as much, or more, greatly influenced by setting and context as it is by offender disposition, situational crime prevention focuses on the premise that if there are fewer attractive and available opportunities for offending, crime should theoretically decrease (Clarke, 1980; 1997). In illustrating how this approach can be practically implemented to achieve effective crime reduction, Cornish and Clarke (2003) put forward a core list of
25 opportunity-reducing techniques classified under the five main strategies of increasing the risks of getting caught for offenders, increasing the effort required by offenders to commit crime, reducing rewards of crime for offenders, reducing provocations to commit crime, and removing excuses for committing crime (See Table 1). From the perspective of situational crime prevention, extending or increasing the presence of others (i.e., guardianship) falls under the category of increasing risks (Clarke, 1997).

As explained by Clarke (1997), the presence of guardians can discourage criminal victimization by heightening the offender’s belief he/she will be detected and/or apprehended. By manipulating perceived risks in this way, guardianship functions as a specific situational feature which can be extended or increased in order to block opportunities for offending. This notion of extended guardianship as an opportunity-reducing technique, draws on a number of underlying assumptions which centre around offender decision making and the means by which criminal opportunities are selected (Clarke, 1980). The theoretical orientation of these assumptions varies significantly from conventional explanations of offending behaviour by shifting the focus away from social and psychological causes of crime to instead embrace the role of the immediate environment in enabling deviant opportunities (Clarke, 1980). In understanding the role of guardianship within the situational perspective, these assumptions are firmly rooted in the rational choice perspective and, most notably, the routine activity approach.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase the effort</th>
<th>Increase the risk</th>
<th>Reduce the rewards</th>
<th>Reduce provocations</th>
<th>Remove excuses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Steering column locks and immobilisers</td>
<td>• Go out in group at night</td>
<td>• Off-street parking</td>
<td>• Efficient queues and polite service</td>
<td>• Rental agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anti-robbery screens</td>
<td>• Leave signs of occupancy</td>
<td>• Gender-neutral phone directories</td>
<td>• Expanded setting</td>
<td>• Harassment codes</td>
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<td>• Tamper-proof packaging</td>
<td>• Carry phone</td>
<td>• Unmarked bullion trucks</td>
<td>• Soothing music/muted lights</td>
<td>• Hotel registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Entry phones</td>
<td>• Improved street lighting</td>
<td>• Removable car radio</td>
<td>• Separate enclosures for rival soccer fans</td>
<td>• “No Parking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Electronic card access</td>
<td>• Defensible space design</td>
<td>• Women’s refuges</td>
<td>• Reduce crowding in pubs</td>
<td>• “Private Property”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Baggage screening</td>
<td>• Support whistle-blowers</td>
<td>• Pre-paid cards for pay phones</td>
<td>• Fixed cab fares</td>
<td>• “Extinguish camp fires”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ticket needed for exit</td>
<td>• Taxi driver IDs</td>
<td>• Property marking</td>
<td>• Controls on violent pornography</td>
<td>• Roadside speed display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Export documents</td>
<td>• “How’s my driving?” decals</td>
<td>• Vehicle licensing and parts making</td>
<td>• Enforce good behaviour on soccer field</td>
<td>• Signature for customs declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Electronic merchandise tags</td>
<td>• School uniforms</td>
<td>• Cattle branding</td>
<td>• Prohibit racial slurs</td>
<td>• “Shoplifting is stealing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Street closures</td>
<td>• CCTV for double-deck buses</td>
<td>• Monitor pawn shops</td>
<td>• “Idiots drink and drive”</td>
<td>• Easy library checkout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separate bathroom for women</td>
<td>• Two clerks for convenience stores</td>
<td>• Controls on classified ads</td>
<td>• “It’s OK to say No”</td>
<td>• Public lavatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disperse pubs</td>
<td>• Reward vigilance</td>
<td>• Licence street vendors</td>
<td>• Disperse troublemakers at school</td>
<td>• Litter bins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Smart” guns</td>
<td>• Red lights cameras</td>
<td>• Ink merchandise tags</td>
<td>• Rapid repair of vandalism</td>
<td>• Breathalyzers in pubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disabling stolen cell phones</td>
<td>• Burglar alarms</td>
<td>• Graffiti cleaning</td>
<td>• V-chips in TV’s</td>
<td>• Server intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Restrict spray paint sales to juveniles</td>
<td>• Security guards</td>
<td>• Speed humps</td>
<td>• Censor details of modus operandi</td>
<td>• Alcohol-free events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Twenty-five techniques of situational crime prevention (reproduced from Cornish & Clarke, 2003)
3.2 Routine Activity Approach and Guardianship

3.2.1 Theoretical basis

The mechanism of guardianship was first introduced as one of the three central elements underpinning Cohen and Felson’s (1979) Routine Activity Approach. Departing from traditional explanations of crime which emphasize individual offender characteristics, the routine activity approach instead takes an opportunity-based perspective and views criminal behaviour to be a normal by-product of people’s everyday non-criminal movements or routines within society. As defined by Cohen and Felson (1979, p. 593), routine activities are “recurrent and prevalent activities which provide for basic population and individual needs, whatever their biological or cultural origins”. In this sense examples can include work, social or leisure pursuits, or other activities undertaken within or around the home which form part of a person’s everyday routine movements (e.g. housework or dropping off children).

At the core of the routine activity approach is the idea that people’s structured daily movements influence both the availability of viable criminal opportunities and the likelihood that these opportunities will be encountered and exploited (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Because of this, it is suggested that variations in spatial and temporal crime patterns will be observed when people modify their routine behaviours. The reason is that these behavioural changes influence the spatial and temporal intersection of the three conditions which Cohen and Felson (1979) argue as being necessary for a criminal act to take place. These are a motivated offender who has the ability to commit a crime, a person or object which provides a suitable target for the crime, and the absence of a capable guardian who might otherwise be able to stop the crime from occurring (illustrated in Figure 1). An individual’s legitimate daily movements between their home and workplace for example, could unintentionally generate a criminal opportunity.
by leaving a suitable target (i.e. their home) in the absence of a capable guardian. On the other hand, a person’s daily movements through space might also obstruct a criminal opportunity as their mere presence at any location could heighten the risks of offending through their perceived and/or actual ability to act as a capable guardian.

The contribution of the routine activity approach in making known the importance of the opportunity structure for crime has been evidenced in studies which have shown that if any of Cohen and Felson’s (1979) three necessary conditions are missing (e.g. no suitable target), there is a much lower chance that crime will occur (Bennett, Holloway, & Farrington, 2006; Felson, 1995, Garofalo & Clark, 1992). By impeding the occurrence of crime through these means, these studies also highlight that the offender is not necessarily the most significant actor in a criminal event as there are multiple conditions which need to come together within a social context in order for a viable criminal opportunity to be generated (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson, 1995). It is in this way that the routine activity approach takes a macro-level view of crime and victimization risk.
Instead of focusing solely on the role of offender disposition, it rather emphasizes the impact which broad-scale shifts in routine societal behaviours can have on those situational attributes that affect crime rates – an example of which is capable guardianship (Felson, 1995).

### 3.2.2 Development of crime controllers

Within the routine activity approach, the capable guardian is seen to play a critical role in the determination of viable criminal opportunities (Felson, 1995). As mentioned previously, a necessary condition for the occurrence of crime is the *absence* of a capable guardian so in this respect, guardianship can be viewed as a mechanism by which criminal violations can be either prevented or deterred. First defined by Felson and Cohen (1980, p. 392) as “any spatio-temporally specific supervision of people or property by other people which may prevent criminal violations from occurring”, guardians are typically viewed as those actors in the crime event model who protect or defend against the target. More specifically, the original work on guardianship as a central tenant of the routine activity approach conceptualized capable guardians as everyday citizens who are carrying out their routine behaviours within society (Cohen & Felson, 1979). A guardian can therefore be any person who is present or available when an offender in search of crime opportunities comes into contact with potential crime targets. The emphasis on regular citizens as guardians, as opposed to people who operate in a formal crime control capacity, is based on the recognition that there are comparably more ordinary persons available within a given space then there are, for example, police officials (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson, 1998). As result, it is assumed that it is these regular citizens who will be more often available to monitor a situation and provide guardianship against any potential criminal behaviour (Felson, 1998).
This shift from a reliance on formal agencies of crime control (e.g. police) to the utility of regular people as a means of capable guardianship is further reinforced in Felson’s (2006) revisited definition of guardianship. In this work, he purports that "A guardian keeps an eye on the potential target of crime. This includes anybody passing by, or anybody, assigned to look after people or property. This usually refers to ordinary citizens, not police or private guards…Usually we think of guardians as looking after specific persons and property that could be targeted” (Felson, 2006, p. 80, emphasis in original). In addition to reinforcing the regular citizen element of the guardianship mechanism, this contribution by Felson (2006) also brings to the forefront the idea that a guardian’s most important role is in being available and monitoring/supervising. Echoed in recent empirical work exploring the definition of capable guardianship (Reynald, 2009; 2010), this argument rests on the notion that as long as a guardian is available and perceived to be aware of their surroundings, their mere presence may be enough to sufficiently deter an offender from engaging in criminal behaviour. That is, it may not be necessary that the guardian actively seeks to disrupt the offence (either directly or indirectly) in order for them to play a preventative role and block a criminal opportunity (Guerette and Santana, 2010).

In reviewing this conceptualization of guardianship within the academic literature, the introduction of ‘controllers’ was arguably one of the most critical developments as it provided a means for exploring the roles and responsibilities of those who have the potential to discourage crime (Felson, 1995; Clarke & Eck, 2003; Eck, 2003). Initially put forward as an extension of Cohen and Felson’s (1979) original crime event triangle, the concept of controllers is divided into the three distinct subtypes of handlers, managers, and guardians. From the perspective of crime prevention, handlers are tasked with the responsibility of supervising potential offenders and are generally recognized as those
people with whom the offender shares some level of emotional attachment. Given that handlers have the ability to exert some level of control over the potential offender’s actions, they often assume the role of a parent, spouse, or employer (Tillyer & Eck, 2011). Managers, on the other hand, are those people responsible for supervising the potential settings of crime events. Described as having the goal of ensuring “the smooth functioning of the place” (Sampson, Eck & Dunham, 2010, p. 39) and maintaining oversight in a particular setting, common examples of managers include bar staff, landlords and store clerks (Eck, 2003). The final type of controller, a guardian, refers to those individuals who have the power to protect potential targets or victims. Generally seen to be family members/friends, individuals guarding their own belongings, and occasionally public or private security, it is argued that when effective supervision by a guardian is demonstrated, the vulnerability of potential targets (e.g. personal property) and/or potential victims (e.g. a person) is reduced (Clarke & Eck, 2003; Felson, 1995).

On the whole, this extension of the routine activity approach suggests that when an offender escapes a handler, and identifies a target which is absent of a guardian within a setting that is not being supervised by a manager, crime is likely to take place (Clarke & Eck, 2005). An illustration of these three controller types, referred to within the academic literature as the problem analysis triangle, is presented in Figure 2.

### 3.2.3 Operationalizing capable guardianship through action dimensions

In addition to literature exploring the concept of who can function as a capable guardian, there has also been a body of empirical work which has focused on understanding what can be considered as capable guardianship (Reynald, 2009, 2010; Hollis-Peel & Welsh, 2014). The necessity for these research developments was first identified by Tewksbury and Mustaine (2003, p. 303) who argued that “the issue of
guardianship lags in theoretical development and empirical testing”. This claim rested on the observation that even though the influence of guardianship on crime rates had been measured within available research (i.e. high levels of guardianship were found to significantly relate to lower levels of crime), there was a high degree of variability in terms of how the mechanism of capable guardianship was measured and subsequently operationalized. In particular, what was noted was that the majority of previous work on guardianship had relied on proxy measures which only estimated, rather than directly measured, the level and impact of guardianship within a particular setting (Reynald, 2009, 2011b). By confining measurements of guardianship to indirect indicators such as number of occupied households and marital status, these studies neglected a critical aspect of Cohen and Felson’s (1979) original definition of guardianship as they were unable to tap into the actual supervision practices of citizens.

To address these identified issues surrounding the measurement and operationalization of guardianship in literature, Reynald (2009, 2011a) proposed an action-based observational approach which allowed for the direct observation of guardianship behaviour. This adapted approach to measuring guardianship was argued to be more ecologically valid as it provided a causal means by which the relationship
between changing levels of guardianship and crime could be tested (Reynald, 2009, 2011a; Hollis et al., 2013; Hollis-Peel, Reynald, van Bavel, Elffers, & Welsh, 2011). Referred to as Guardianship in Action (GIA), this work involved the development of a four-stage model which measured the sequential intensity of guardianship; invisibility, availability, capability and intervention. The application of this model to study guardianship in relation to the problem of property crime within inner-city urban areas reinforced the seminal argument that increased levels of active guardianship are in fact related to lower levels of crime and disorder (Reynald, 2009). However, most importantly the work of Reynald (2009; 2011a) identified that there are discernible differences in levels of guardianship. In particular, it was found that while monitoring and intervention are in some instances necessary determinants of capable guardianship, it is actually the availability stage which remains the most critical dimension. The reason for this is that it is essential a guardian is in close proximity to a potential crime event (e.g. available) if they are to become either aware of a potential crime, or be observed by the potential offender involved (Reynald, 2009; Leclerc & Reynald, 2017).

Further work by Reynald (2010) on the Guardianship in Action (GIA) model built on these differences in guardianship intensity to explore the types of factors which facilitate the transition from an available guardian to a capable guardian (i.e. able to disrupt a criminal opportunity). Drawing upon interviews with available residential guardians, this study identified three critical dimensions which distinguish capable guardianship; a person’s willingness to supervise, their ability to detect potential offenders and a willingness to intervene, should it be necessary (Reynald, 2010). The results of this empirical study confirmed the idea that the more overt the action taken by the guardian when faced with a crime or related event in progress, the greater their guardianship intensity. Moreover, this work by Reynald (2010) established that in making
the progression from detecting a potential offence to actually engaging in some form of intervention, one of the key assessments made by available guardians is the importance of their own personal safety versus their obligation to protect the potential victim/target.

This finding ties into Felson’s (1995, p. 57) prior research on differing levels of guardianship responsibility in which he stated “In general, one’s tendency to discourage crime will vary with the primacy of responsibility”. Discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, this primacy of responsibility is argued to progress through the four stages of general, diffuse, assigned and personal (Felson, 1995). When considered in the context of a practical setting, these differences suggest that in situations where a guardian feels a high level of personal responsibility for the target/victim (e.g. personal property or a friend/family member), they are more likely to directly intervene. If, however, the guardian adopts a general level of responsibility for the person or place (e.g. encounters a situation involving a stranger), they are more likely to take either no action or wait until the crime is finished before indirectly reporting what they witnessed. Bringing together these ideas around primacy of responsibility, the subsequent conclusion drawn by Felson (1995) was that a guardian’s level of responsibility affects not only their likelihood of intervention, but also the likelihood this intervention will be direct.

3.2.4 Criticisms of guardianship within the routine activity approach

Updates to the routine activity approach offered by advancements such as the development of the controller concept (Felson, 1995; Eck, 2003) and Reynald’s (2009; 2010) GIA model have assisted in providing a much more refined definition of guardianship within empirical literature. Nevertheless, a number of conceptual and empirical criticisms still remain within the field of guardianship research. The most notable of these are directed at the overly simplistic framework within which guardianship operates, and the fact that the routine activity approach ignores the role of
criminality (Clarke, 2000). The first counter argument, that the theory is overly simplistic, is more generally directed at the perspective of situational crime prevention. Scholars who align with this empirical position maintain that the theoretical concepts which underpin situational crime prevention (e.g. enhanced guardianship) lack the necessary sophistication to adequately respond to a complex social problem like crime (Clarke, 2000). In addition, they contend that by shifting the analyses of crime events away from the offender and instead toward the impact of situational influences and the role of opportunity, the situational crime perspective offers little in terms of furthering our understanding about why crime occurs. This has implications for the effectiveness of any responses which are developed within a situational orientation.

In response to this criticism, Wortley (2010) put forward the argument that while opportunity is an important consideration for situational prevention, the perspective is equally embedded in the recognition that behaviour is determined by a person-situation interaction. In this sense, it may not necessarily be appropriate for scholars to suggest that situational approaches always negate the root causes of criminal behaviour because realistically “opportunity implies only that certain situational factors make it easy for the individual to follow a course of action that will deliver benefits” (Wortley, 1997, p. 66). Drawing from behavioural psychology, what this argument suggests is that in many cases it may actually be the situation which actively triggers a person’s particular choice of behaviour. Therefore while opportunity-reducing techniques, such as guardianship, are based on the assumption a motivated offender is constant, they also recognize that it could be the particular features of the situation which prompt a person to act on this motivation (Wortley, 2010).

Within the empirical literature, another identified criticism is that that routine activity approach may be less readily applied to explain interpersonal crime (e.g. sexual
assault). The argument is that its’ definition of target attractiveness does not account for the personal reasons, beyond proximity and guardianship, that explain why an offender may have chosen that victim (Finkelhor, & Asdigian, 1996). However, in recent studies exploring the impact of situational factors such as guardianship on the modus operandi of offenders and reaction of victims within interpersonal offences (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Leclerc et al., 2016), it has been established that the routine activity approach can be used to better understand, and subsequently prevent, the occurrence of interpersonal offences. In her empirical investigation of how the use (or non-use) of self-protective actions in a rape scenario are independently related to situational characteristics of the offence for example, Clay-Warner (2003) found that potential victims took assault context into consideration when making decisions about their choice of protective actions. This outcome suggests that victim decision making in response to an unwanted sexual attack is influenced not just by psychological processes, but also by situational variables.

Relatedly, research conducted by Beauregard and Leclerc (2007) revealed that prior to selecting a criminal opportunity sexual offenders will take situational factors into consideration. An example would be the risks posed by their immediate environment. Together these studies suggest that, similar to property offences, criminal behaviours which are classified as interpersonal operate within an opportunity structure. By therefore manipulating this opportunity structure through factors such as capable guardianship and other situational variables, we might be able to change the way an offender chooses to respond in a given situation. These ideas around the effectiveness of restricting criminal opportunities by increasing the costs compared to the benefits of a criminal behaviour are rooted in Cornish and Clarke’s (1986) rational choice perspective.
3.3 Rational Choice Perspective and Guardianship

3.3.1 Theoretical basis

As one of the core perspectives upon which situational crime prevention is based, the rational choice perspective is grounded in the assumption that offenders make more or less deliberate choices, and these choices are committed with the intention of satisfying a given motive (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). This perspective further assumes that in making decision which are ‘satisficing’ – satisfactory and sufficient but not ideal - the offender will engage in a rational cost-benefit assessment where they base their decision on the effort involved, perceived risk of apprehension, and anticipated rewards of the behaviour (1985). Within the rational choice model therefore, criminal behaviour is viewed as similar to any other human activity. This is because crimes are seen to be purposive acts which enable the offender to attain a prescribed goal through a satisficing, heuristic approach to decision making (Cornish & Clarke, 1985).

In developing preventative responses to crime (i.e. increased or extended guardianship) the rational choice theory posits that an offender will likely refrain from exploiting a criminal opportunity if they are in a situation where the probable reward of the behaviour is perceived to be less than the required risk and effort (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). Moreover, the probability that they will actively choose to refrain from the behaviour rests on the extent to which the devised prevention strategy has been tailored to address the specific crime of concern. This reflects another underlying concept of the rational choice perspective which is that criminal decision making is crime specific (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). From this position, it is proposed that the factors which influence offender decision making vary according to the unique circumstances, motivations, and purposes of the particular criminal opportunity identified. The variability observed in offender modus operandi (as demonstrated in Chapter 2.3) also
means that this decision making process varies not only between broad crime categories, but also between the specific contexts of unique offences which fall within these categories (Poyner & Webb, 1991). For this reason, techniques which are framed by the rational choice perspective are not designed to be a blanket response for a broad criminal problem. Instead they are intended to address the unique situational determinants within a given environment and the role these determinants play in the offender decision making process for that particular context and interaction (Clarke, 1997).

When exploring and understanding the influence of guardianship on the decision making of a potential sexual offender, it is evident that the rational choice perspective is of critical importance. It facilitates our understanding of the differing situational contexts under which a guardian is perceived to be either an effective or ineffective prevention agent. However, much like the limited available knowledge regarding other aspects of the guardianship and sexual offence dynamic, there have been relatively few studies which have sought to understand the different factors which impact on sexual offender decision making in the presence of a third party. At best what the available research allows is for approximations to be drawn based on what is understood about the impact of more commonplace situational factors on a person’s decision to either engage or refrain from exploiting a sexually deviant opportunity. With respect to the unique context of sexual offences, this has often involved looking at the influence of offender intoxication (see section 2.5.2 for a summary) and the role of anticipated emotional or visceral states.

This idea that anticipated emotional and visceral states can be incorporated into a rational choice perspective of sexual offending behaviour has been drawn upon by Bouffard (2002) which established that emotions play a situationally important role in a person’s assessment of costs compared to benefits. In particular this work identified that when subjects were sexually aroused, they reported both a greater likelihood of engaging
in sexual coercion to secure sexual contact and a greater perceived certainty that they would achieve sexual pleasure as an outcome. In more recent work, Bouffard (2013) also observed that heightened levels of sexual arousal reduced the deterrent value of those perceived costs which would normally be associated with sexually coercive tactics. Taken together, it could be inferred from these findings that if a potential sexual offender is motivated by the need for sexual gratification, their emotionally aroused state may blur what would be an otherwise rational assessment of costs versus benefits. Given there has been no research to date exploring the capability of situational deterents (e.g. guardianship) to counteract the effect of these visceral states however, there are evident limitations in making these bold statements about the ability of sexual offenders to engage in a rational cost benefit situational analysis. Future research would benefit from looking into the role of emotions and other situational factors in the criminal decision making employed by sexual offenders.

### 3.3.2 Criticisms of guardianship within the rational choice perspective

Similar to the routine activity approach, there are a number of criticisms which have been raised in regards to the applicability of the rational choice perspective in explaining deviant behaviour. The most noteworthy of these is the argument that criminals are fundamentally irrational actors and, in particular, this has been said to apply to those individuals who engage in crimes of a violent and/or sexual nature (Miethe et al., 1987; Trasler; 1986). As demonstrated in the scholarship of Beauregard and Leclerc (2007) however, there is some evidence to suggest that even though sex offenders may be typically considered as incapable of rational thought, they do in fact exercise judgement in contemplating the relative costs compared to benefits of their intended actions. Evidence of offender rationality has also been cited in recent work exploring the influence of guardianship on the severity of child sexual abuse (Leclerc, Smallbone, &
Wortley, 2015a). This work identified that when a person was identified as being nearby the scene of the offence, the overall severity of the abuse reduced (Leclerc et al., 2015a). Coming from the perspective of rational choice, it could be suggested that these potential guardians were perceived by offenders to heighten the risk of discovery in the situation. This, in turn, highlights the potential of capable guardianship as an important protective factor in affecting offender decision making and facilitating the reduction of viable sexual offending opportunities.

Capable guardianship, as a targeted situational crime prevention measure designed to increase perceived risk and deter rational offenders, has received relatively little attention within the context of sexual offences involving adult female victims (Ullman, 2007). Nonetheless, in the research which has been published, the key findings have made suggestions about the importance of opportunity in the commission of interpersonal criminal acts (Clay-Warner, 2002, 2003; Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). Through identifying that interpersonal offenders are often required to operate within what is termed a bounded rationality, this body of work puts forward evidence which suggests that offenders do not necessarily engage in long-term detailed planning prior to committing every offence, as Clarke and Cornish (1985) argued. Rather, in the context of some settings, suitably motivated offenders who happen upon an accessible and vulnerable victim have been found to engage in an on-the-spot consideration of factors such as skills, experience and fluid situational factors (Cohen & Felson, 1979). This is particularly well illustrated in the work of Beauregard and Leclerc (2007) where it was identified that in a number of cases, offenders had opted to wait until the right situation and opportunity presented itself, before they acted on any criminal inclination.
3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the core theories which form the foundation of this thesis. Guided by the model of situational crime prevention, the chapter introduced both the rational choice perspective and routine activity approach as the underlying theoretical framework relevant to the current research. The next three chapters contain each of the three discrete studies which have all either been published or are currently under review in international peer-reviewed journals.
Chapter 4: Study 1

The first study expands on the bystander (guardianship) literature and provides a detailed review of what is currently known about the presence of potential guardians at the scene of sexual offences against women. Through highlighting current knowledge on the situational correlates of contexts in which potential guardians are found to be present and active, compared to situations in which they are absent or passive, this study draws attention to the critical gaps in literature. This, in turn, frames the contribution which this research makes in terms of developing a more sophisticated understanding of the role which can be had by regular citizens in the prevention, disruption and minimization of the severity of sexual offences committed against adult women. The following abstract provides a summary of the study.

This paper reviews the literature on bystander intervention with a view to establishing what we know about how guardians can be effective in preventing, disrupting or reducing the severity of sexual offences against women through intervention. Viewing bystanders as potential guardians, this review explores what is currently known about the presence of potential guardians at the scene of sexual offences against women, and how these potential guardians respond to witnessing such events. Research shows that the likelihood and type of intervention by available guardians varies across situational contexts. Relatedly, trends in the characteristics of available and active guardians also reveal the importance of individual characteristics such as age, and most significantly gender, in affecting the willingness to intervene and perceptions of capability in intervening in various situational contexts. Results suggest that while men generally have greater confidence in their physical capability to intervene directly, women generally express a greater willingness to help and are more likely to intervene indirectly. The implications of these gendered bystander responses for sexual assault prevention are discussed.
Statement of Contribution to Co-Authoring Published Papers

This chapter includes a co-authored paper, invited as part of a special issue. The bibliographic details of the co-authored paper, including all authors, are:


My contribution to the paper involved: the conceptualization and design of the study; the review of the literature, critical interpretation of the literature, drafting the article and development of the action model.

(Signed) ___________    (Date) __24.01.2018___

Name of Student: Alana Cook

(Countersigned) ___________ (Date) __24.01.2018___

Corresponding author of paper and Supervisor: Danielle Reynald
4.1 Guardianship against Sexual Offenses: Exploring the Role of Gender in Intervention

It has been well established in the criminological literature that the actions and reactions of third parties can greatly assist in de-escalating, and even preventing, the occurrence of deviant criminal behaviour (Reynald, 2009). The utility of bystanders as potential guardians against various forms of crime has been well established in studies of both property crime (such as burglary and theft) and interpersonal victimization (such as armed robbery) with a reduced risk of victimization observed when active third parties are present (Reynald, 2011b; Nugent, Burns, Wilson & Chappell, 1989). More recently scholars have begun to suggest that the presence of other persons beyond the offender and victim may also be associated with the avoidance of sexual assault (Ullman, 2007; Leclerc, Smallbone & Wortley, 2015a; Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). Though limited work has yet been undertaken to empirically validate this proposition, preliminary findings support the utility of bystanders as potential guardians in both sexual offences committed against child victims (persons under 16 years of age) and, of particular significance for this paper, sexual offences against adult female victims (Hart & Miethe, 2008; Leclerc et al., 2015a).

A large volume of sexual offences committed against adult women occur between known persons in private dwellings. Compared to the capacity for opportunity reduction in public places, these private settings reflect a situational context which is relatively difficult to infiltrate. For this reason the presence and intervention capabilities of third parties offers what is arguably a unique and innovative method for addressing the high incidence of sexual offences against women. In particular, the ability of bystanders to identify high-risk markers suggests that they have the power to act as guardians by intervening and assisting in preventing sexual assault both before it has occurred and
during its commission (Burn, 2009). In the instance that bystanders are able to identify and report the offender involved, they can also assist in reducing incidents of re-victimization (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). This paper highlights the significance of bystanders as potential guardians who have the power to prevent sexual offences against adult women.

To integrate the concept of the “bystander” within the framework of routine activity theory, bystanders can be viewed as potential or available guardians (Hart & Miethe, 2008; Reynald, 2011b). By definition, bystanders are people (other than the offender(s) and victim(s)) who are present when a crime event occurs. We argue that the presence of a bystander is the equivalent of the presence of a potential guardian. Under some circumstances the mere presence of a third party or bystander functions as an effective form of guardianship against crime as the presence of others is sufficient to discourage offending (Felson, 1996). In other situations, however, presence of others alone is not a sufficient condition for preventing crime (Reynald, 2010). Once a crime is in progress bystanders who witness the crime event in progress have the potential to take some form of action to disrupt the crime event, and as such, they can be viewed as potential guardians. Bystanders or potential guardians who intervene, either directly or indirectly, in an attempt to disrupt the event can be viewed as active guardians.

By drawing attention to what is currently known about bystanders, we aim to organize and review the current knowledge about their role as potential guardians who are present at the scene of a crime. First, we highlight trends in the characteristics of bystanders who are reportedly present at the scene of sexual offences against women, with a particular focus on the significance of gender. Based on this review, we will next explore how and under what conditions bystanders (available guardians) become active guardians who take action to disrupt or prevent a sexual offence in progress. The paper...
will then lead into a discussion of active guardianship against sexual offences targeting adult women, highlighting the different forms of action taken by different types of guardians (e.g. male guardians compared to female guardians).

By completing this exercise, we provide a tentative framework which can be used to guide the delivery of bystander intervention programs and broader sexual offending prevention models. Moreover, this contribution calls attention to the critical gaps in knowledge which remain in order to develop a more sophisticated understanding about how regular citizens can play a significant role in preventing, disrupting and minimizing the severity of sexual offences committed against adult women.

4.2 Bystanders as Potential Guardians during Sexual Offences

Recent research has brought attention to the importance of the sexual offence opportunity structure and the role of situational factors in shaping the commission of sexual offences against women (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Leclerc, Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). This research has also demonstrated that although few empirical attempts have been made to apply this body of knowledge to the prevention of sexual offences against women, there is capacity for strategies driven by this situational approach to not only help prevent these events from happening in the first place but also disrupt the crimes during perpetration. One such promising strategy is to increase the risk of offenders getting caught through the presence of others who can be viewed as potential guardians. Derived from the routine activity approach, the concept of guardianship proposes that third parties (people other than the victim and offender) can help to prevent or discourage criminal violations from occurring through their availability and monitoring of potential crime targets (Cohen & Felson, 1979). In addition to availability and monitoring, Reynald (2009; 2010; 2011a; 2011b) suggested that direct and indirect intervention are also critical action-oriented dimensions of guardianship that are
important for crime prevention and control. The presence of potential guardians therefore holds enormous power for assisting in the prevention of sexual offences against women given that the majority of these incidents take place in private locations, are committed by an offender who has an established relationship with their victim, and have relatively low reporting rates as result of fear of repercussions.

To identify the relevant studies to be included in this review of guardianship in sexual offences against women, a search was first conducted using the PsychInfo database. Using the keywords “guardians”, “guardianship” and “bystanders”, we were able to include in our search strategy publications from both the criminology and psychology areas. In line with the purpose of this review, we then implemented selection criteria which further refined the results. First, we only included studies which involved the analysis of sexual offences or sexual offenders. This allowed us to explore both the pertinent offence contexts where guardianship is a salient factor, as well as the perceptions which offenders or potential offenders hold about the role of bystanders acting as guardians. For the gaps in literature where guardianship had not been explored in the specific context of a sexual offence, studies of broader emergency situations were included. Next, we only selected those papers which to some degree focused on sexual offences involving adult female victims. Given how little is known about the role of bystanders as guardians in these offences however, there were some studies included which had a mixed sample of offenders (i.e. child sexual offenders, sexual offenders against women). This decision was critical because it ensured that we were able to synthesize all the current knowledge on this area of research.

Our search of current literature revealed there are only a small number of empirical studies which have included a measure of guardianship in their exploration of sexual offence outcomes (Ullman, 2007). This body of research tends to focus on the
frequency and influence of the presence of potential guardians, with little consideration of who the guardian is (individual characteristics) and their monitoring and/or intervention capabilities. Taken together, the limitations of the available research mean little information is known about the circumstances under which potential guardians are available during sexual offences against women. Similarly, there remain critical questions about the extent to which guardianship discourages the commission of these offences, and if the impact of guardianship varies under different situational contexts (Hart & Miethe, 2008). This paper will begin by elucidating what we know about the guardianship dimension of presence or availability of third parties during sexual offending.

4.3 The Presence of Potential Guardians or Bystanders during Sexual Offences

In discussing the situational contexts which surround sexual offending, few scholars have included a measure of bystander presence or the availability of potential guardians (Banyard, 2011). The small body of work which has considered bystander presence is also subject to a number of limitations including an absence of uniformity in the way bystanders are conceptualised, and disparities in the frequency with which bystanders are reported as being present during a sexual offence. The reasoning for this is summarised by Hart and Miethe (2008, p. 642), who note that “the likelihood of bystander presence varies dramatically across different situational contexts for violent crime”. These difficulties in getting a clear impression of the frequency with which potential guardians or bystanders tend to be available are further compounded by the significant underreporting of sexual offences committed in private dwellings (see for example Lievore, 2008). Nevertheless, by pulling together what is known about the availability of bystanders in sexual offences against women, there is tentative evidence that up to a third of these crimes are committed in the presence of a third party or a person other than the offender or victim (Hart & Miethe, 2008; Planty, 2002).
Clay-Warner (2003) used data from the US National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to assess how situational factors, such as the presence of bystanders, affect a victim’s choice of self-protective strategy. By analysing all male-perpetrated single-assailant attacks committed against women between 1991 and 2001 (n=453), Clay-Warner (2003) found that bystanders were reported as present in 18% of assaults. Both Tark and Kleck (2014) and Guerette and Santana (2010) reported a similar prevalence of third-parties in their analysis of the same body of NCVS data (20% and 18.4% respectively). Using the same NCVS data but including all sexual incidents in which a third party was reportedly present (e.g. not limited to sexual contact), the availability of bystanders was reported to be slightly higher in both Hart and Miethe (2010) and Planty (2002) (28% and 29% respectively).

The work of Hart and Miethe (2008) makes a further contribution to the body of knowledge on bystander presence in sexual assault. In highlighting that 29% of all rapes in US national data occurred in the presence of another person, the authors found that this presence was not constant across all situational contexts. Their results suggest that there are in fact unique situational contexts in which bystanders are relatively more, and also less, likely to be available. Hart and Miethe (2008) used the conjunctive analysis of case configurations (CACC) to identify the micro-situational contexts most conducive to bystander presence in sexual assaults. The situational profile leading to the highest likelihood of bystander presence were situations of rape which occurred in public, during daylight hours, between people known to each other, and without the use of a weapon. For incidents with this particular combination of situational factors, 49% were found to have been committed in the presence of bystanders. This figure is not entirely surprising

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2 Throughout the NCVS, bystanders are defined as “any person or group of persons other than the victim or offender who was present during the victimization, and who is at least 12 years of age”. The specific question asked of respondents is “was anyone present during the incident besides you and the offender (other than children under age 12)?”
given that it is under these circumstances we would expect higher levels of pedestrian movement and the subsequent intersection of third-parties with the offender and victim (Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). The lowest rates of bystander presence (14%) arose during incidences of rape which occurred in private dwellings, during the day and between persons previously known to each other with no recorded weapon (Hart & Miethe, 2008). The expected daily routines of potential bystanders in these contexts (e.g. children at school, housemates at work) present a plausible explanation for their relatively infrequent presence in private dwellings during daylight hours.

Further analysing these offences committed in private places between known persons, Hart and Miethe (2008) found that the presence of a third-party was slightly higher for rapes which occurred during the night both with the use of weapons (25%) and without the use of weapons (20%). A more recent examination of acquaintance sexual offending in Queensland, Australia identified that almost half of these cases involved the presence of third parties (Chiu & Leclerc, 2016). This study involved the thematic analysis of sexual assault by acquaintances cases and operationalized third parties to include any person other than the victim or offender. This definition therefore extended to the victim’s children, romantic partners, and other relatives or known persons such as friends, acquaintances, co-workers, and housemates. Importantly, it was not a necessity of the study’s inclusion criteria that third parties had to witness or be aware of the sexual offence to be defined as being present. Rather, third parties were coded as being present if they were nearby at any point during the course of the crime whether this was the beginning or during commission (e.g. person located in another part of the house). The primary implication of approaching bystander presence from this angle is that it does not necessitate that third-parties are aware an offence is occurring and this would obviously have a negative impact on their potential intervention capabilities. Nevertheless, these
results provide a strong foundation for the argument that even within private dwellings the availability of others means that there is the potential for bystanders to assist in sexual offence prevention (Chiu & Leclerc, 2016; Hart & Miethe, 2008).

### 4.3.1 Characteristics of available guardians or bystanders in sexual offences.

One of the critical limitations of current knowledge on the presence and influence of potential guardians these offences is the scarcity of information describing who these guardians are in terms of the individual characteristics which define them. Given the variations among groups with respect to skills which facilitate their effectiveness as a guardian (e.g. assertiveness, strength), it may be suggested that different types of bystanders will have varying influences on an offender’s decision to either proceed with or refrain from offending (Fischer et al., 2011). Considering differences in guardianship potential between adults and children, or males and females, it may be that an offender’s decision making process is in part mediated by how willing or capable the bystander is perceived to be in their capacity to intervene or report. Drawing on this logic, it is clear that knowledge about trends in the characteristics of bystanders in sexual offences against women has important implications for the effectiveness of any recommendations which are made for prevention purposes.

#### Available guardian/bystander characteristics and settings.

Drawing on what is known about the types of third parties present during sexual offences against women, it is evident that bystander characteristics such as gender, age and relationship with the victim are heavily contingent on the location or site at which the sexual offence occurs. In the context of sexually motivated burglaries\(^3\) committed in private dwellings, for example, Pedneault and colleagues (2014) found that when someone else in addition to the victim was present they were more commonly either a

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\(^3\) Sexual burglaries were defined by the authors as an incident of burglary with recorded sexual components
child (12.9%) or adult female (8.9%). The most infrequently reported type of third party was an adult male (7.6%). Considering these differences, it may be that offenders perceive a greater success in controlling the actions of a potential witness when they are regarded as a person of lesser physical strength (e.g. child or physically smaller woman). Taken together, the findings of Pedneault and colleagues (2014) could indicate a sexual offender’s conscious preference for situations where they see themselves as more equipped to control or eliminate potential risks. This preference for situations where risks can be anticipated and managed is supported by the prevalence of sexual offences which occur in private dwellings. In these settings, offenders are afforded a greater level of control over who might potentially be witness to an offence (Leclerc & Beauregard, 2007; Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard, 2014). The capacity of offenders to assess a situation for cues and intentionally act on viable opportunities is further seen in the literature on bystander presence in child sexual abuse. Here it is demonstrated that children are the most commonly reported type of third party present in offences occurring within the home (Leclerc et al., 2015a; Underwood et al., 1999; Mouzos and Makkai, 2004).

In the context of sexual offences against women in public spaces, there is no mention in the current literature about the specific characteristics of bystanders. Similarly, there is an absence of information on the gender and age of those third parties who are witnesses or are at the least nearby during offences which occur between people who meet socially on dates or at parties (Hart & Miethe, 2008). In light of these gaps in the literature, further research is required to understand the characteristics of guardians who are most likely to be present in sexual offences within public spaces. In doing this, bystander intervention programs can be tailored and targeted to educate specific groups about their guardianship potential in different public spaces.
4.3.2 The willingness to intervene in sexual offences against women.

Offender decision making is influenced by situational factors. By engaging in a rational cost-benefit assessment, offenders base their decision to offend on considerations including the effort involved, perceived risk of apprehension, and anticipated rewards of the behaviour. Sexual offenders often select environments in which there is a lower likelihood of intervention by available guardians and we therefore reason that the presence and intervention behaviours of guardians offer enormous potential in reducing both the severity and likelihood of completion in these offences. Unfortunately there is a relative paucity of empirical evidence which explores the interaction between bystander behaviours and sexual assault. The consequence is that very little is understood about willingness to intervene among different types of third-parties. Approaching this knowledge gap from a policy perspective, we argue that an understanding of intervention willingness is just as important as an understanding of bystander/guardian impact. The rationale is that the guardians who both witness and take steps to disrupt an offence, offer more in terms of prevention than a bystander or available guardian who witnesses the behaviour but chooses to take no further action (Reynald, 2009; Reynald, 2011b). Understanding what constitutes “effectiveness” within bystander responses, in addition to the characteristics of the bystanders/ most likely to employ these actions, will help build knowledge around what is promising for preventing sexual violence and abuse. Moreover, it will facilitate the development of strategies aimed at encouraging intervention behaviours.

Research has shown that crime levels decrease as the intensity of active guardianship increases (Reynald, 2009; 2011; Hollis-Peel & Welsh, 2014). Although these findings relate to property crime, they provide the basis for understanding how active guardianship can function as a successful intervention to protect against
interpersonal crime. Results suggest that third-party presence alone has a notable impact on crime. When bystanders are more overt in making their presence, capability and willingness to intervene apparent however, it is proposed that the likelihood of impacting the crime event outcome increases. As Reynald (2013, p. 141) states “direct intervention is more likely to be effective than indirect intervention because of the immediacy of the response”. Although not empirically tested with respect to sexual offending, it may be that this concept would similarly apply given that sexually abusive behaviours don’t always involve penetration and can, in some instances, be quite short in duration (Balemba & Beauregard, 2013). Available guardian/bystander responses which are more immediate in disrupting the offence (e.g. yelling out to the perpetrator or taking direct physical action) may therefore be of greater help for reducing offence severity than indirect responses which defer direct intervention responsibility onto other parties (e.g. reporting an offence in progress to the police).

The situational context of violent crime (including rape) has been determined to play an important role in the success of any intervention actions taken (Hart & Miethe, 2008). As such, it may be that the effectiveness of a guardian’s action will vary between contexts characterized by different combinations of micro-situational factors. A bystander response that would be highly effective in one context may not be in another due to the amalgamation of different situational factors. Further research is required to clarify if there are in fact differences in the effectiveness of different intervention behaviours under varying situational contexts, and if so, what these differences entail. When formulating recommendations about what guardians can do to disrupt or discourage incidents of sexual abuse, it is also important to recognize that not all third-parties will exhibit equal willingness to intervene. Reflecting on what is noted in general studies of helping behaviour (see, for example, Latane & Darley, 1970), it has even been
suggested that “inactivity is the typical reaction of bystanders who witness violent
crimes” (Hart & Miethe, 2008, p. 638). Building on this understanding, a sizeable body
of literature has emerged which examines the factors predicting bystander behaviour
across a range of emergency situations which, of particular relevance for this study,
includes sexual violence (Bennett, Banyard, & Garnhart, 2014).

**Factors predicting bystander intervention behaviour.**

Within social psychology research on bystander intervention behaviours a number
of key factors are argued to be most salient in determining willingness to intervene. These
are (1) the bystander noticing the event, (2) the bystander’s subsequent assessment of the
event as an emergency, and (3) the bystander’s own perception of their ability to take
intervention responsibility (Latane & Darley, 1970). Originally, this situational model of
bystander intervention was formulated as a means of understanding bystander behaviours
in emergency situations more generally. However, recent scholarly research into the
model’s applicability to violent behaviours also provides preliminary support for its use
in explaining why certain individuals will choose to intervene in violence while others
will remain passive (Burn, 2009; Banyard, 2008; Banyard & Moynihan, 2011). For sexual
offending in particular, scholars’ reason that it is the experience of a situational barrier
during the decision to intervene which ultimately explains both the intrapersonal
(individual) and contextual (situational) differences observed in bystander responses to
sexual offences.

**Gender.**

In exploring individual-level differences linked with bystander responses to
sexual offending, males and females are shown to differ markedly in their likelihood of
taking intervention actions. Interestingly, the types of differences observed are
inconsistent with broader helping situations which find that men are more likely than women to intervene in generally violent situations (e.g. physical assault) (Eagley & Crowley, 1986). In the case of perceived sexual misconduct, Burn (2009), Banyard (2008), and Nicksa (2014) instead identified that women are actually more likely than men to express a willingness to intervene in incidents. In explaining these inconsistencies in male and female helping behaviours across situations, Burn (2009) suggests that women have an increased knowledge with regards to the issue of sexual offending because of their disproportionate victimization and vulnerability as a population. The greater willingness women express for intervening in sexually risky situations may therefore be explained by their enhanced capacity for recognizing these behaviours and the obligation they feel for intervening on behalf of other females. Established in studies of helping behaviour, it is individuals who self-report a lower rape myth acceptance, a greater awareness of the problem of sexual violence and a greater perceived responsibility for helping, that are more likely to offer some type of intervention in the context of sexual offending (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Banyard, 2008; Chabot, Manning, & Poisson., 2009).

An alternate suggestion offered by Banyard (2011) to explain these gender differences in helping behaviours is that while females may be more likely to intervene on behalf of the victims, men may instead be more likely to try and obstruct the perpetrator. Although no research has empirically validated this proposal, there is evidence in the sexual offending literature to suggest that women will often choose an indirect method of intervention (e.g. yelling for help, calling the police) because of a perceived deficit in their physical intervention capabilities (Nicksa, 2014; Chabot et al., 2009). Men, on the other hand, generally express greater confidence in their physical self-efficacy and might thus be more likely to adopt an immediate and direct strategy to disrupt
any witnessed events (e.g. push the offender off) (Harari, Harari & White, 1985; Banyard, 2008). However, in making this point it should be noted that not all males confronted by emergency situations will choose to employ direct actions. Rather, studies exploring male bystander responses to emergencies show that male responses are greater influenced by the attitudes and norms of their peer group and less influenced by their perceived responsibility for helping. Therefore, in situations where a male bystander sees his peers to be accepting of the victimization of women, he may choose not to take any intervention responsibility for fear that doing so could make him appear less masculine (Gage, 2008; Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010).

**Situation-specific characteristics: Ambiguity in identifying the crime event.**

Following on from individual differences in helping behaviours, it is also suggested that in the context of perceived sexual violence, the proclivity of a person to engage in a bystander response is also mediated by characteristics of the immediate situation. First identified in the work of Latane and Darley (1970), this influence of situation is based on the argument that both aspects of and cues within the immediate environment contribute to the selected activity or inactivity of a potential bystander. Considering, for example, the situational contexts which people often regard as ‘high-risk’ for sexual assault (e.g. parties, entertainment districts), it has been found that distractions such as music, conversation and alcohol can have the effect of masking a person’s ability to identify risk indicators (Burn, 2009). Adding to this, it is possible that in the context of a social gathering there may be greater ambiguity in terms of the perceived seriousness of a witnessed event (i.e. sexually assertive behaviours may be misconstrued as flirtation). This might then lead a bystander to question whether taking action and intervening would actually be a help or a hindrance to the presumed victim.
With respect to helping behaviours in broader emergency situations, numerous scholars have put forward evidence which supports this argument that intervention likelihood is partially dependent on a person’s own confidence in their ability to correctly interpret situations. That is, bystanders have been observed as less likely to intervene when they express hesitancy in their reading of a situation, and more likely to intervene when there is reduced ambiguity in the victim’s need for help (e.g. the victim is yelling out for aid) (Clark & Word, 1972). Unfortunately in the context of sexual violence and assault specifically there is very little research which has empirically validated this association.

Studies also reveal a great deal of inconsistency in terms of how ‘willingness to intervene’ is measured and how ‘intervention actions’ are defined. For example, in one of the earliest studies to explore the effect of situational ambiguity on a bystander’s decision to intervene during sexual assault, Shortland and Straw (1976) carried out a simulated laboratory study in which subjects witnessed a violent argument between a man and a woman. Under these conditions an intervention was defined as including any behaviour, whether indirect (e.g. called the police or asked another person to stop the attack) or direct (e.g. pushing offender away) that was made in an attempt to disrupt the witnessed event. More recent research by both Banyard (2008) and Banyard and Moynihan (2011) however, explored willingness to intervene retrospectively. In both these studies, data regarding intervention attitudes was collected via self-report surveys which asked participants to report on bystander behaviours actually carried out in the last two months. Finally, work by authors including Burn (2009) and Nicksa (2014) has looked at differences in propensity to intervene by questioning participants about how they think they would respond in the context of a hypothetical pre-assault situation. In these two studies, Burn (2009) considered both direct and indirect intervention actions
whilst Nicksa (2014) took a much narrower approach and looked only at likelihood of reporting to an authority figure.

Considering the varying methodologies adopted in this body of work, it is not surprising to see mixed conclusions in the likelihood of helping behaviours across contexts. In particular, retrospective studies tend to suggest a relatively minimal difference in the actual offering of help for situations involving a friend compared to situations involving a stranger. When queried about a hypothetical scenario or staged event however, people suggest they would be less likely to intervene if it is inferred that the perpetrator and victim had a pre-existing relationship (e.g. husband and wife). Participants further reasoned that their assistance would be more warranted in situations where a woman is arguing with someone she doesn’t know because an encounter between strangers is seen as more damaging than an encounter between known persons (Shortland & Straw, 1976).

**Gender & situation-specific characteristics: Ambiguity in identifying the crime event.**

More recent work by Nicksa (2014) extends these findings, as the study showed that the likelihood of intervention in situations where the risk of sexual assault is unclear was actually found to differ between male and female subjects. Using vignettes which described a person overhearing a description of sexual assault, and operationalizing intervention actions as a bystander’s willingness to report (i.e. indirect intervention), Nicksa (2014) found that irrespective of the perceived offender-victim relationship, women indicated a greater inclination than men to report the suspected sexual assault. One plausible explanation for this increased reporting by females draws on the earlier discussed work of Burn (2009). Here it is suggested that women, compared with men, more strongly identify with the victim because of a heightened awareness regarding the
potential consequences of unwanted sexual contact. This may be due to either their own experience as a victim of sexual assault or that of someone else. Additionally, Laner and colleagues (2001) who found similar patterns in the context of violent assault suggest that the women may not be as affected by this situational ambiguity because the perceived risks of their own victimization are actually lower in cases involving intimate partners. As such, female bystanders may see the risks of intervening to be quite minimal when compared to the potential costs of not helping the victim (Fischer, Greitemeyer, Pollozek, & Frey, 2006; Eagley & Crowley, 1986).

This work ties in with the idea that people who better understand the realities of sexual assault are more easily able to identify when others are at risk and take subsequent action (Banyard, 2008). It is evident that more research needs to be undertaken which explores ambiguity as a situational influence in sexual offences against women. Particularly, the focus needs to be on whether ambiguity (in terms of offender-victim relationship) does in fact impact all forms of bystander responses in sexual offences or whether it only influences the likelihood of direct action, a finding tentatively suggested in the current literature. This requires further exploration at all levels of bystander intervention including primary (prior to the assault), secondary (during the assault), or tertiary (a response after the event) prevention.

**Situation-specific characteristics: Ambiguity and the number of bystanders.**

Analysis of the influence had by ambiguity in bystander decision making within sexual offences indicates that ambiguity is also related to the number of other bystanders present. Based again on the work of Latane and Darley (1970), this concept termed the ‘bystander effect’ is grounded in the premise that the likelihood of a bystander offering assistance in a critical situation decreases as the number of other passive bystanders increase. The reasoning for this phenomenon relates back to three psychological
processes referred to as diffusion of responsibility (the belief that one of the other bystanders will step in), evaluation apprehension (fear of being judged by other people), and pluralistic ignorance (relying on the reactions of others to define the seriousness of a situation) (Burn, 2008).

Across broader emergency behaviours there is a sizeable body of knowledge which demonstrates the validity of these original conclusions drawn by Latane and Darley (1970) (i.e. the probability of helping is diminished when other people are nearby). However, much like the previously discussed literature on bystander action in sexual assaults, it is still relatively unclear the extent to which this argument also applies in sexually aggressive behaviours. In part, the challenges of understanding ambiguity in sexual assault stem from the observation that as perceived dangerousness of the situation increases, the bystander effect decreases (Fischer et al., 2006; Harari et al., 1985). As such it may be that while the bystander effect would likely be observed in contexts which suggest a low or ambiguous risk of sexual assault (e.g. an interaction between intimates), it may not be observed in situations in which the risk of potential sexual assault is determined to be high (e.g. interaction between strangers).

**Situation-specific characteristics: Gender and the bystanders’ relationship.**

The extent to which the bystander effect applies in sexual offences is also confounded by the observation that intervention likelihood differs depending on how well acquainted bystanders are with one another. It has been shown that female bystanders in particular express a greater willingness to help if they are in a group of people they associate with (i.e. other females) compared to if they are alone or in a group of people with who they are not familiar (Levine & Crowther, 2008; Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005). For males however, this likelihood of helping has been found to be inhibited by the presence of other bystanders who they consider “in-group members” (i.e.
other males) but significantly increased when other bystanders are considered “out-group members” (Levine & Crowther, 2008, p. 18).

Literature on sex-role stereotypes can be drawn upon to explain this trend. Here it is shown that while male helping behaviours tend to be driven by the desire to appear heroic and chivalrous, females helping is instead characterized by compassion and empathy (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Under these conditions, the expectation is that males would be more likely to assist in an emergency when strangers were nearby as it provides them with an opportunity to appear courageous and capable. A female bystander, on the other hand, would be arguably less inclined to step forward in this situation as she may prescribe to the perceived social norm that it is the man’s responsibility to take action. When in the presence of friends however (e.g. other females), a woman may feel a greater sense of empowerment to assist because there are no males nearby to activate conformity to the sex-role stereotype (Levine & Crowther, 2008).

**Situation-specific characteristics: Gender and the bystander-victim relationship.**

The salience of the bystander effect has been further found to differ according to the relationship between the bystander and potential victim. In these studies, bystanders are reportedly more likely to intervene if the victim is someone with whom they associate with (Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005; Levine, Cassidy, Brazier & Reicher, 2002). For females this may include intervening on behalf of a fellow female regardless of how well they are known (given the heightened awareness of sexual offence consequences), whereas for males this intervention would more likely occur when the offence involved a female with whom they share an intimate relationship (Flood, 2010). Relating back to the evidence cited earlier regarding the increased likelihood of women intervening in situations where the risk to the victim was perceived to outweigh the
consequences to them, it may be that when presented with a scenario about a known person in danger, the effect of audience inhibition is reduced.

4.3.3 The effectiveness of guardianship against sexual offences against women.

Within the current body of sexual victimization literature, very few studies have explored the actual impact of guardianship availability and intervention on the commission of sexual offenses against women (Ullman, 2007). The types of policy implications which can be drawn from this research area are also subject to a number of limitations given that most bystander impact data comes from qualitative interviews with victims, official victimization figures, and thematic analyses of case reports. Although rich sources of supplementary information, it can be argued that survey data and victim accounts may not be the most comprehensive sources of data to determine the actual effectiveness of guardianship presence and action. Nevertheless, these types of data do offer approximations of the cues which might assist in preventing further victimization. It is from this perspective that we argue there is preliminary evidence to suggest that third-party presence appears to reduce both the severity and likelihood of completion in sexual offences committed against adult women.

Active guardianship through bystander intervention: Helping or hurting?

Across the body of work which explores the association between bystanders and sexual assault outcome, third-parties have been subject to an inclusion criteria restricted to persons aged 12 years and older. These studies cite evidence in support of the positive influence of bystanders in reducing the inflicted harms of sexual offending. Marchbanks, Lui and Mercy (1990) found that the odds of rape completion decreased when persons other than the victim and offender were present at the immediate scene of the assault.
Likewise, Clay-Warner (2002) reported that bystanders significantly reduced the likelihood of completed rape amongst female victims (i.e. rape was 44% less likely to be completed in the presence of another party). Planty (2002) corroborates these findings, indicating that in cases where available third-parties also take steps to intervene in situations, their actions more often assist in helping (33.4%) rather than worsening (15.2%) the sexual assault. According to the NCVS, from which the data was derived, helping is defined by the “prevention of injury or further injury” to the victim, and hurting as “making the offender angrier”.

The work Hart and Miethe (2008) also provides evidence to suggest that bystander impact varies across situational contexts. With the intention of identifying “the most predominant situations of bystander intervention and its relative effectiveness within them” (Hart & Miethe, 2008, p. 641) these scholars found that victim perceptions of third party helpfulness differed between situational contexts. Across all offence types analysed in this dataset (robbery, rape and assault), situations with the highest ‘helping’ responses were observed to be sexual assaults committed in the absence of a weapon. Of particular interest was the observation that the highest overall ratio of ‘helping’ to ‘hurting’ was in cases of night-time sexual assault within the home which occurred between strangers in the absence of any weapons. Under these circumstances the assistance of a bystander was, on average, ten times more likely to help than to hurt – an outcome which provides some of the strongest evidence to date in support of the role which active bystanders/guardians can play in disrupting sexual offences. It can also be said that even with the relative infrequency with which this situational context arose in the data (36%, n=21), it is clear that these findings from Hart and Miethe (2008) provide support for the utility of active guardianship as an effective strategy for addressing sexual assaults committed in both public and private space.
Available guardians/bystanders as witnesses: Helping?

The argument that passive guardianship is enough to influence the outcome of a sexual offence is supported by a small number of studies which have explored bystander impact from the perspective of the offender. Drawing on interviews with male college students, both Malamuth (1981) and Burgess (2007) found that 35% and 48% of their samples, respectively, acknowledge some possibility of committing a sexual assault against an adult woman if they could be sure they would not get caught or receive some form of penalty. Similarly, Beauregard and Leclerc (2007) used interview data acquired from stranger serial sex offenders who had victims of all ages (e.g. women and children) to find that 24% of the sample estimated the risks of apprehension to be high when in the presence of a third-party. The consequences perceived from having these other persons present was also substantiated by the finding that in just under one-fifth of offender accounts, the reason cited to explain why the assault came to an end was either a witness interfering or the victim screaming (which could arguably attract the attention of nearby persons).

4.4 Implications for Prevention

It is clear from the literature reviewed in this paper that the likelihood and extent of intervention by a guardian in a sexual offence against an adult woman is not constant across situational contexts. Rather, the effectiveness of guardianship as a preventative strategy varies according to the characteristics of the crime event. Consistent with the observations of Reynald (2009) the most significant of these characteristics is the availability of guardians. This is because third parties must be in close proximity to the crime event in order to first take notice of, or be noticed by, the perpetrator involved (Leclerc & Reynald, 2017). Assuming that a guardian is present within the immediate environment, research suggests one of the other most important aspects determining their
impact on offence outcome is individual characteristics (Nicksa, 2014). Taking into consideration factors such as the guardian’s age, and relationship to the offender and/or the victim, it is of particular significance for the current study that this decision to either remain passive or actively intervene (which then also involves a decision regarding the type of intervention employed) is also shown to vary according to gender of the guardian (Banyard, 2011; Burn 2009).

Based on the studies reviewed it can be tentatively suggested that men are depicted to be the more physically capable guardian. This is because men generally express greater confidence in their physical self-efficacy and ability to respond to a situation directly (e.g. physically pushing an offender off). The challenge is that men’s actual likelihood of intervening in an emergency situation is largely influenced by audience inhibition and the social norms of their peers (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010). For this reason, it is women who are argued to be more willing in terms of their guardianship intensity and likelihood of intervention. That is, perceptions of similarity between female guardians and potential victims are suggested to increase feelings of empathy and, in turn, the likelihood of helping others when in need. The perceived deficits which women often report in their physical intervention capabilities, coupled with the fear of becoming a victim themselves, do however lead to a greater use of indirect intervention behaviours by female guardians (Burn, 2009).

These differences in the likely intervention behaviours of male compared to female guardians in sexual offences against women have important implications for prevention. Instead of supporting a “one size fits all” approach, the results of this review suggest that the education provided to men and women about their guardianship potential should be each characterized by a markedly different set of strategies. Given that intervention during a sexual offence can also be employed at each of the primary,
secondary, and tertiary levels, it is further suggested that different guardianship strategies will apply for each of these respective stages (Leclerc & Reynald, 2017). This reasoning is consistent with recent work by Leclerc and Reynald (2017) which used a crime script process to highlight the ways capable guardianship, at its broadest definition, can be facilitated at each stage of a crime event within a public setting. To facilitate a guardian’s capacity to intervene, for example, Leclerc and Reynald (2017) suggest the provision of free self-defence training sessions. At the later script stage of approaching the offender, they alternatively propose the utility of providing and promoting citizens’ legal arrest powers.

Reflecting on these suggestions and the empirical differences noted in this paper’s review of guardianship capacity at both the individual and situational levels, Table 2 puts forward a model of bystander action which will be of use in the development of future bystander intervention programs. Basing this model on the types of responses which males and females are found to confidently employ in the context of a sexual offence, this work highlights the types of actions which bystanders should be encourage to adopt. By similarly highlighting those responses which males and females are less likely to exhibit and the reasons why, the model can be also used to identify strategies which could potentially circumvent the barriers which impact on one’s decision to intervene both immediately and directly.
Table 2. A preliminary model of bystander action in sexual offences against women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary (pre-offence)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often in groups within public spaces</td>
<td>Promote importance of looking after intoxicated oragrivated peers</td>
<td>Relatively lower awareness of risky situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to influence the behaviour of peers</td>
<td>Encourage males to remind peers of importance of consent</td>
<td>Less likely to intervene if situation is ambiguous (e.g. intimates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary (during offence)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in physical ability</td>
<td>Promote the importance of direct and immediate intervention</td>
<td>Strongly influenced by friendship norms and perceived attitudes of peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to intervene when perpetrator is in-group member</td>
<td>Emphasize responsibility of males to protect peers from risk of sexually assaulting</td>
<td>Emphasize the consequences of sexual assault perpetration on reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tertiary (post-offence)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to influence the behaviour of peers</td>
<td>Provide training on non-intrusive ways of approaching peers about suspected sexual assault</td>
<td>Influence of perceived peer norms can cognitively justify rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasize consequences of sexual assault experienced by victims</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater awareness of high-risk situations</td>
<td>Encourage women to look after intoxicated friends</td>
<td>May be hesitant about directly confronting unknown male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often in groups within public spaces</td>
<td>Prevent friends from heading to private locations with unknown males</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage women on different actions (both direct and indirect) they can use to disrupt sexual assault</td>
<td>Use of direct intervention can be inhibited by perceived skills deficit</td>
<td>Fear of victimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate women on where and how to report abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide training on non-intrusive ways of approaching victims about suspected sexual assault</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Summary and Conclusions

The review undertaken in this paper highlights the critical need for additional research which explores in detail the relationship between capability and willingness in terms of guardianship. In turn, this will allow us to develop a much clearer understanding of the relative importance of these dimensions in terms of having an impact on the outcome of a crime event. The complexities associated with this distinction, particularly in light of the fact that a bystander’s presence in itself may be enough to deter some sexual offences from occurring, are illustrated by Guerette and Santana (2010, p. 206) who state that:

"What determines a capable guardian from one that is not could be the presence of any bystander who either (a) intervenes in the incident; (b) notifies others for help, such as calling the police during the incident; or (c) observes the incident and later identifies the offender to police. In each case, the risk of detection and/or apprehension for the offender is increased….Yet even if no action is taken by the bystander (assuming that he or she is not a co-offender), the offender could perceive that the bystander will carry out one of these actions, which could be sufficient to deter the offender from completing the crime".

By incorporating the gendered responses of guardians into a model of bystander action it is expected this research will facilitate practitioners in delivering practical and evidence-driven prevention at each of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Further recognizing and addressing the barriers which males and females respectively face in making the transition from an available to an active guardian, it is also proposed that this model will also be of use in identifying best practice for bystander intervention within both private and public spaces.
Chapter 5: Study 2

The second study examines how guardians and guardianship are perceived from the offender’s perspective. This study shifts focus to the tradition of offender-based research and showcases the unique methodological approach employed in this thesis (self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework). It also provides a first-time comparison of disrupted and completed sexual offences with the view of starting to unpack the key mechanisms responsible for explaining why some sexual offences are aborted while others are not. This study provides the basis for the empirical analysis undertaken in Chapter 6. The following abstract provides a summary of the study:

The collective knowledge of offenders is one of the richest ways to advance understandings of crime commission and effective crime prevention. Drawing on self-report data from 53 incarcerated offenders in three Australian states and territories, the current article presents an innovative method which, through a crime script framework, allows for a first-time comparison of completed versus disrupted sexual offences involving adult female and child victims at each stage of the crime commission process. Findings (a) highlight the critical need to boost the efficacy of situational prevention in the crime-setup phase of the sexual offence script, and (b) showcase how incorporating a script framework in offender-based research can identify new directions for crime prevention.

Statement of Contribution to Co-Authored Published Papers
This chapter includes a co-authored paper. The bibliographic details of the co-authored paper, including all authors, are:

**Cook, A., Reynald, D, & Leclerc, B. (under review).** Learning about situational crime prevention from offenders: Using a script framework to compare the commission of completed and disrupted sexual offences. *Criminal Justice Review.*

My contribution to the paper involved: the conceptualization and design of the study; the review of the literature, critical interpretation of the literature, drafting the article and development of the action model.

(Signed) __________________ (Date) __24.01.2018___

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(Countersigned) __________________ (Date) __24.01.2018___

Corresponding author of paper: Richard Wortley
5.1: Learning about Situational Crime Prevention from Offenders: Using a Script Framework to Compare the Commission of Completed and Disrupted Sexual Offences

At the core of criminology lies the goal of better understanding crime and criminal behaviour. To learn about this social phenomenon, scholars have traditionally drawn on readily available sources of information including administrative records, victimization surveys, and statistics collated by government departments (Jackson, 1990). These data have been instrumental in providing population-level changes in crime trends but are limited in that they only shine light on offences that have been reported and recorded. They also have clear strengths in their contribution toward descriptive accounts of event and victim characteristics but are not always as helpful in revealing how offenders commit their crimes and the rationale for their decisions. This can result in an incomplete understanding of crime events and how we respond to these events in terms of prevention.

In light of these limitations, there has been a growing movement toward the adoption of insightful, grounded approaches to data collection. Ethnographic or offender-based research (OBR), as an example, seeks to elicit offenders’ narrative accounts of crime commission through face-to-face interviews or self-report surveys. This approach facilitates a significantly more comprehensive account of crime and criminal decision making as it provides the opportunity to learn from those who either currently or previously identified as active offenders (Jacques & Wright, 2010). It is also a relevant data source for crime prevention purposes, specifically situational crime prevention (SCP), as it is offenders who are best placed to inform on which measures prevent or facilitate offending (Jacques and Bonomo, 2016). However, there is potential to further boost the benefits of OBR through a systematic crime script framework that captures offenders’ behaviours across the entirety of the crime commission process (Cornish,
The main impediment is that currently, there are no instruments which use a script framework for collecting data specifically for SCP purposes. Addressing this represents a crucial step toward the evaluation of SCP interventions in real settings as we can then break down crime commission to observe not only which SCP measures work and which do not, but when in the script they are encountered.

This article presents a novel instrument incorporating a script framework for the purpose of collecting data on SCP. Developed specifically to capture the perspectives of adult male sexual offenders incarcerated in Australia, our work is an innovative step in identifying how situational measures aimed at preventing sexual violence and abuse function in practice. Analysis focuses on data collected from 53 incarcerated offenders who reported both a disrupted and completed sexual offence against either an adult female or child victim. In providing this first-time comparison of completed versus disrupted sexual crime events, we start to unpack key mechanisms responsible for explaining why some sexual offences are aborted while others are not. To begin the article, we highlight the contribution that OBR has made in determining what can be done from a situational perspective to restrict or prevent criminal opportunities in the first place. We then focus, in particular, on the recent expansion of OBR to the study of sexual crimes. Finally, we introduce the crime script framework as an innovative way forward in untangling offender experiences of SCP, specifically in the context of sexual violence and abuse.

5.1.1 Explaining offender-based research (OBR).

While not a new development in criminology (see Sutherland, 1937), the possibility of furthering what we know about crime through the perspective of offenders has gained significant momentum in recent years (Jacques & Bonomo, 2016). Facilitating this transition is the recognition that traditional means of exploring crime patterns leave unanswered questions about why and how individuals act in the ways they do. Victim
self-reports, for example, don’t capture the preparation of offenders before they get access to victims and the subsequent steps that occur post-victimization. These sources cannot effectively tap into the dynamic nature of interpersonal crime (see Luckenbill, 1977). Offender-based methodologies seek to fill these gaps by considering the decisions, and subsequent actions, of individuals throughout the entirety of the crime event. Through the process of interviewing offender populations, OBR provides strong evidence to show that “criminals know things about crime that others do not see” (Jacques & Wright, 2010, p. 23).

OBR studies also show that many offenders display a rational and systematically driven approach to target selection. This is consistent with early theoretical notions such as rational choice (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). In identifying opportunities to exploit, offenders can be seen to base their decisions on a rational assessment of their surroundings and the subsequent effort involved, perceived risk of apprehension, and anticipated rewards of the behaviour (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). OBR allows scholars to understand what it is that either facilitates or hinders criminal decision making. This puts OBR in a unique position to inform not only what motivates the choice to commit crime, but what can be done from a situational perspective to restrict or prevent criminal opportunities in the first place.

5.1.2 Offender-based research and situational prevention.

Situational crime prevention (SCP) is a highly pragmatic approach to crime control which seeks to manipulate those cues within an immediate environment which facilitate opportunities for misconduct (Clarke, 1980). Situated within a rational choice framework and environmental criminology more broadly, SCP is based on the proposition that crime is as, or more, influenced by setting and context as it is by offender disposition. When people perceive there to be fewer attractive and available opportunities for
offending, crime should theoretically decrease (Clarke, 1980). To illustrate how SCP can be practically implemented to achieve effective crime reduction, Cornish and Clarke (2003) put forward a list of 25 opportunity-reducing techniques. These are classified under the five main strategies of increasing risks of getting caught, increasing effort required to commit crime, reducing rewards of crime, reducing provocations to commit crime, and removing excuses for committing crime. At its core, SCP aims to unpack how these strategies can be best implemented in real settings, both effectively and efficiently, so that crime opportunities are blocked. For this reason, the perspectives of those at whom these strategies are aimed (i.e. offenders) offers valuable insight for researchers (Jacques & Bonomo, 2016).

In addition to understanding what is effective at disrupting offending, it is also important to know what does not work. As Jacques and Reynald (2012, p. 18) explain, “if researchers can determine the kinds of countermeasures used by criminals to reduce the effect of crime prevention techniques, then these countermeasures can themselves be countered by law-abiding persons and governments”. The burgeoning application of OBR in the drug market literature is an example of this. Scholars have drawn on qualitative data collected from drug dealers to explore the defensive tactics offenders use to evade sanction (Jacques & Reynald, 2012; Jacques & Wright, 2015). Importantly, these studies show that the types of tactics adopted differ according to offence context (e.g. inner city vs. suburban). This highlights the ability of OBR to determine not only what does and does not work, but of importance for focused prevention, under what particular contexts and for which particular groups it works (Jacques & Bonomo, 2016).

5.1.3 Expanding the scope of offender-based research to sexual crimes.

While offender-based research has traditionally been applied to inform prevention efforts in property crime (Bennett & Wright, 1984; Wright & Decker, 1994) and most
recently drug crime (Jacques & Reynald, 2012; Jacques & Wright, 2015), one novel application of this method is to sexual crimes. This is because if we consider each of the actors present during a sexual offence (i.e. offender, victim, potential guardian), it is the sexual offender who is best positioned to reveal details about potential intervention points beyond the actual sexual interaction (e.g. crime commission stage). There is a sizeable body of literature which draws on offender self-report data to examine the modus operandi strategies involved in sexual crimes and the implications these may have for prevention see for example (Leclerc, Carpentier, & Proulx, 2006; Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Leclerc, Proulx, & Beauregard, 2009; Leclerc, Wortley, & Smallbone, 2011a).

With regards to empirical research on what actually stops sexual abuse from occurring, however, only a handful of studies have taken the step of directly asking offenders their perspectives on prevention. In one of the earliest studies to do this, 72 incarcerated offenders were surveyed on their attitudes toward the efficacy of various child sex abuse prevention strategies (Budin & Johnson, 1989). Using a semi-structured interview process, Elliott, Browne, and Kilcoyne (1995) took a broader approach and asked offenders (n=91) to suggest anything they believe to be effective in preventing child sexual abuse. Colton and colleagues (2012) similarly took the approach of asking offenders how they believe abuse could be prevented, but in this work they focused on a sample of incarcerated adult males (n=8) who perpetrated child sexual abuse while in a positon of trust.

The most recent study of these studies focused specifically on youth-orientated organizations (Leclerc, Feakes, & Cale, 2015). Using a sample of 23 Canadian offenders who admitted to sexually offending against a young person they met through work or volunteer activities, information was sought on (a) ways to identify potential offenders during recruitment interviews, (b) the policies organisations should implement to prevent
opportunities for abuse, and (c) what parents can do to reduce their children’s risk of victimization.

It is evident from the literature presented that empirical research on the effectiveness of situational prevention in sexual crimes is promising, but still in its infancy. The few studies which have explored offender’s perspectives on prevention provide the foundation for this understanding but sample sizes are small, and questions have been directed at what offenders think would work, rather than what actually has or has not worked in practice. To our knowledge, there have also been no studies asking offenders how to prevent sexual offences committed against adult women – a much needed area of scholarly attention. A further limitation of current self-report studies is the way respondents are asked to consider what may be relevant for prevention. Specifically, these papers position the offender to consider crime as a single event meaning they are not able to disentangle how strategies’ supposed effectiveness might differ across discrete stages of the offence.

5.1.4 Crime script analysis and sexual offending.

One way of systematically breaking down complex offender narratives of sexual offending into discrete, analysable stages is through the application of crime scripts. First introduced to the study of criminology by Cornish (1994), it is argued that if interventions are to effectively prevent, constrain or disrupt criminal activity, we need to consider the crime event as part of a bigger crime commission process. This is the objective of crime script analysis. Script analysis allows scholars to capture the step-by-step account of an offender’s decision making before, during and after the crime commission process (Cornish, 1994).

Scripts are a distinct analytical framework which allow for the entirety of the crime event to be explored - tapping into aspects such as initial offence planning, how
and where the offender encountered their victim, the actors present during the crime event phase, the unique behaviours adopted by these actors, and the events leading to the end of the crime. By articulating in detail the sequential steps offenders take when committing an offence, scripts provide a framework to examine step-by-step accounts of the procedures adopted to successfully commit a crime (Cornish, 1994). The most important benefit of examining crime scripts, however, is the potential generated for SCP. By breaking down crime commission into different stages, a crime script allows for the identification of a greater range of possible intervention points. Applicable SCP techniques can then be ‘mapped’ onto each stage of the script to disrupt crime before completion.

Recognizing the potential scripts have for refining situational crime prevention, Leclerc, Wortley, and Smallbone (2011a) obtained self-report data from 221 child sex offenders incarcerated in Queensland, Australia. They used these data to develop an eight-step crime script in adult male child sex offending (see Appendix A). This paper demonstrated that offenders’ progress through a series of manipulative processes prior to committing any physical acts against the child. This is referred to as the crime set-up phase. It is only once the child has been effectively isolated that the offender progresses to the crime-achievement phase. This is comprised of gaining victim cooperation, engaging in sexual activity, and preventing victim disclosure (Leclerc et al., 2011a).

After identifying this script, hypothetical suggestions of SCP techniques that might disrupt the offence were mapped onto each stage of the crime commission process (Leclerc et al., 2011a). To interrupt an offenders’ ability to gain victim trust, for example, it was suggested that caregivers be provided with training on modus operandi and the context of abuse. By contrast, suggestions aimed at obstructing the later script stage of gaining victim cooperation included resilience building for children so they have
increased assertiveness. Except for the work of Clarke and Newman (2006) on terrorism at that time, this study was the first real attempt to systematically map SCP techniques onto a crime script.

More recently, the crime script approach has been used to identify potential points for intervention in sexual offences against women by acquaintances (Chiu & Leclerc, 2016). Similar to adult male child sexual offending, authors identified that the acquaintance rape script comprised eight separate stages which fall within either the crime set-up, or crime-completion phase (see Appendix B). The types of prevention measures suggested for these stages did, however, exhibit variations from those recommended in the context of child sex offending (e.g. different guardianship strategies). This affirms the importance of recognising crime specificity within script analysis as there are very few ‘one size fits all’ responses in the context of sexual offending (Chiu & Leclerc, 2016).

It is clear crime script analysis offers a unique framework for organising self-report data on sexual offending for the purpose of situational prevention. However, to determine which proposed techniques could be effective in real settings, it is of critical importance we move beyond speculative ideas about prevention and start building evidence-based knowledge. For these reasons, it makes sense that when taking the next step of asking sexual offenders about their experiences of SCP, we collect and analyse this data within a script framework. By using this template, it becomes possible to break down the crime commission process of sexual offenders and consequently observe not only which SCP techniques are effective or not but at which stage of the script these obstacles are encountered.

5.1.5 The present study.

In the first part of this paper we present our new data-collection instrument which incorporates a script framework for the purpose of collecting data on SCP. With this
instrument we can (a) identify situational techniques that prevented sexual offenders from completing an offence; (b) identify situational techniques overcome by the offender and how this was achieved; and (c) identify hypothetical situational techniques that are promising in order to prevent sexual offences. We can also determine how sexual offenders perceive and have experienced guardianship. This is an important contribution as guardianship is intended to function as a key disruptive mechanism for offending but little is known about the real-life conditions under which guardianship is more or less effective against sexual offences (Leclerc et al., 2015a; Cook & Reynald, 2016).

The second part of this paper will analyse self-reported script data collected with the instrument and provide a first time comparison of completed versus disrupted sexual offences at each stage of the crime event (n=53). Data from both incarcerated offenders with child victims and incarcerated offenders with adult female victims will be presented. By identifying the similarities and differences between offenders disrupted, compared to completed, crime commission, we start to unpack the key mechanisms responsible for explaining why some sexual offences are aborted while others are not. Our aim is to showcase how incorporating a crime script framework in offender-based research can identify innovative avenues for preventing crime, in particular, sexual violence and abuse.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Sample.

363 adult males convicted of committing a sexual offence against a child or adult female victim and incarcerated in Queensland, Victoria or Northern Territory, Australia volunteered to provide self-report data. To be eligible for recruitment, participants must have engaged, or had the intention to engage, in a contact sexual behaviour. Applying this definition allowed for the inclusion of sexual acts such as fondling, penetration and oral contact while excluding non-assaultive behaviours such as exhibitionism, voyeurism or
the distribution or possession of child exploitation material. All participants consented to providing self-report data on their offending behaviour but to fulfil the second objective of this study, only offenders who reported both a disrupted and completed sexual offence were included in the current analysis (n=53). No criterion was imposed to stipulate that both offences involve the same victim as offenders were asked discuss to their most recent offence of each type.

Of the 53 participants with both a disrupted and completed sexual offence, the majority (79.2%) identified as an Australian born non-Aboriginal and the average age at the time of the most recent offence was 42.1 years old ($SD = 13.08$). Most (69.8%) did not progress past the completion of secondary school, and just over half (50.94%) reported being married and living with their spouse at the most recent offence. In the population sampled, 50 offenders provided data on a disrupted and completed sexual contact against a child victim, and three offenders provided data on a disrupted and completed sexual contact against an adult female victim. This distribution was expected as previous research within an Australian context (see McCabe & Wauchope, 2005) indicates that the majority of incarcerated sexual offenders with an offence against a child know the victim, while majority of the incarcerated sexual offenders with an offence against an adult woman do not.

Including the self-report data of offenders with an adult female victim was justified on the grounds there have been no studies directly asking offenders how to prevent sexual offences committed against adult women. Therefore, even with this small sample, our analysis of these offenders’ accounts makes a unique contribution to the scant knowledge in this area. Broader literature on sexual offending also tends to report on

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4 All participants completed the questionnaire in the presence of a member of the research team, so no missing data was identified. This was checked for at the time of survey completion.
offences against children and offences against adult females as empirically distinct crime types (Leclerc, Chiu & Cale, 2015c; Leclerc, Cale, Chiu & Cook, 2016). For this reason, we argue that it is critical to take the age of the victim into account and conduct separate analyses. Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee, Queensland Corrective Services Research Committee, Justice Human Research Ethics Committee (Victoria), and NT Department of Correctional Services Executive Directors Group provided ethical approval for the study.

5.2.2 Procedure.

The first stage of recruitment involved identifying offenders who were eligible to participate. To facilitate, each corrective services department identified the prisoners in their facilities who were either currently serving or had previously served a sentence for a sexual contact against a child or adult woman. For potential participants who agreed to learn more about the project, two strategies of recruitment were employed. These were determined according to the current program status of the offender (i.e. participating in a sex offender therapeutic program, not participating in a sex offender therapeutic program). Offenders participating in a therapeutic program were approached during one of their weekly group sessions and provided with a detailed information sheet and participant consent form. This method was possible as offenders in programs already know each other and have generally overcome the fear of disclosure in front of their group. All other eligible offenders (i.e. those not participating in a program), were approached individually to maintain their confidentiality. Participants who consented to participate then completed the self-report questionnaire in the presence of at least one member of the research teams. This gave participants the opportunity to have any questions or concerns answered regarding their completion of the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire was completed, the research assistant checked the responses to make sure
nothing has been misinterpreted or omitted. This helped avoid the occurrence of missing fields in the final dataset. Lastly, to link each questionnaire with its consent form, all participants were assigned a unique identification number. We did not record any further particulars which could lead to an individual being identified as having participated in the study.

5.2.3 Measures.

Incarcerated adult male sexual offenders who consented to participate were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework. The self-report questionnaires developed in this research are, to the best of our knowledge, the first instruments that incorporate a script framework for collecting data specifically for SCP purposes. Acknowledging the distinct differences between sexual offences against children and sexual offences against women, two self-report questionnaires were developed. To capture sexual offences committed against children, the child sexual abuse script proposed by Leclerc et al. (2011a) was employed (Appendix A), and to examine sexual offences against women the script for sexual offenses against women by acquaintances proposed by Chiu and Leclerc (2016) was used (Appendix B). Each questionnaire involved five sections (Figure 3) and questions were developed based on the literature on sexual offences and the most recent

Figure 3. Structure of self-report instrument incorporating a crime script framework
classification of twenty-five SCP techniques designed in criminology (see Cornish and Clarke 2003). Only the sections relevant to the current study will be discussed in this paper.

5.2.3.1 Self-report data on most recent disrupted offence.

Section 2 of the questionnaire asked offenders to report the situational details of their most recent disrupted offence. For the purposes of consistency, a disrupted offence was defined as the most recent time the participant was either (a) discouraged before sexual contact or (b) disrupted during sexual contact. When designing the self-report instruments, we chose to acknowledge that disruptions (e.g. witness intervention) can occur during physical contact. Although an interruption at this script stage has not prevented the initiation of abuse, it may still have played a role in reducing its severity. This is a consideration we view as important in taking this first step toward the accumulation of evidence-based knowledge on the effectiveness of SCP for sexual abuse (Leclerc et al., 2011). The crime scripts described in both Leclerc and colleagues (2011a)
and Chiu and Leclerc (2016) also identify post-action, such as avoiding victim disclosure, as a stage that occurs after the sexual acts. A situation which is stopped during physical contact is therefore still disrupted before completion of the crime commission process.

In section 2, offenders were asked to report the actions they took at each stage of the script (e.g. how they gained the victim’s trust, how they got time alone) up to point of the disruption. For each script stage in this most recent disrupted offence, they either selected a response from a list to indicate how they behaved at that point in crime commission (e.g. gave the victim compliments), or reported ‘non-applicable’ if they were stopped or discouraged beforehand. The option was also given to provide a qualitative response under ‘other’. An illustrative example of a question is presented in Figure 4. Questions were also included on the victims’ characteristics, offender-victim relationship, the reason for offending, the time and location of the offence, and the individual characteristics and intensity of guardianship. In line with Reynald’s (2009; 2011b) guardianship-in-action model, the lowest level of intensity was defined as a nearby guardian who was available for supervision. The second level of intensity was defined as a guardian who was alert and witnessed the sexual contact, and the highest level of intensity was defined as a witness who engaged in intervention. This section concluded by asking at what stage of the script the offender was stopped or discouraged and the SCP measure that interrupted the crime commission process.

Figure 4. Example of survey question following crime script framework
Did you try to get that person to follow you to the place where you wanted to have sexual contact? (please tick all that apply)

- No – I was stopped or discouraged beforehand
- Non-applicable – the location where I found that person was the location where sexual contact occurred
- I gave the person love/attention (e.g. compliments)
- I encouraged that person to explore their sexuality (e.g. talking about sex)
- I offered bribes (e.g. money)
- I showed the person pornography
- I threatened the person with physical force
- I gave the person alcohol /drugs
- I promised the person something
- I used physical force
- Other - Please specify ______________________________________________________

5.2.3.1 Self-report data on most recent completed offence.

The questions in section 3 concentrated on the offender’s most recent completed offence. This was defined as the most recent time the participant was able to complete crime commission without being disrupted or discouraged. To provide a point of comparison with the disrupted offence, the questions presented here were a replication of those asked in section 2. However as this was a completed offence, there were no questions asking what stopped or discouraged crime commission.

5.2.3.3 Section 5 – Demographics.

Section 5 was developed to capture a demographic profile of offenders at the time of their most recent offence. It included questions on the offender’s ethnic background, age, education, marital status, occupation and if they currently or had previously participated in a therapeutic program for sexual offenders.
5.3 Results

5.3.1 Situational characteristics of disrupted and completed sexual crime events.

It is known from prior research on offender decision making that the way a person acts in a situation is context-dependent (Leclerc et al., 2009). For this reason, we first examine the situational conditions of each offender’s disrupted, compared to completed, crime commission focusing on a small number of variables which emerge as theoretically relevant in reviews of sexual offender decision making (see Table 3). In line with what are considered the necessary conditions for crime (see Cohen & Felson, 1979), we were specifically interested in characteristics relative to the victim (were they suitable?), the offender (were they likely?), and capable guardianship (was it absent?). A positive symbol (+) indicates the presence of the variable and a negative symbol (-) indicates the absence of the variable. The presence of shading highlights a difference in how the offender responded to that characteristic across their disrupted and completed offences. Cells containing an X symbol indicate the crime event was stopped or discouraged before that variable was relevant to the script. Within Table 3, this only emerged as applicable when considering guardianship because victim/offender characteristics are determined before the initiation of the crime event whereas guardianship is a variable encountered during the crime event.

5.3.1.1 Victim characteristics.

Participant responses with regards to victim characteristics show that for adult male child sex offenders, gender of the victim and relationship with the victim was largely consistent across both their disrupted and completed offence. Eighty-two percent of offenders reported the victim being female in both offences, and 88% of
Table 3. Situational characteristics of completed and disrupted sexual offences

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<th>Offender characteristics</th>
<th>Guardianship characteristics (intensity)</th>
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Presence of variable
- Absence of variable
X Crime event was stopped or discouraged
  Difference between disrupted and completed offence
  Difference between disrupted and completed offence
victims were, in both reported situation, known to the offender. For offenders with adult female victims, these metrics were slightly different. Two out of the three offenders in this sample reported the victim to be a stranger in both the disrupted and completed offence.

5.3.1.2 Offender characteristics.

Responses informing on offender characteristics showed only 10% of child sex offenders had differing alcohol and/or drug consumption behaviours across both their completed and disrupted offence. In comparison, two out of the three offenders who sexually offended against women reported consuming alcohol in their disrupted offence but not their completed offence. Results also show a relatively low prevalence (20%) of alcohol/drug use among child sex offenders prior to both reported offences. For offences against adult females however, all offenders had taken drugs immediately prior to both their disrupted and completed offence.

5.3.1.3 Guardianship characteristics.

Thirty-eight percent of child sex offenders reported a difference in the lowest level of guardianship intensity (i.e. person nearby) between their disrupted and completed sexual offence. However, there were no clear patterns to suggest the proximity of a potential guardian was conducive to a particular offence outcome. At the next highest level of guardianship intensity, ten offenders with child victims reported a guardian witnessing either their disrupted or completed offence. Specifically, six of these individuals reported a difference in witness availability between their two offences with five of the six indicating the presence of a witness in their disrupted offence, but the absence of a witness in their completed offence. The occurrence of the highest level of guardianship intensity (i.e. intervention) was reported by five of the ten offenders with child victims, who reported a guardian witnessing either their disrupted or completed offence. The nature of these interventions was primarily direct verbal (e.g. shouting at the
offender telling him to stop). All instances of intervention were successful in disrupting the contact and three of the offenders who reported a witness in their disrupted but not completed offence were in this group. For the five offenders who reported a witness that did not engage in subsequent intervention, analysis revealed the witness to be either a co-offender, or a child.

None of the men who offended against adult women reported a difference in the presence of nearby/potential guardians between their disrupted and completed sexual offence. Moreover, only one offender with an adult female victim reported any occurrence of a witness and this was present in both their disrupted and completed offence. The main difference emerged at the highest level of guardianship intensity where for this same offender, intervention occurred in their disrupted but not completed offence. Similar to the data reported by the child sex offenders, this intervention was direct verbal. In the completed offence where intervention did not occur, the witness was identified to be a young female who had also been victimized by the offender at an earlier point in the evening.

5.3.2 Script characteristics of disrupted and completed sexual crime events.

Table 4 builds on these dominant situational contexts emerging in self-reported sexual crime events, and provides a step-by-step breakdown of the actions adopted by participants for their most recent disrupted and completed crime commission process. Completing this exercise reveals (a) the stage/s of the crime script in which offending is being discouraged, (b) the stage/s of the crime script in which offending is not being discouraged - suggesting that interventions need to be boosted at this point to maximise capacity for prevention, and (c) the situational conditions under which these patterns
Table 4. Crime script characteristics of completed and disrupted sexual offences

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<th>Crime-achievement phase</th>
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<td>(4) Achieved isolation</td>
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### Crime-setup phase

1. Gained victim's trust  
2. Proceeded to crime location
3. Indoor location selected
4. Achieved isolation

### Crime-achievement phase

5. Used strategies to gain victim co-operation
6. Victim co-operated
7. Achieved sexual contact with victim

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**Legend:**

- Presence of variable
- Absence of variable
X Crime event was stopped or discouraged

**Note:** Difference between disrupted and completed offence.
emerge. A positive symbol (+) indicates the presence of the variable, a negative symbol (-) indicates the absence of the variable, and an X symbol indicates the crime event was stopped or discouraged before the offender could progress to that stage of the script. The presence of shading highlights a difference in how the offence unfolded at that stage of the offender’s disrupted compared to completed crime commission process.

5.3.2.1 When were sexual offences disrupted?

Self-reported accounts of respondents’ most recent disrupted sexual contact indicates that regardless of victim type, the majority of offenders encountered no obstacles to their offending in the early stages of the script. Discouragement leading to a disrupted offence outcome during the crime-setup phase occurred for only 4% of child sex offenders and 33% of offenders with adult female victims. A disruption while attempting to progress to the crime-achievement phase was reported by a further 14% of child sex offenders and none of the offenders with adult female victims. In total, 82% of disrupted offences involving child sex offenders and 66% of disrupted offences involving offenders with adult female victims progressed to the crime-achievement phase, but most of these were stopped at stage 6 - victim co-operated. Less than one-third of offenders with child victims (30%) and 33% of offenders with adult female victims progressed to the point of attaining any sexual contact with their victim before crime commission was stopped or disrupted.

5.3.2.2 What differentiated discouraged and completed sexual offences?

Across both victim types, the actions employed by offenders to facilitate their progression through the crime-setup phase were relatively consistent for each of their disrupted compared to completed sexual offences. Most offenders (1) did not attempt to/did not need to gain their victim’s trust, (2) encountered and either attempted or were able to offend against their victim in that same location, (3) carried out the contact in an
indoor location, and (4) isolated their victim. These patterns were more pronounced in regards to the selection of an indoor location (reported in 92.4% of all disrupted offences and 90.5% of all completed offences), and isolation of the victim (reported in 88% of all disrupted and 82% of all completed offences).

Analysis of the crime-achievement phase of the script indicated that use of strategies to gain victim co-operation across both offences was also relatively consistent for both offenders with child victims (34%) and offenders with adult female victims (33%). However, the actual attainment of cooperation by the victim emerged as the stage at which differences in disrupted compared to completed crime scripts were most pronounced for both groups. Just over half (54%) of child sex offenders who progressed to this point in both their offences, reported a difference in victim co-operation across the two offences. Most notably, for 86% of these offenders the inability to achieve victim cooperation (i.e. negative victim reaction) was reported for their disrupted but not completed offence. A difference in victim co-operation across offences was similarly reported by half of the three offenders with adult female victims who progressed to this stage in both their disrupted and completed contacts. Here, the victim reacted negatively (i.e. did not cooperate) in the disrupted offence but reacted positively or not at all in the in the completed offence. This suggests that for both groups of offenders, victim cooperation within the crime-achievement phase is operating as the critical script stage at which disruption occurs effectively.

5.4 Discussion

To better understand and develop effective crime opportunity reduction, it is becoming increasingly evident that offender insight is critical for building up a picture of offence commission from initiation through to completion. The current paper presented an innovative contribution which uses offender self-report data, collected through a crime
script framework, to provide a first-time comparison of completed versus disrupted sexual offences involving adult female and child victims. The instrument refines knowledge of the micro-situational contexts of sexual crime events, and taps into the distinctive situations and circumstances which should be emphasised to prevent opportunities arising in the first place. Consistent with prior research, results confirmed that while sexual offenders take risks in securing opportunities for sexual contact with a victim, it is critical from the perspective of the offender that these risks can be anticipated and managed (Leclerc et al., 2015a).

Preliminary findings demonstrate that guardianship intensity and non-cooperation by the victim are the two dominant mechanisms operating in the disruption of sexual offence opportunities. With respect to guardianship, findings build on previous work by illustrating the importance of considering contextual factors beyond the dichotomous observation of availability (Cook & Reynald, 2016). The emerging position of guardianship research suggests that crime likelihood is most significantly linked with the overtness of guardianship presence and immediacy of guardianship response (Hollis-Peel & Welsh, 2014; Reynald, 2009; 2011a; 2011b). Our findings suggest that the same principle applies in the disruption of sexual offending as every reported intervention led to a disrupted offence outcome. The primarily direct, verbal interventions reported also indicate that while the willingness of third parties to engage in higher levels of intensity is important in determining offence outcome, it is not always necessary that the guardian place themselves in a risky situation to achieve this objective. This is a particularly important finding in light of current research on barriers to bystander intervention, which identify a fear of personal safety as a key reason third-parties may avoid helping when witness to a sexual assault (Banyard, 2011).
Analysis of the self-reported offences, where guardianship was not a deterrent to offending (e.g. offence committed in the presence of a witness), also suggests that the progression from monitoring to intervention is highly context-dependent and driven by more than just the guardian’s belief in their efficacy. In all situations where the monitoring guardian remained passive, they were identified to be a child, co-offender or another victim. This supports prior work which argues for the importance of exploring the factors that explain both intervention capability and intervention willingness (Cook & Reynald, 2016). It is clear from our findings that the sexual offender’s decision making process is strongly mediated by how willing they perceive that guardian to be in their capacity to intervene or report (see also Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). Moreover, this result points to the preparedness of offenders to take risks and the critical need to consider the micro-situational context of the offence in building up our understanding of the complex ways guardianship operates as a preventative mechanism in sexual violence and abuse.

The second situational measure that played a dominant role in disrupting sexual contact was the offender’s inability to secure victim cooperation. The efficacy of self-protection strategies by the victim is not new in the context of research around sexual offences against children (see Leclerc, Wortley, & Smallbone, 2011b) or sexual offences against women (see Guerette & Santana, 2010) but our findings are unique in that this is the first time, to our knowledge, self-protection in sexual offending has been looked at within a script framework. The fact victim cooperation operates as the critical stage of crime commission at which disruption effectively occurs suggests that sexual offenders operate within an opportunity structure in which they are successfully exploiting the facilitating conditions of the early stages in their script (e.g. absence of supervision).

These findings highlight the critical need to boost the efficacy of situational prevention in the crime-setup phase of the script. In the context of sexual contacts against
adult female victims, the proactive adoption of low-risk self-protection strategies is recommended (e.g. asserting dominance, drawing the attention of people nearby). Offenders with adult female victims had a high prevalence of either alcohol and/or drugs prior to the offence, and reported minimal engagement with their victim, who were predominantly strangers, prior to the initiation of contact (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). This absence of an established relationship which the offender can manipulate means that at the first victim-offender intersection, there is capacity for the victim to raise an alarm and disrupt the script immediately. If we also factor in the alcohol and/or drug consumption habits of offenders with adult female victims, it is quite possible these offences are predominantly unplanned and opportunistic. Situational measures which immediately draw offender’s attention to the risks associated with their actions (e.g. calling for help) are therefore also worthy of attention in disrupting sexual offences against women in the crime-setup phase of the script.

For the reported sexual contacts involving child victims, a large majority of contacts in both disrupted and completed events occurring in an indoor setting against a victim with whom the offender had already established trust. For this reason, prevention models for child sexual abuse which emphasise screening potential offenders, and regulating child and adult interactions are not likely to be suitable, nor practical in the context of the offending identified in this study. Drawing on the suggestions of Leclerc and colleagues (2011a), prevention capabilities might be better improved by educating primary caregivers on the trust-gaining strategies offenders use to establish relationships with child victims. Better understanding and promoting the trust-building or grooming strategies being adopted should have strong implications for prevention as our findings indicate the techniques offenders employ are clearly facilitating the progression of their offence to the point of intended contact (Leclerc et al., 2011a). The extent to which these
trust-building behaviours differ across situational contexts and interact with the actions adopted in subsequent script stages is worthy of future consideration.

The number of disrupted and completed sexual offence scripts committed in the presence of a person nearby, against both types of victims, also indicates that increasing natural surveillance within indoor settings is critical for facilitating prevention. For example, educating victims on safe ways to draw the attention of potential guardians may work to restrict opportunities which arise when potential guardians are not able to directly supervise the victim (Leclerc et al., 2011a). To build on these suggestions, it is critical future research continues to explore the specific circumstances under which guardianship is a factor in sexual offences. There is currently little understanding of guardianship trends and patterns which emerge from offenders’ accounts of sexual offences against both adult females and children; or under what situational conditions guardianship is effective/ineffective in preventing sexual abuse.

5.4.1 Limitations.

To our knowledge, this study represents a first-time comparison of completed versus disrupted sexual offences involving adult female and child victims. While the findings have important implications for illuminating new avenues in the prevention of sexual offences, we acknowledge that our conclusions should be considered in light of relevant limitations. Most notably, this study was based on self-report data from incarcerated offenders which may be subject to both memory and social desirability biases. To address this, offenders were asked to report on only their most recent disrupted sexual offence and/or most recent completed sexual offence. This helped to neutralize the concerns of memory limitations. A research assistant was also present while each participant completed the questionnaire to answer any questions or concerns they had about their responses. In this way, researchers had the opportunity to establish a rapport
and help circumvent the problem of inflated or socially desirable responding. As participants still had the freedom to read the survey for themselves and response categories were made exhaustive using the ‘other’ label, it also took into account the sensitivities of the topic and the self-consciousness offenders may experience if asked to disclose verbally.

Second, the offences reported in our study largely occurred against a female child victim with whom the offender was familiar – characteristics indicative of intra-familial child abuse patterns (Leclerc et al., 2015a). It is therefore likely that at the point of their most recent sexual contact with the victim, respondents had already engaged in an extended period of offending. For this reason their reporting on how they gained trust or got the victim involved might not have been adequately captured as these were only relevant at the initiation of their relationship with the victim. There is also the possibility that offenders who were disrupted very early in the course of their script (e.g. while gaining the victim’s trust) may not now recognise that they had initiated a sexual offence script at that time. This may be one explanation for why such a large number of the disrupted offences reported progressed to the crime-achievement phase.

5.5 Conclusion and Future Directions

This study makes a useful contribution by demonstrating how a script framework can be incorporated into an offender self-report instrument for the purpose of collecting data on SCP. By comparing completed versus disrupted sexual offences involving adult female and child victims within a script framework, this study acts as a first step toward the accumulation of evidence-based knowledge on the effectiveness of SCP interventions in real settings. Future research using the full database of disrupted and completed sexual crime events will build on this knowledge of what works by examining in-depth associations between SCP techniques and outcomes of the offences across different
contexts. With this we can ensure a better understanding of the opportunity structure across the crime commission process for sexual violence and abuse and determine the configuration of SCP techniques that emerge in situations leading to prevention. Better understanding the critical dimensions of sexual crime events is a key factor in furthering knowledge around innovative methods for preventing sexual offences involving adult female and child victims. With the support of a crime script framework, the self-reported insights of sexual offenders should be at the centre of this growing body of research.
Chapter 6: Study 3

Study three builds on the insight generated by the previous studies and focuses on developing an empirical understanding of the extent to which guardianship affects the likelihood of the disruption of sexual offences against adult females. To do this, it draws on a sample of 138 self-reported crime events involving sexual contact with an adult female and looks at how situational guardianship characteristics and the intensity of guardianship affect the likelihood of a sexual offence against a woman being disrupted. The following abstract provides a summary of the study.

Objectives: The current study explores the extent to which guardianship affects the likelihood of the disruption of sexual offences against adult females. Specifically, we compare the micro-situational contexts in which these types of offences are disrupted and not disrupted. We also examine in what ways the intensity of guardianship affects the likelihood of a sexual offence against a woman being disrupted. Method: The sample consisted of 138 adult males who were incarcerated for having committed a sexual offence against a woman. Data on sexual crime events was collected from these offenders using a self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework. The relationship between guardianship and sexual offence disruption was analysed using Conjunctive Analysis of Case Configuration (CACC) and logistic regression. Results: We found that the effectiveness of guardianship for sexual offence prevention is highly context-specific. The outcome of disruption is determined by the action dimensions of guardianship. Conclusions: We conclude that different levels of guardianship may be required for prevention (i.e. reducing intrusiveness of sexual behaviour) as compared to disruption (i.e. stopping a crime in progress). The micro-situational context of the crime event is critical to understanding how guardianship affects offender decision making.
Statement of Contribution to Co-Authored Published Papers

This chapter includes a co-authored paper. The bibliographic details of the co-authored paper, including all authors, are:


My contribution to the paper involved: the conceptualization and design of the study; the review of the literature, critical interpretation of the literature, drafting the article and development of the action model.

(Signed) _______________    (Date)  __24.01.2018___

Name of Student: Alana Cook

(Countersigned) _ _______ (Date)  __24.01.2018___

Corresponding author of paper and Supervisor: Danielle Reynald

(Countersigned) _ _______ (Date)  __24.01.2018___

Corresponding author of paper and Supervisor: Benoit Leclerc
6.1 The Micro-Situational Context of Sexual Offences against Adult Women: Unpacking the Role of Guardianship Intensity in Disruption

6.1.1 Introduction

Capable guardianship has typically been acknowledged as serving an important protective function in reducing property crime (e.g. Reynald, 2009, 2011a, 2011b). Recent findings indicate that guardianship may also be a mechanism for reducing the incidence (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Ullman, 2007) or severity (Leclerc, Smallbone, & Wortley, 2015a) of sexual offences. Reflected in preliminary self-report data collected from both incarcerated sexual offenders (see Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007) and sexual assault victims (see Hart & Miethe, 2008), it has emerged that the presence of persons, other than the offender and victim, heightens sexual offenders’ perception of their risk of detection. It is estimated that third-parties are present in around one-third of all sexual offences involving adult female victims (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Hart & Miethe, 2008; Tark & Kleck, 2014). Guardianship may therefore be a specific situational feature which can be extended or increased to prevent the escalation of sexual offence severity or block the opportunity for sexual offending altogether.

Research on guardianship has shown that while the availability or presence of guardians is critical for crime prevention and control, guardianship intensity and its preventive effect can be increased when guardians actively monitor or witness a crime event, and intervene when necessary (Reynald, 2011b). This paper extends criminological research with a first-time examination of the extent to which guardianship intensity affects the likelihood of the disruption of sexual offences against adult females, using data provided by sex offenders themselves. The micro-situational contexts in which these types of offences are disrupted and not disrupted are compared, revealing the importance of a range and combination of situational characteristics including guardianship intensity,
age of guardian, victim resistance, offence location, offender-victim relationship and relationship between guardian and offender/victim.

6.1.2 Theoretical orientation of guardianship.

The mechanism of guardianship was introduced as one of the three fundamental elements underpinning Cohen and Felson’s (1979) Routine Activity Approach. Departing from traditional explanations of crime which emphasize individual offender characteristics, the routine activity approach takes an opportunity perspective and views criminal behaviour to be a normal by-product of people’s everyday non-criminal movements or routines within society. At its core, the routine activity approach aligns with the idea that people’s structured daily movements influence both the availability of viable criminal opportunities and the likelihood these opportunities will be exploited (Cohen & Felson, 1979). When people modify their routine behaviours they subsequently influence the spatial and temporal intersection of the three necessary conditions of criminal activity. These are a motivated offender who has the ability to commit a crime, a person or object which provides a suitable target for the crime, and the absence of a capable guardian who can directly or indirectly discourage or interrupt crime commission (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

First defined by Felson and Cohen (1980, p. 392) as “any spatio-temporally specific supervision of people or property by other people which may prevent criminal violations from occurring”, guardians are typically viewed as the actors in the crime event who protect or defend targets or victims. The original work on guardianship conceptualized guardians as everyday citizens who are carrying out their routine behaviours within society (Cohen & Felson, 1979). A guardian can therefore be any person who is available when an offender converges with potential crime targets. The emphasis on regular citizens as guardians, as opposed to people who operate in a formal
crime control capacity, stems from the fact that they are more likely to be available at places than formal police (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson, 1998). As a result, it is assumed that regular citizens will be more often available to monitor a situation, increase the possibility of detection and/or apprehension for the offender and act as guardians against any potential criminal behaviour (Felson, 1998).

6.1.3 Guardianship and situational crime prevention.

Guardians discourage opportunities for crime by triggering the situational crime prevention (SCP) strategy of increasing risk (Clarke, 1997). SCP shifts the focus from social and psychological causes of crime to instead embrace the role of the immediate environment in enabling deviant opportunities (Clarke, 1980). By manipulating those factors within the immediate environment which create or enable criminal opportunities, situational crime prevention seeks to alter offender decision making so that fewer attractive and available opportunities for offending are perceived or actually present. It is in this way guardianship acts as a specific situational feature which can be extended/increased to impede the necessary conditions for crime identified by the routine activity approach and ultimately block opportunities for offending (Clarke, 1980; 1997).

6.1.4 Conceptual developments in guardianship.

Developments within the routine activity approach have resulted in the expansion of the crime controller role to extend beyond the guardian. Guardians are now one of three types of crime controllers, along with handlers and place managers (Felson, 1986). From the perspective of crime prevention, handlers are tasked with the responsibility of supervising potential offenders and often assume the role of a parent, spouse, or employer (Felson, 1986). Managers are those people responsible for supervising the potential settings of crime events (Eck, 2003). Common examples include bar staff, landlords and store clerks (Eck, 2003). The final type of controller, a guardian, refers to those
individuals tasked with protecting potential targets or victims. This role can be performed by anyone including family members/friends, intimate partners, strangers and occasionally public or private security (Clarke & Eck, 2003; Felson, 1995). Together, controllers can exert influence over the offender, victim and/or situation and facilitate crime prevention.

Another significant advancement which has contributed to the evolving definition and theoretical development of guardianship is Reynald’s (2009) Guardianship in Action (GIA) model. This model was introduced to measure guardianship at the property level and used direct field observations to validate that there are four critical stages of guardianship intensity - invisibility, availability, capability of monitoring, and intervention when necessary. At the core of this model is idea that while the active behaviours of monitoring and intervention are in some instances necessary determinants of capable guardianship, it is actually potential guardianship at the availability stage which remains the most critical dimension (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson, 2010). This is because if no-one is available, then the subsequent stages of monitoring or awareness, and intervention are not possible and active, capable guardianship cannot be enacted.

This distinction the GIA model makes between potential or inadvertent guardianship and active or purposeful guardianship (see Reynald, 2011b) is particularly relevant to our understanding of how guardianship might protect against the sexual abuse of adult females. In looking at how varying expressions of guardianship intensity affect crime rates, the model suggests that while the mere presence of a guardian may prevent some offending from occurring (see Leclerc et al., 2015a), increased levels of intensity should be related to lower levels of crime and disorder (Reynald, 2009). If a controller (guardians or handlers in particular) chooses to intervene, for example, this should theoretically increase the likelihood of sexual crime commission being disrupted –
particularly if this intervention is direct and immediate (Reynald, 2011b). It is this premise which underpins the widespread implementation, across U.S. college campuses, of active bystander behaviour training (Banyard, Plante & Moynihan, 2004). By teaching men and women how to intervene safely and effectively in situations they believe are leading to sexual violence, these programs use a community approach to guardianship as a means of reducing the occurrence of dating and sexual violence on campus.

6.1.5 Past research on impact of guardianship in sexual offences.

This burgeoning adoption of the bystander approach to the problem of sexual violence in the U.S. represents a critical development in what we know about the capacity of guardians for sexual violence prevention. College-aged samples that engage with these programs appear more confident in their ability to recognize and intervene in risky situations (see Coker et al., 2011; Banyard, Moynihan & Plante, 2007), providing powerful support for the role potential guardians may play in proactively disrupting sexual violence. However, evaluations of these programs have not typically been able to speak to the efficacy that empowering guardians has for the actual prevention of sexual violence in practice (Coker et al., 2015). This is not helped by the fact that relatively little attention has been given in empirical literature to the availability of guardians and the varying levels of guardianship intensity that occur during sexual crime events involving adult female victims. Table 5 provides a summary of the empirical studies that have examined guardianship in sexual offences against adult females.

With a few exceptions (see for e.g. Chiu & Leclerc, 2016), most existing empirical research suggests that potential guardians are present in between twenty to
Table 5. Summary of empirical knowledge on guardianship in sexual offences involving adult female victims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Measure of guardianship</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Population summary</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bart &amp; O’Brien (1985)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Environmental intervention during incident&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>Adult females who were either raped or avoided rape (n=94)</td>
<td>Associated with rape avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchbanks, Liu &amp; Mercy (1990)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Presence of other persons</td>
<td>Not provided</td>
<td>Female victims (12 years and over) of male-perpetrated, single offender rape and attempted rape (n=851)</td>
<td>Reduced odds of rape completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ullman &amp; Knight (1991)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Environmental intervention during incident</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Adult females who were either raped or avoided rape (n=274)</td>
<td>Related to less severe sexual abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planty (2002)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Third-party/s present during incident</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>Victims (aged 12 and older) of single offender non-fatal rape and attempted rape (n=393,200)</td>
<td>More likely to help than hurt in situations of sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay-Warner (2002; 2003)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Bystander present during incident</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Adult female victims of male-perpetrated, single offender rape and attempted rape (n=597)</td>
<td>Significantly reduced the probability of completed rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauregard &amp; Leclerc (2007)</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Victim screamed/Witness interference during incident</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Male serial stranger rapists (n=30)</td>
<td>Associated with rape avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart &amp; Miethe (2008)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Third-party/s present during incident</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Victims (aged 12 and older) of single offender non-fatal rape (n=384)</td>
<td>More likely to help than hurt in situations of sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerette &amp; Santana (2010)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Bystander present during incident</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>Adult female victims of male-perpetrated, single offender rape and attempted rape (n=782)</td>
<td>Significantly reduced the odds of rape completion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>3</sup>Defined as “occurrence of an outside intrusion on the assault scene”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Measure of guardianship</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Population summary</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deslauriers-Varin and Beauregard (2010) Balemba &amp; Beauregard (2013) Data source: Offender self-report data</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Victim alone</td>
<td>Yes: 57.6% No: 42.4%</td>
<td>Male-perpetrated stranger sex crimes (n=361)</td>
<td>No information provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodhams &amp; Labuschagne, 2012 Data source: Police files</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Victim alone</td>
<td>Yes: 72% No: 28%</td>
<td>Sexual offenses committed by male serial rapists (n=119)</td>
<td>No information provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tark &amp; Kleck (2014) Data source: Victimisation data</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Third-party/s present during incident</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Adult female victims of rape or attempted rape (n=733); Adult female victims of sexual assaults that were not rapes or attempted rapes (n=1,278)</td>
<td>Associated with lower likelihood of rape completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oziel, Goodwill &amp; Beauregard (2014) Data source: Offender self-report data</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Victim alone</td>
<td>Yes: 55.6% No: 44.4%</td>
<td>Male-perpetrated stranger sex crimes (n=147)</td>
<td>No information provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiu &amp; Leclerc (2016) Data source: Court transcripts</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Third party/s present initially or during the incident</td>
<td>Almost 50%</td>
<td>Make-perpetrated acquaintance sexual offences (n=23)</td>
<td>Relatively rare for third parties to intervene or disrupt the crime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, it is consistently reported that the odds of rape completion appear to decrease in situations where third-parties, defined as any person other than the offender or victim, are present (Cook & Reynald, 2016). For instance, Hart and Miethe (2008) identified that victims typically perceived third-party intervention to be helpful in de-escalating an incident of sexual assault. Recent research by Liebst, Heinskou, and Ejbye-Ernst (2018) also found a relatively low risk of personal injury to third-parties who directly intervened in violent situations, further suggesting that the benefits of guardianship appear to be greater than any potential costs.

In theory, these findings support the broad adoption of increased or extended guardianship as a strategy for discouraging the sexual victimization of adult females. In practice, however, we know the impact of guardianship is likely to be contingent on the individual offender in question and the unique way they perceive, interpret and interact with their immediate environment. This is because situational prevention approaches such as guardianship are built on the assumption that crime is a product of a person-situation interaction (Wortley, 2012). Applied to offender decision making, the choice to desist in the presence of a guardian will form part of a sequence of events (i.e. crime script) in which the situational dynamics act as choice-structuring properties (Wortley, 2012). These impact the offender’s assessment of risk and difficulty and in turn influence how they respond to guardianship as a situational prevention mechanism. To therefore determine exactly how guardianship affects offender decision making and offence outcome, it is critical scholars consider the micro-situational context of the crime event - a point which has been largely neglected in the adult-victim sexual offending literature.

6.1.6 The current study.

It is clear guardianship holds enormous potential for sexual offence prevention but there are important limitations to acknowledge. Perhaps most critically, is that the
infancy of guardianship research within the context of sexual offences means very little is known about real-life conditions under which guardianship, in interaction with other situational mechanisms, has been more or less effective in preventing sexual crimes against adult women. This makes it is difficult to draw any robust conclusions with regards to the practical role that regular citizens may contribute in preventing, disrupting, and minimizing the severity of these offenses. The second limitation is that empirical findings have been largely descriptive with a focus on simple, binary observations of guardianship presence versus absence. This means that very little is known about the characteristics of the guardians available in sexual offences, the circumstances under which they are available, and the level or intensity of guardianship which they provide.

With these gaps in mind, the overarching aim of the current study is to unpack the role of guardianship in preventing sexual abuse against women using a micro-situational analysis of self-reported sexual crime events. Three questions guide the research:

1) What role does guardianship, at its broadest definition, play in disrupting sexual offending against women?
   1.1) How does guardianship relate to other key situational factors in explaining the likelihood of the disruption of sexual offences against women?

2) To what extent do situational guardianship characteristics (age of guardian, relationship between guardian and offender/victim, offense location) affect the likelihood of a sexual offence against a woman being disrupted?

3) How and in what ways does the intensity of guardianship (nearby guardians, witness guardians, intervening guardians) affect the likelihood of a sexual offence against a woman being disrupted?

It is important to note here that most existing research examining situational prevention of sexual offending has measured crime event outcome by the intrusiveness
of sexual behaviours (Leclerc, Wortley & Smallbone, 2011b; Leclerc et al., 2015a). Being able to determine what discourages or disrupts a sexual offence from occurring in the first place, from the perspective of those who commit the crime, represents a significant advancement to current knowledge. To our knowledge, this study is also the first to unpack the specific micro-situational contexts which characterize capable guardianship in the context of sexual offences involving adult women victims.

6.2 Method

6.2.3 Sample.

A total of 145 adult males who were incarcerated for having committed a sexual offence against a woman (16 years or older) participated in this study. All participants gave voluntary informed consent and were recruited from correctional centres in Queensland, Victoria, and Northern Territory, Australia. To avoid limitations associated with poor memory recall, only the most recent offence committed by each participant was included in final analyses. The final sample used for this study comprised 138 participants.

On average, participants were 29.2 years of age at the time of their most recent offence ($SD = 12.79$). Almost two-thirds identified as either Aboriginal (48.9%) or Australian Torres Strait Islander (12.1%) with other participants either Australian born non-Aboriginal (27.7%) or born in another country (11.3%). Just over a fifth of participants reported the perpetration of a sexual offence prior to the one discussed in this study (22%), and most did not achieve higher than a high-school education (80.1%). A total of 31.2% of participants were single at the time of the offence and 32.6% were single.

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6 Three participants were subsequently deleted from analyses as they reported both a disrupted and completed offence, but it was not possible to determine the temporal ordering of these events. Another four offenders did not respond to the questions on guardianship. These cases were also deleted.
without employment. Almost two-thirds of offenders (65.2%) were currently, or had previously, participated in a treatment program for sexual offenders with Corrective Services at the time of participation in the study.

6.2.2 Procedure.

This study used offender self-report data from a larger project examining how sexual offenders directly perceive and have experienced situational prevention techniques in their prior offending. The aim of the project was to better understand the effectiveness of situational prevention for preventing sexual violence and abuse. Eligible offenders were first identified by Queensland Department of Corrective Services, NT Department of Correctional Services, and Department of Justice and Regulation, Victoria and recruitment by the research team occurred over the period of 2014 through 2017 inclusive. Eligible offenders were approached by a member of the research team and invited to complete a confidential self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework. The purpose of the instrument was to break down the crime commission process of sexual offenders, to observe the way SCP techniques factor into offender decision making. The questionnaire captured the most recent disrupted or completed offence committed by each participant with offenders asked to indicate situational aspects such victim characteristics, offender-victim relationship, and location of the offence, in addition to the modus operandi strategies adopted prior to, during, and following the commission of the sexual offence. This provided a template to investigate at precisely which stage of crime commission an SCP measure (e.g. guardianship) was encountered and the micro-situational context which characterized this offence. To establish the reliability of the instrument over time, a sample of offenders (n=21) who provided their consent were administered the same questionnaire six months after they first completed it. In their responses to questions regarding their most recent disrupted and completed offence, a
Pearson correlation coefficient of .804 was reported providing strong evidence of test-retest reliability.

Involvement in the study was voluntary with each participant asked to provide written consent prior to their participation. In providing consent, participants were assured their anonymity would be safeguarded with the information they provide used for research purposes only. A total number of 138 crime events involving sexual contact with an adult female were analysed.

6.3.3 Variables.

The key independent variable in this study was the presence of guardianship during the commission of the sexual offence. This was measured in three ways; (1) the presence of any guardian, irrespective of their level of guardianship intensity, (2) the presence of a nearby or potential guardian as measured by the presence of a person nearby, and (3) the presence of a witness or active guardian as measured by a guardian who saw the offence take place and/or intervened. To ensure each guardian reported by a participant was captured only once in the data, we treated the individual stages of guardianship intensity as discrete situational factors. First, participants were asked if any person witnessed the incident (0=no; 1=yes). This is the equivalent of an individual becoming aware a crime was occurring. If yes, they were then asked to select a response from a list to identify who this witness was (e.g., offender’s biological child, adult friend of the victim, stranger) and if the witness intervened to try and stop the offence (0=no; 1=yes). If they responded affirmatively to witness intervention, they were then asked to indicate the response/s of the witness (i.e., direct physical intervention, direct verbal intervention, indirect intervention) and if the witness intervention was effective in either stopping or discoursing sexual contact with the victim (0=no; 1=yes). Participants were

7 Co-offenders (i.e. accomplice of the offender) were not included in this definition of a guardian.
then asked to indicate if anyone else was nearby, but not close enough to witness, during the commission of the offence (e.g. in another room of the house). This is the equivalent of availability. If yes, they were asked to select a response from a list to identify who this person nearby was, and the reason they committed the sexual offence in the presence of somebody else.

To capture the micro-situational context of each participant’s offence, we also extracted a number of additional independent variables which emerge in the sexual-offending literature as theoretically related to offender decision making and sexual offence outcomes (Ullman, 2007; Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). These variables were (a) offender-victim relationship (0=non-stranger, 1=stranger), (b) location of the offence (0=outdoors, 1=indoors) and (c) victim resistance (0=no, 1=yes). All variables were coded as dichotomous.

The dependent variable of interest in this study was outcome of the sexual contact. Specifically, we were interested in whether the offence was disrupted (0=no, 1=yes). For consistency, we defined a disrupted offence as an event where the offender had either (a) identified a suitable target but was discouraged from proceeding with sexual contact, or (b) initiated sexual contact but this was disrupted while the offence was in progress. Descriptive statistics and definitions for all variables are provided in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Percentage (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent variable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence disrupted</td>
<td>45.7 (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of a guardian</td>
<td>Nearby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.2 (50)</td>
<td>25.4 (35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for the sample of sexual offences involving adult female victims, n = 138

6.2.4 Analytic strategy.

The main purpose of this study was to use offenders’ self-reported criminal experiences to explore the efficacy of guardianship for preventing adult-victim sexual offences in real-life abuse settings. The analysis of data is performed over three steps. The first step consisted of using conjunctive analysis of case configuration (CACC) to determine if there is a relationship between available guardianship (that is the presence of any guardian, irrespective of their level of guardianship intensity) and a disrupted crime outcome. The purpose of CACC is to explore the dominant situational contexts leading to disruption of the sexual crime event. As a consequence of the small sample size we limited the number of independent variables in CACC to the four deemed most relevant to the study aims and research questions (guardianship, offender-victim relationship, location of offence, victim resistance). This represents a total of 16 possible distinct situational contexts. Logistic regression was then completed to determine the strongest predictors of sexual offence disruption. To control for key correlates that may impact on

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8 The four variables were selected based on their expected association with the outcomes, and the absence of any extreme splits between the two levels.
the outcome of sexual contact, the presence of guardianship (nearby or witness) was introduced in model 1 followed by situational variables in model 2.

In the second data analysis step, we explored how the association between guardianship and offence disruption is influenced by situational guardianship characteristics. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the age of the guardian, (child or adult), their relationship with the offender and/or victim (known person or stranger), and their location at the time of offence (indoors or outdoors) in disrupted offences compared to completed offences.

Finally, in the third step, we explored how the association between guardianship and offence disruption is influenced by the intensity of guardianship. Logistic regression analyses were first completed to explore the association between sexual offence disruption and the presence of a guardian nearby the crime event. The same analytic strategy as the previous regression was used so we could examine whether the effect of a nearby guardian fluctuates across models. To boost our micro-analysis of the crime event we also included a third model in this regression which tested for any interaction between the presence of a nearby guardian and each of the situational variables. Each variable was centred prior to creating the interaction term to avoid multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Finally, we explored the association between sexual offence disruption and the presence of a guardian who witnessed the crime event. This was done using descriptive statistics. The reaction of witnesses to sexual contact was also examined. Here, we looked at if witnesses used an indirect method of intervention (e.g. alerted another person, calling the police), a direct verbal method of intervention (e.g. shouted at

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9 As only 13% of offences involved a witness, there were an insufficient number of cases for multivariate analysis. This relationship was subsequently explored using descriptive statistics.
the offender to stop), a direct physical method of intervention (e.g. pushed the offender away) or a combination of the three.

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Step 1: Relationship between guardianship and sexual offence disruption.

A guardian (either a witness or person nearby) was present in 36.2% of all sexual offences (see Table 6). Therefore, to understand the role of guardianship, at its broadest definition (i.e. the presence of any guardian, irrespective of their level of guardianship intensity), in the disruption of sexual offences against women, we use the exploratory method of CACC to identify the distinct situational contexts in which sexual offences are most likely to be disrupted (Table 7). While all 16 case configurations were empirically observed, only those combinations with at least five cases within them were retained. This cut-off is consistent with previous studies (Mieczkowski & Beauregard, 2010; Leclerc & Cale, 2015). Profiles were then numerically ordered according to their relative prevalence of a disrupted offence outcome. A likelihood level, calculated using the same method again as Mieczkowski and Beauregard (2010) and Leclerc and Cale (2015), was finally determined to indicate the relative likelihood of offence disruption in that context.

In total, five profiles were found to represent a high likelihood of offence disruption. The configuration of the most dominant context, in which 100% of offences were stopped, was characterized by an outdoor assault committed against a known person, where the victim used either physical or verbal resistance and a guardian (witness or nearby person) was available. Of interest, the only difference between this context (#1) and the third most dominant context (#3) was the presence of a guardian. With all other
Table 7. Dominant situational contexts for the disruption of a sexual offence against an adult woman (n=138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration number</th>
<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>Victim resistance</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent disrupted</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-stranger</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-stranger</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-stranger</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Non-stranger</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-stranger</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Non-stranger</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Non-stranger</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

categories remaining the same, the presence of a guardian increased the likelihood of disruption by 20%.

Comparing the nature of case configurations with a high likelihood of disruption to those with a low likelihood of disruption indicates guardianship (witness or nearby), victim resistance, and offence location are all highly discriminatory with respect to offence outcome. More than half of the high-risk profiles involved guardianship (3 out of 5), victim resistance (4 out of 5) and the offence occurring outdoors (4 out of 5) suggesting a strong link between these situational factors and a disrupted offence.

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10 High=at least 10 per cent above the average risk of 45.1 percent; Medium =within 10 per cent of the average risks, Low=at least 10 per cent below the average risk of 45.1 per cent.
outcome. In contrast, guardianship and victim resistance were present in only one-fifth of low-likelihood profiles and an outdoor location arose in only two out of five of the low-disruption contexts. Comparing profiles #1 with #11 and #2 with #10 also points to a possible interaction effect between guardianship and victim resistance. This is because offender-victim relationship and offence location remain consistent in the two pairs of profiles but guardianship (witness or nearby) and victim resistance differ in conjunction. Specifically, in profiles #1 and #2 where guardianship is present and victim resistance occurs, there is a 100% and 83% likelihood, respectively, of offence disruption. In profile #10 and profile #11 where guardianship and victim resistance are absent, there is a 14 percent and zero percent likelihood of offence disruption.

To build on this analysis, Table 8 reports the results of a logistic regression analysis performed on offence outcome. This strategy is adopted to differentiate the impact of guardianship from the other theoretically relevant situational variables and identify the strongest predictors of offence disruption. Similar to what emerged in CACC, Model 1 indicates that a guardian (witness or nearby) increases the likelihood of the offence being disrupted ($\Psi = 3.27$). This result remains significant when victim resistance, offender-victim relationship and offence location are introduced in Model 2. In the second model, victim resistance is also a significant predictor suggesting that when victim resistance occurs the offence is again more likely to be disrupted.

6.3.2 Step 2: Micro-level relationship between situational guardianship characteristics and sexual offence disruption

The positive association between the presence of a guardian (i.e. witness or nearby) and sexual offence disruption indicates that guardianship may play a role in preventing the sexual abuse of adult females. To tease out the nuances of this association,
Table 8. Logistic regression models of guardianship and offence characteristics on disrupted sexual offence outcome (n=138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
<td>Ψ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.18 (.370)</td>
<td>3.27***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim resistance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger relationship</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence occurred outside</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*b*=Unstandardized beta; SE=Standard error; Ψ=Odds ratio.

*Note*** p ≤ .001

the second step of analysis explores if this relationship is impacted by the characteristics of the guardian and/or the guardianship intensity they provide.

Descriptive statistics were used to determine if the situational guardianship characteristics (adult compared to child, relationship between guardian and offender/victim, indoors compared to outdoors) affect the likelihood of a sexual offence against a woman being disrupted. Figure 5 presents the characteristics of the guardians present during disrupted offences according to their age, relationship with the offender and/or victim, level of guardianship intensity, and location.

In the context of disrupted offences, the majority of guardians were adults (i.e. 16 years or older) with the highest likelihood being nearby adults (28.5%), followed by adult witnesses (25.4%), and adults who intervened (25.4%). Looking at the relationship these guardians had with the offender and/or victim shows that the majority of nearby adults in disrupted offences were known to either the victim or offender. In comparison,
just over half of the adult witnesses and adults who intervened were strangers. Turning attention to the location in which these guardians were present shows that, irrespective of their relationship with the offender and/or victim, nearby adults in disrupted offences were typically indoors but adult witness and adults who intervened in disrupted offences were predominantly outdoors.

With regards to the types of guardians present in completed sexual offences, Figure 6 shows that child guardians were present in almost as many completed offences as adult guardians. Most guardians in completed offences were nearby with the majority of nearby adults and all nearby children known to the offender and/or victim. These known guardians in completed offences were also always present in an indoor setting while the smaller number of stranger guardians in completed offences, who presented as nearby adults, were only reported in outdoor settings.
6.3.3 Step 3: Micro-level relationship between intensity of guardianship and sexual offence disruption

The third step of the analysis first looks at the extent to which the intensity of guardianship (nearby guardians compared to witness guardians) affects the likelihood of a sexual offence against a woman being disrupted. Logistic regression was used to explore the association between a nearby guardian and sexual offence disruption. As depicted in Model 1 (Table 9), a nearby person does not increase the likelihood of the offence being disrupted. Model 2 shows that this does not change when victim resistance, offender-victim relationship and offence location are introduced. In this model however, victim resistance is significant suggesting offence disruption is more likely when the victim does not co-operate with the offender ($\Psi=4.99$). Finally, in Model 3 a person nearby is again
non-significant however a significant negative interaction effect does emerge between
person nearby and victim resistance. This effect

Table 9. Logistic regression model of person nearby and offence characteristics on
disrupted sexual offence outcome (n=138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
<td>Ψ</td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
<td>Ψ</td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
<td>Ψ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person nearby</td>
<td>.313 (.385)</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.676 (.449)</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.742 (.439)</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim resistance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.99***</td>
<td>1.71 (.403)</td>
<td>5.52***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger relationship</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.244 (.396)</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.455 (.418)</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence occurred outside</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.526 (.406)</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>-.620 (.403)</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person nearby x victim resistance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.27 (.867)</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.103**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(b=U\)nstandardized beta; SE=Standard error; \(Ψ=O\)dds ratio.

Note **p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001

suggests that if a sexual offence is committed and there is no guardian nearby, disruption
will be only be more likely if the victim resists (Figure 7). No other interaction terms were
observed.

Moving from the analysis on nearby guardianship, the impact which higher levels
of guardianship intensity have on offence outcome was lastly examined by considering
the association between a witness guardian, intervening guardian and sexual offence
disruption. Descriptive statistics were used for this analysis as the small sample size
violated key assumptions of logistic regression. Figure 8 shows that a witness does
increase the likelihood of the offence being disrupted. Offenders reported a witness in
25.4% of disrupted offences compared to 1.3% of completed offences, and intervention
by the witness in 25.4% of disrupted offences but no completed offences. Of interest, a similar number of disrupted compared to completed offences involved a person nearby.

Figure 7. Graph depicting the interaction effect of presence of nearby guardian and victim resistance on the disruption of a sexual offence (Full Model – Table 5; Model 3)

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Figure 8. Guardianship intensity according to outcome of crime event ($n=138$)
When asked how their decision to offend was affected by the presence of a witness, all but one offender reported that intervention by the witness was effective in stopping or discouraging them from continuing with the sexual contact. An analysis of how witnesses responded show that 58.8% engaged in verbal direct intervention (see Figure 9). This was defined as verbal actions, such as shouting, which are aimed at directly disrupting the offence in progress. The second most common reaction exhibited by guardians was physical direct intervention (41.2%) which typically involved the guardian physically confronting the offender (e.g. pushed them off the victim). An indirect intervention was the least common reaction of guardians (29.4%) and often occurred in conjunction with a direct response.

6.4 Discussion

Despite the importance it offers for crime prevention there has been little empirical attention given to the effect of guardianship on sexual offending. Consequently, there is limited understanding of what guardians contribute to the prevention of sexual
abuse against adult women in practice and how and/or if the impact of guardianship on offender decision-making varies across dynamic situational contexts. This study builds on these gaps by exploring sexual offenders’ direct experiences of guardianship focusing on the most recent disrupted or completed sexual offence they committed against an adult female victim. Overall, results confirm that guardianship is a situational factor which sexual offenders encounter, and respond to, in the context of their criminal decision making.

6.4.1 The overarching importance of guardianship for sexual offence disruption.

Consistent with current approximations of guardianship availability (see Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007; Hart & Miethe, 2008; Tark & Kleck, 2014) we first found that a guardian was present in just over a third of sexual offences. Looking further into patterns of guardianship according to the crime event outcome however, revealed that the...
presence of any guardian (i.e. a person nearby or witness) was twice as likely in the self-reported accounts of the offenders who were disrupted, compared to those who were not. Guardianship at its broadest definition (i.e. any nearby person or witness) was also strongly and positively associated with a disrupted offence outcome and three of the five high-disruption contexts identified in the conjunctive analysis, involved the presence of any guardian.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the mechanism of guardianship is a fundamentally important factor in sexual offence disruption. However, because guardians were also present in a number of completed offences and in one of the high-completion contexts, these analyses similarly suggest that the impact of guardianship is not guaranteed. One possible explanation, which appears supported by the current study, is that the effectiveness of guardianship for sexual offence prevention is highly context-specific. We argue that while it is important a guardian is present, the most critical factors from the perspective of offenders are who the guardian is and what the guardian is doing.

6.4.2 The importance of the situational guardianship characteristics.

Results show that the guardians present during disrupted offences were characteristically different from the guardians present during completed offences. Perhaps most critically, we found that majority of the guardians present during disrupted sexual offences were adult/s (i.e. 16 years or over), while almost half the guardians present in completed offences were children. In addition, we identified that child guardians were always nearby (i.e. not close enough to witness), always indoors (i.e. the offender or victim’s home) and always known to the offender and/or victim. By comparison, the adult guardians were often in a position where they could witness and intervene, with these actions typically occurring in outdoor settings (i.e. a park or a street).
A likely explanation for this is the increased surveillance opportunities generated by the physical context of outdoor space (Reynald, 2011a).

This distinction in age between the guardians present in disrupted compared to completed offences highlights an important issue in terms of how capable guardianship within sexual offending can be conceptualized. It is likely that adults and children are categorically different from one another in their capacity as capable crime prevention agents. Within this study, adult guardians typically fulfilled the three components of capable guardianship identified by Reynald (2010). These are (1) willingness to supervise, (2) ability to detect potential offending, and (3) willingness to intervene. In no situations however, was a child guardian reported to even witness the offence which suggests that compared to adults, children do not have the same opportunities for intervention. This is interesting considering that most of the current work which evaluates the role of guardians in sexual offending against women adopts a broad definition of guardianship where guardians of any age group are collapsed into a single guardianship category (Chiu & Leclerc, 2016; Hart & Miethe, 2008). A similar analytic procedure is noted in the child sexual offending literature (Leclerc et al., 2015a; McKillop, Brown, Wortley & Smallbone, 2015).

Drawing these comments together, our findings contribute to the debate about whether children should be considered equal to adults when promoting the significance of capable guardianship for the prevention of sexual violence against women. While it is clear children can act as potential guardians since disclosure from them remains possible, the convergence of their developmental vulnerabilities with the physical settings in which they are typically present, diminish the likelihood that they will supervise and/or intervene/disclose (Leclerc et al., 2015a). Our findings provide empirical evidence that without the opportunity to engage in these action dimensions, child guardians
subsequently remain at the availability stage of guardianship which does not equate to capability in terms of disrupting opportunities for sexual offending (Reynald, 2009). This implies that capable guardianship in the context of sexual offending against a woman depends not just on who the guardian is, but also what the guardian does.

6.4.3 The micro-situational importance of what the guardian does.

The results of this study show that sexual offences where the guardian witnessed and/or intervened were significantly more likely to be disrupted. This increased likelihood of disruption was also observed irrespective of the type of witness reaction – i.e. both direct and indirect interventions had an effect. In contrast, guardians who were merely nearby (i.e. in another room of the house) did not appear to have any significant impact on offence disruption. Taken together, these findings show that the disruption of sexual offending against women is related to the intensity of guardianship. However, unlike property crime where it established that availability is critical for preventing crime opportunities (Reynald, 2009), our results suggest that in the context of sexual offending against women, and perhaps interpersonal crime more broadly, it is the action dimensions of guardianship which determine if disruption will occur. This suggests that different levels of guardianship may be required for prevention as compared to disruption. Considering that the majority of active guardians were also in an outdoor setting, our results similarly suggest that this transition to capable guardianship may be, in part, determined by the immediate environment in which the offence occurs (Reynald, 2009; 2011a). In settings where there are clearer lines of sight and better visibility of space, the likelihood of guardian witnessing and then potentially intervening in criminal behaviour, is much higher.
The importance of action in facilitating sexual offence disruption was also highlighted in the significant negative interaction term we found between a person nearby (i.e. available guardian) and victim resistance. The direction of this interaction suggests when a sexual offence opportunity intersects with the absence of guardianship, action by the victim is imperative for disruption. This observation is not entirely surprising as we know from previous literature that rape avoidance has consistently been found to be associated with the performance of self-protective actions (Clay-Warner, 2002; Ullman, 2007; Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2010b). From a situational perspective, this interaction also makes sense because if the offender and victim are alone, it is not likely a guardian will arrive at the location and witness the situation. As such, while the presence of a witness guardian may neutralize the need for a victim to respond, if there is no guardian available the only remaining opportunity for disruption is the self-protective action which the victim takes themselves (e.g. verbal or physical resistance).

6.5 Limitations and Conclusion

Together these findings show that the disruption of sexual offending against women really depends on who the guardian is, and what the guardian and/or victim are doing. Action, on behalf of the guardian or, if necessary, the victim, appears to be the critical factor which determines a sexual offender’s decision to cease the offence. The fact adults emerge as capable guardians while children do not also ties in with this concept of action, as it shows that the contexts which surround children as guardians restrict their ability to react and respond. While, in part, a reflection of the fact that opportunities for capable guardianship are determined by the physical environment, this finding also promotes the importance of willingness and ability in defining capable guardianship (Reynald, 2010).
To our knowledge, this study is the first to examine the micro-situational contexts which characterize capable guardianship in sexual offences involving adult victims. As such, we acknowledge that there are some limitations which surround the present findings. First, our study draws on self-report data collected from incarcerated offenders. This may mean that participants’ responses are subject to a social desirability bias. The responses to guardianship reported in our data may also be characteristically different from those offenders who have not been apprehended. This is because the latter group may employ more sophisticated strategies to overcome situational barriers. We also acknowledge that although clear definitions were provided within the survey instrument, there may be some situations in which participants incorrectly interpreted questions (i.e. what is meant by a person nearby).

Second, our study is based on a relatively low number of cases with almost two-thirds of recruited participants identifying as either Aboriginal or Australian Torres Strait Islander. While this is likely a reflection of the difficulty in collecting data from a sensitive and difficult to access population and the regions in which participants were recruited, results still need to be interpreted accordingly.

Despite these limitations, this study offers vital insights into what we know about the role of guardians in disrupting or preventing the sexual abuse of women in the first place. By showcasing the importance of adults as capable guardians, and reinforcing the importance of action over availability for sexual offence disruption, our findings illuminate the importance of the micro-situational context in operationalizing capable guardianship. They additionally indicate that the capability of guardianship in sexual offences against women is contingent on the perception of the offender. Anything short of a guardian who witnesses the offence does not appear to sufficiently increase the risk of detection sexual offender’s associate with the immediate criminal environment. It is
clear we need to be a lot more nuanced in defining capable guardianship, specifically in the context sexual offending, which we aimed to accomplish here. It is essential to differentiate between the guardians who are nearby and those who witness and intervene, and to clearly identify who the guardian is.

Further research in this area, using victim’s perspective of the crime event, would be valuable for building additional knowledge around what guardians can do for victims to most effectively disrupt the situation. For example, victims may perceive certain types of guardians or guardianship responses as more reassuring than others. Moreover, identifying the victim’s perspective on situational techniques would emphasize precisely when, during the crime event, guardians are available and at what stages of crime commission guardianship needs to be boosted. Considering we found preliminary evidence to suggest any intervention action by the guardian (e.g. indirect and direct) effectively disrupted the sexual offence, it would also be worthwhile examining the micro-actions of guardians using a much larger sample. This would help us to understand the extent to which a guardian’s actions interact with situational features and, in turn, inform the development of pro-active and practical models of guardianship intervention (see Cook and Reynald, 2016, for a preliminary model of bystander action). Moving forward, we argue that shifting focus to the micro-situational context of the offence will offer the most critical insights into the role regular citizens can play in disrupting, and ultimately preventing, the occurrence of sexual and violent offending, more broadly.
Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Research summary

Guardianship, as a crime control mechanism, holds enormous potential for assisting in the prevention of sexual offences against women. Because guardians can act as prevention agents at multiple points during the crime commission process (i.e. through availability, witnessing or intervening), they may disrupt or prevent sexual crimes during, and even prior to, perpetration. Despite this, little is known about the circumstances under which guardians are available during sexual offences, the ways that guardianship affects crime commission under different situational contexts, and the extent to which guardianship contributes to sexual offence prevention. This is consistent with the lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of situational prevention for sexual violence and abuse more broadly – very little is known about which SCP strategies work for preventing sexual offending and the contexts which facilitate or hinder this (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

The present thesis built on these critical gaps in knowledge by providing an in-depth examination of the mechanism of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women. Three studies were conducted and each investigated a different aspect of the roles which guardians theoretically (Study 1) and empirically (Study 2 and Study 3) play in preventing sexual offending against women. Analyses focused on understanding to what extent and under what circumstances the presence of guardianship affects the likelihood of disruption in sexual offences against women. The aim was to understand the real-life conditions under which guardianship has been more or less effective in preventing sexual crimes against adult women. Acknowledging the fact that offenders are best placed to inform on which strategies most effectively restrict or prevent
crime opportunities, the empirical analyses in this thesis also took the next step of using self-report crime event data collected from a sample of incarcerated sexual offenders.

From the three studies conducted, it was evident that guardianship triggers the SCP strategy of increasing risk and emerges as a fundamentally important factor in offender decision making. The effectiveness of guardianship for sexual offence prevention was however found to be highly context-specific with the situational characteristics of the crime event, and the intensity of the guardianship both playing a key role in the way guardianship contributes to offence outcome. With these findings, the current thesis begins the construction of the evidence-base on the effectiveness of SCP for preventing sexual violence and abuse from the offender’s perspective.

7.2 Overview of the Studies

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, each of the three studies are discussed in detail. This section provides a summary of each chapter’s key findings in order to showcase how the studies come together to explain the role of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women.

7.2.1 Study 1.

Study 1 (Chapter 4) provided a detailed review of the literature on bystander intervention with a view to establishing what we know about how guardians can be effective in preventing, disrupting or reducing the severity of sexual offences against women. First, the study evaluated what is currently known about the presence of potential guardians at the scene of sexual offences against women. This revealed that approximately a third of sexual crimes against adult females are committed in the presence of a person other than the offender or victim (i.e. a guardian). When present, guardians can also reduce the inflicted harms of sexual offending. Assimilating the available literature on guardianship additionally drew attention to the availability and
effectiveness of guardianship appear to vary across situational contexts. In the work of Hart and Miethe (2008), for example, it was identified that bystander presence was highest in rape events which occurred in public, during daylight hours, between people known to each other, and without the use of a weapon. On the other hand, bystander helpfulness was highest in cases of night-time sexual assault within the home which occurred between strangers in the absence of any weapons.

Next the study reviewed what is known about how potential guardians respond to witnessing sexual crime events. Notably, it was identified that willingness to intervene differs between males and females. Within the literature, males are established as the more physically capable guardians and females as the more willing guardians in terms of their probability of intervention. A likely explanation for this trend is that men have greater confidence in their physical self-efficacy while women may be more attune to recognizing sexually aggressive interactions and feeling a personal responsibility for helping. It was also identified through the review that the extent to which guardians are perceived as capable might similarly be determined by age. Although we found little empirical evidence to explain who guardians most often are or the circumstances in which they are more likely to intervene, the review did find that that typical target audience for established bystander intervention programs across the USA is young male and female adults.

This finding suggests that among scholars, adults are believed to be more capable than children in terms of their impact on the offender’s decision to refrain from offending. It also points to the importance of acknowledging, in the development of prevention strategies, that there are dominant situational contexts in which sexual offence opportunities are most likely to arise. In relation to increasing or enhancing guardianship, for example, the routine activities of young adult females (the most at-risk group victim
population – see Fisher, Daigle & Cullen, 2010a) will more often place them in the company of other young male and female adults, rather than children. In this sense, it may be indeed be more practical to focus on how best to increase the guardianship capabilities of the third-parties most likely to be available (i.e. adults). The SCP strategies mapped onto the acquaintance rape script proposed by Chiu and Leclerc (2016) illustrate this line of thinking as they focus on what actions could be taken by partners compared to relatives compared to acquaintance/friends. Overall, this study concluded that although a number of gaps in literature remain, the effectiveness of guardianship as a preventative strategy clearly varies according to the characteristics of the crime event. This means there is no “one size fits all” approach to the role guardians’ play in preventing or disrupting sexual offending against adult females and this was reflected in the proposed model of bystander action presented in Table 1.

7.2.2 Study 2.

Having demonstrated the theoretical relevance of guardianship for sexual offending, the second study (Chapter 5) turned reader’s attention to the practical relevance that guardianship, and broader situational principles, may offer for preventing sexual violence and abuse. Specifically, this study presented an innovative methodology which draws on the offender’s perspective of the crime event to understand how, and under what circumstances, situational prevention techniques function to discourage offenders from committing sexual offences – crime script analysis. To position the novelty of this approach within the broader sexual offending literature on prevention, the study first reviewed the contribution that offender-based research has made in the study of sexual crimes. Here it was noted that because sexual offenders are present from the initiation through to the completion of the offence, they are in a unique position to reveal the vulnerabilities or weak points in the crime commission process and broaden the scope for
crime prevention measures. This highlights what is arguably the most significant contribution offender-based research offers in explaining the practical role of guardians. With the firsthand insight of offenders, we can move beyond simple, binary observations of guardianship presence versus absence (summarised in Study 1) and understand more about when and where guardians are encountered, and what they practically contribute to prevention at different stages of the offence.

Next, the paper introduced the methodology - a self-report questionnaire incorporating a crime script framework. The focus here was to showcase how this instrument can build on the critical knowledge gaps identified in Study 1, and take the first steps toward accumulating evidence-based knowledge on the effectiveness of guardianship for sexual offence prevention in real settings. To summarise, the instrument involved five sections (see Figure 3) and questions were developed based on the literature on sexual offences and the most recent classification of twenty-five SCP techniques designed in criminology (i.e. increasing risk). Participants were asked to answer a series of fixed-choice questions about the situation which characterised the offence and their decisions at each stage of the crime event. To control for issues associated with poor memory recall, questions focused on only their most recent disrupted and/or completed sexual offence against an adult female victim. For those offenders who reported a guardian, questions captured who the guardian was, and the guardian’s level of intensity.

The final part of Study 2 used a subset of the crime events captured through the self-report questionnaires to provide a first-time empirical comparison of completed versus disrupted sexual offences at each stage of the crime commission process. In line with the emerging position of guardianship research which stresses a negative correlation between crime likelihood and guardianship intensity (see, for example, Hollis-Peel and Welsh 2014; Reynald 2009, 2011a, 2011b), this study similarly found that guardian
intervention was a key mechanism differentiating disrupted and completed offences. When looking at when intervention occurred however, results showed that only a small number of the disrupted offences were stopped in the early stages of the offence script. Most disruptions, whether by a guardian intervening or the victim employing self-protection, occurred during the crime-achievement phase when the offender was at the point of gaining or trying to gain victim co-operation.

This study is important for the current thesis in a few ways. First, it offers preliminary support for the relatively direct, practical strategies proposed in Study 1. Second, and perhaps most importantly, it points to the importance of breaking down the offence process so that it is viewed as a series of potential intervention points rather than a single prevention opportunity. The comparison of disrupted and completed crime script characteristics in Study 2 shows there is a critical need to promote the types of strategies we propose for the primary (pre-offence) stage of the offence process as here, it is evident that the efficacy of guardianship has the capacity to be boosted. In determining how best to motivate potential guardians and the most suitable populations at which to direct these strategies however, Study 2 did find that the progression from monitoring to intervention is highly context-dependent with child guardians, co-offenders and other victims, when present, typically remaining passive.

This finding aligns with Study 1 by suggesting that in the context of sexual offending, capable guardianship may indeed be dependent on both physical capacity and willingness. Child guardians could be argued to lack physical capacity due to their developmental age, co-offenders could be argued to lack the willingness to intervene due to their motivations, and other victims could be without both these dynamics if they are physically restrained and/or afraid for their own safety. Taken together, these findings suggest that there are certain points during the sexual offence script where guardianship
does contribute to disruption but other points where this mechanism clearly needs to be boosted. To further unpack this and understand what guardianship should look like at each of these points, however, findings emphasize the necessity of considering the micro-situational context of the crime event (e.g. who the guardian is, how they respond) and the relative risk and/or difficulty inferred from the immediate situation.

### 7.2.3 Study 3.

Having reviewed the literature on guardianship in incidents of sexual offending (Chapter 4), and introduced and discussed the empirical self-report approach (Chapter 5), the third study (Chapter 6) turned attention to nuances of guardianship. Specifically, this study explored the extent to which guardianship affected the likelihood of the disruption of sexual offences against women by comparing the micro-situational contexts in which these types of offences were disrupted or not. Using a sample of 138 crime events involving sexual contact with an adult female (self-reported by incarcerated offenders), three overarching questions were addressed within this research. First, the study explored what role guardianship, at its broadest definition, plays in disrupting sexual offending against women. Results confirmed what had been tentatively suggested in Study 1 and Study 2 – that is, while a guardian (witness or nearby person) significantly increases the likelihood of offence disruption and is highly discriminatory with respect to offence outcome, it does not predict disruption across all contexts. Sexual offences committed in the presence of a guardian, indoors, between known persons, and with victim resistance, for example, were almost two and a half times more likely to be completed than disrupted. On the other hand, if a guardian was present but the offence occurred outdoors, between strangers, and with victim resistance, the sexual crime event was almost five times more likely to be disrupted than completed. In line with what was argued in the previous two
studies, these findings suggest that the effectiveness of guardianship for sexual offence prevention is highly context-specific.

To tease out the nuances of this association, the second part of the study looked at which situational guardianship characteristics actuate the mechanism behind guardianship (i.e. increasing risk) and its contribution to offence disruption. While a number of characteristics were looked at descriptively, the situational characteristic which emerged as most important for capable guardianship was the age of the guardian. Similar to Study 2, results suggested that adults and children may be categorically different from one another in their capacity as capable crime prevention agents. In terms of why however, the findings of this study built the previous chapter by suggesting that it may not just be the lesser physical capacity of children which explains the lower risk offenders evidently attribute to their presence. Rather, it may be that children do not have the situational opportunities to engage in the action dimensions of guardianship (e.g. they are asleep in another room of the house). For this reason, people who offend under these conditions have the upper hand in terms of controlling the risks presented by the immediate environment. This again reaffirms the key role which the micro-situational context plays in either facilitating or obstructing the effectiveness of situational prevention mechanisms.

The last part of Study 3 focused on how the intensity of guardianship affected the likelihood of a sexual offence against a woman being disrupted. The most notable finding was that while guardianship at the witness and intervention level significantly predicted offence disruption, guardianship at the availability level (i.e. a guardian who was nearby but without surveillance opportunities) did not. This is an important contribution to current literature in a number of ways. First, it confirms not only the results of the previous two studies but also the importance of the action dimensions of guardianship as
established in the broader criminological literature (Reynald, 2009). When a guardian is in close proximity to a sexual crime event and afforded the opportunity to witness and intervene, the risk associated with that opportunity is clearly increased to the point where the offence is no longer viable. It is under these conditions, that offenders with adult female victims were discouraged and the offence was disrupted.

The second key contribution made is the insight it offers into the different guardianship mechanisms required for prevention compared to disruption. While it is well-established in the literature that availability is critical for preventing crime opportunities (e.g. a property showing signs of occupancy is less likely to be burgled), this study suggested that the action dimensions of guardianship are critical for disrupting sexual crime events (e.g. stopping a crime in progress). If we think about the crime script of completed and disrupted sexual offences in Study 2 and the typical offender behaviours noted in this comparison, this necessity for action becomes clearer. Within the small sample of sexual offences reported, alcohol and drug use by the offender was common. In this sense, offenders with adult female victims may be operating within an altered cost-perception whereby the situational factors which infer risk in other types of offending (e.g. available guardians within property crime), bear differently on the offender’s decision making in sexual crimes. We argue that under these conditions and the visceral state of intoxication, a guardian who takes action is much more likely to draw the offender’s attention to the consequence of what they’re doing compared to a guardian who is merely nearby. In the context of controlling sexual violence against women, the study therefore concluded that while nearby guardians may reduce some crime outcomes (e.g. intrusiveness of sexual behaviour) it is witnessing and intervening guardians which are required for offence disruption.
7.3 Implications

The results of this dissertation provide empirical support to show that capable guardianship is a fundamentally important crime control mechanism in the disruption of sexual offending against women. However, taken together, findings highlight that the micro-situational context of the crime event is most significant for understanding exactly how guardianship affects offender decision making. These results have important implications for theory and allude to some preliminary implications for practice. These are discussed in the following section.

7.3.1 Theoretical implications.

In all three studies, capable guardianship played a role in the avoidance or disruption of sexual offending. For this reason, the present dissertation first and foremost supports the use of capable guardianship, within the Routine Activity Approach, as a crime reduction measure for sexual violence and abuse (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Under the right conditions, guardians appear to destabilize the opportunity structure of sexual offending against women by increasing perceived risks and the subsequent assessment of cost versus benefit. Because it was also observed, particularly with Study 2 and 3, that varying expressions of guardianship intensity differentially affect the likelihood of sexual offence disruption/prevention, these findings similarly align with Reynald’s (2009) Guardianship in Action model. Evidently, in the same way that guardianship intensity affects rates of property crime - active, over potential, guardianship also corresponds with an increased likelihood of sexual offence disruption.

These key findings advance the opportunity-based theoretical framework used to understand interpersonal offences in two notable ways. First, in terms rational choice perspective the most important theoretical contribution made is the insight provided into offender decision making in the context of sexual offending against women. The present
dissertation shows that for this type of offending, capable guardianship is not just a question of whether a guardian is available or not. From the perspective of sexual offenders with adult female victims, it appears that the intensity of guardianship and the likelihood of guardian intervention, in part determined by the immediate environment, are what matter most in their decision to either continue or cease in their perpetration of the offence (see also Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007). In both Study 2 and Study 3, anything short of a guardian who witnessed the offence did not appear to sufficiently increase the risk of detection sexual offenders associated with the immediate criminal environment. Consistent with prior research (see Leclerc et al., 2015a), this suggests that sexual offenders are taking risks in securing opportunities for sexual contact with an adult female victim (e.g. they are willing offend in the presence of a nearby guardian). However, the disruption typically reported in response to guardians who engaged in action does suggest that from the perspective of these offenders, it is critical these risks can be anticipated and managed. Evidently, when they are not (i.e. the guardian witnesses the offence), the offending is stopped. Not surprisingly, this preference for situations where the offender is more equipped to control or eliminate potential risks is similarly observed in the literature on child sexual offending (Underwood et al., 1999; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004; Leclerc et al., 2015a).

The second theoretical contribution which this research makes is the unpacking of what capable guardianship means in sexual and violent offending against women. Within the routine activity approach, capable guardianship has typically been acknowledged as serving an important protective function in reducing property crime (Reynald, 2009, 2011a, 2011b). This dissertation pushes what we know about guardianship by showing that as a crime control mechanism guardianship is also empirically valid in the context of sexual offending against women. While this
relationship between guardianship and sexual offence avoidance has emerged in prior empirical research (see Table 5 for a summary), there have been no comprehensive attempts to (1) understand when in the sexual offence script guardianship comes into effect, (2) how guardians can most effectively discourages sexual offending, and (3) under what situational conditions guardianship does or does not work. The results of this thesis address these knowledge gaps and show that while guardianship does play a preventative role in sexual offending, we clearly need to be a lot more nuanced about how we define what capable guardianship is.

To illustrate some examples, the differences observed in how offences progressed when committed in the presence of child guardians compared to adult guardians (Study 3) informs the use of children as capable guardians in future research. Rather than looking at guardians as any person who is present when a motivated sexual offender intersects with a potential crime target, these results suggest it may be more appropriate to restrict definitions of guardianship to those who are aged 16 years or older. Alternatively, the guardian’s age should at the least be taken into account so that comparisons can be made between child and adult guardians. Also in Study 3, and Study 2 to an extent as well, the importance of guardianship intensity was shown. This draws attention to the relevance of considering not only if guardianship predicts a particular crime outcome, but if and how this differs among nearby compared to witnessing compared to intervening guardians. In moving forward, this dissertation argues for the importance of acknowledging and further discovering, how these dynamic contextual features individually and collectively contribute to the outcome of prevention.

7.3.2 Practical implications.

The findings of this research emphasize the importance of action over availability for sexual offence disruption. In this way, the present dissertation also has implications
for crime prevention - the most notable being the way guardians can best respond when they witness to an episode of sexual violence or abuse. As suggested in Study 3, action is what appears to lead to disruption. Promoting the importance of direct and immediate intervention, and endorsing tactics which help get victims away from risky situations may help in restricting sexual offence opportunities. Table 1, Study 1, provides a more in-depth breakdown of such potential guardianship responses with suggestions provided for each main phase of the offence process. For the purposes of linking Study 1 with Study 2, the primary level (i.e. pre-offence) is considered equivalent to the crime-setup phase and the secondary level (i.e. during offence) is considered equivalent to the crime-achievement phase.

Within this preliminary model of bystander intervention (see Table 1), consideration was given to the principle of crime specificity (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). Most notably, the proposed strategies were aligned with the relative strengths and weaknesses of male compared to female adult guardians in sexual crime events and the types of actions these potential guardians would be more likely to employ in an emergency situation. In this way, the model adds to the 12-step script for guardian intervention in public space developed by Leclerc and Reynald (2017) by identifying how different types of adult guardians (i.e. males compared to females) can be encouraged to intervene. One of the suggestions in the crime-setup phase, or pre-offence, for example, is to encourage male guardians to remind peers about the importance of consent. This is supported by literature which shows that males have the ability to influence the behaviour of their peers (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010). The pre-offence suggestions levelled at female guardians, on the other hand, focus on encouraging them to look after intoxicated friends. This is derived from empirical work which shows that females generally have a greater awareness of potential high-risk situations (Burn, 2008).
By breaking sexual crime events down into a series of stages, the model takes the micro-situational contexts of sexual crime events into account to provide a comprehensive scope of potential areas of focus for increasing guardianship behaviours. It should be noted that in making these suggestions, this dissertation does not recommend guardians should *always* intervene, particularly if doing so would so put them in a position of vulnerability. Rather, it advocates the importance of empowering guardians so that are confident to engage in a situationally appropriate response when it is safe to do so and they perceive no immediate risk to themselves (Liebst, Heinskou, & Ejbye-Ernst, 2018). The fact direct, verbal interventions were reported as the most common type of response by guardians also suggests that guardians may not be required to place themselves in an excessively risky situation (i.e. physically confront the offender) to bring about offence disruption. Actions such as yelling at the offender from a distance or even calling to another person for help appear to sufficiently increase perceived risks. In relation to current research on barriers to bystander intervention, this is a particularly important finding as one of the main reasons bystanders are found to not to help a victim when witness to a sexual assault is due to fear of their own personal safety (Banyard, 2011).

7.4 Limitations

The current thesis contributes to knowledge by informing the impact SCP mechanisms have on offender decision making under real conditions. However there are some important limitations which surround the present findings. First, with the exception of Study 1 the findings produced from this research were based on self-report data. While this does offer the advantage of tapping into previously unexplored offender perceptions of situational techniques for preventing abuse, there is the potential challenge of poor memory recall. For this reason, offenders were only asked to report on their *most recent* disrupted sexual offence and/or *most recent* completed sexual offence. In addition to
resolving the limitations of memory recall, this approach also neutralized the possibility that participants with both disrupted and completed offences committed these at two very different points in time (i.e. an offence when they were younger and then one when they were older). This helped to establish the baseline on which to compare their disrupted versus completed offence at each stage of the script.

The second acknowledged limitation of using self-report data is that the responses offenders provided may have been subject to a social desirability bias. In this sense offenders may have chosen to “fake good” and respond to questions in a way that elicits approval and aligns with social norms and expectations (Tan & Grace, 2008). To therefore reduce the extent to which offenders felt embarrassed or ashamed by their truthful responses, they were provided the opportunity to fill out their own questionnaire. It was also decided that unique ID codes, instead of participant names, would be recorded as this may help to reduce uncertainty among those who choose to have the questionnaire read out to them. Finally it was emphasized to all eligible participants, that involvement in the study was voluntary and anonymity would be safeguarded with the information provided used for research purposes only. Additional steps that were taken to circumvent the typical criticisms of offender self-report data are presented in Table 10.

The collection of data from incarcerated offenders presents another potential limitation. This is because the participants in this research might not represent the broader population of sexual offenders within Australia which may impact on the generalizability of any findings. For example, it is well-documented that women are more likely to be sexually assaulted by someone who is known to them (e.g. an intimate partner or close friend) (Myhill & Allen, 2002; Black et al., 2011; Dijk, Kesteren, & Smith, 2007). Within the Australian judicial system however, research exploring contextual factors that impact on the continuation or dismissal of sexual assault complaints has found that the closer the
intimate relationship between victim and offender; the more likely it is that the complaint will be discontinued before the point of prosecution (Lievore, 2005; Heenan, 2006).

This suggestion has been further supported in the findings of Muldoon, Taylor and Norma (2013) who, through an in-depth analysis of Victorian Police data, found complaint continuation to be more strongly associated with offences occurring in public, open space (more often associated with stranger rape) than offences occurring in private dwellings (more often between known persons). In reflecting on this as a limitation however, it is recognised that there are serious ethical concerns which would characterise the collection of self-report data from an active sexual offender sample. For this reason, recruitment from an incarcerated population outweighs the limitations in this instance and results should be interpreted accordingly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticism</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive distortions</strong>: Respondents asked to self-report may minimize or deny certain aspects of their offending because revealing too much carries significant risks</td>
<td>- Establish rapport with respondents prior to collecting any data. An authentic interviewing relationship between the researcher and respondent increases trust, facilitates communication, and encourages the respondent’s cooperation in revealing information relating to sensitive situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Poor memory recall**: Respondents may experience memory problems which can lead to consistency bias | - Focus on most recent offence(s)  
- Avoid asking questions which focus on trivial or conversational detail  
- Triangulate with other data sources (e.g. administrative data)  |
| **Difficulties in understanding questions**: Respondents and interviewers may have inconsistent reference frames (e.g. they may interpret a concept differently) | - Use clear language and provide examples for context  
- Administer questions in face-to-face setting  
- Consider the use of a professional interpreter for participants from a culturally and linguistically diverse background  
- Use validated instruments/scales to detect the impact of social desirability on responses  
- Reassure participants that information will remain anonymous  
- Emphasize independence of research from correctional and/or policing organizations  
- Establish test-retest reliability by re-administering the self-report measure to a sub-sample of respondents  |
| **Social desirability bias**: Respondents answers may be affected by perceived social norms and expectations | - Utilise incentives  
- Explain research in a way which emphasizes the value of participant’s contribution (appeal to sense of altruism)  
- Limit role of intermediate persons (e.g. correctional staff) in presenting research to participants  
- Reassure participants that information will remain confidential  
- Be personable  
- Conduct interviews in a private location where respondent feels comfortable and presence can be easily justified (e.g. education block)  
- Provide respondents with an information sheet which details the confidentiality and anonymity procedures  
- Avoid the recording of respondent names or other personal identifiers where possible  
- Restrict the material which participants can remove from the interview setting  
- Develop a strict informed consent process to assess respondent competence  
- Promote voluntary nature of the research to screen out some of those respondents whose interests do not align with those of the researchers (e.g. deniers) |
| **Lack of willingness to participate**: Respondents being asked to discuss stigmatised behaviours may be difficult to recruit because of the guilt/shame they associate with their actions | - Establish rapport with respondents prior to collecting any data. An authentic interviewing relationship between the researcher and respondent increases trust, facilitates communication, and encourages the respondent’s cooperation in revealing information relating to sensitive situations  
- Focus on most recent offence(s)  
- Avoid asking questions which focus on trivial or conversational detail  
- Triangulate with other data sources (e.g. administrative data)  |
| **Impact of setting**: Respondents may be hesitant to disclose information if they are approached in a setting where they believe anonymity or confidentiality could be compromised or there is possibility of harm by other prisoners | - Use clear language and provide examples for context  
- Administer questions in face-to-face setting  
- Consider the use of a professional interpreter for participants from a culturally and linguistically diverse background  
- Use validated instruments/scales to detect the impact of social desirability on responses  
- Reassure participants that information will remain anonymous  
- Emphasize independence of research from correctional and/or policing organizations  
- Establish test-retest reliability by re-administering the self-report measure to a sub-sample of respondents  |
| **Open to deception**: Respondent may falsify or conceal information in an attempt to deliberately mislead researcher | - Establish rapport with respondents prior to collecting any data. An authentic interviewing relationship between the researcher and respondent increases trust, facilitates communication, and encourages the respondent’s cooperation in revealing information relating to sensitive situations  
- Use clear language and provide examples for context  
- Administer questions in face-to-face setting  
- Consider the use of a professional interpreter for participants from a culturally and linguistically diverse background  
- Use validated instruments/scales to detect the impact of social desirability on responses  
- Reassure participants that information will remain anonymous  
- Emphasize independence of research from correctional and/or policing organizations  
- Establish test-retest reliability by re-administering the self-report measure to a sub-sample of respondents  |

Table 10. Strategies to overcome the limitations of offender self-report data
A final limitation, relevant specifically to Study 2, is that the sample used was not specific to offences against adult females (i.e. self-reported offences involving child victims were included). However, in line with broader literature which treats these groups as two discrete, heterogeneous populations (Robertello & Terry, 2007; Rosenberg & Knight, 1988) these events were analysed independently from one another and the interpretation of results reflects this. Moreover, while there were dominant overall trends in the disrupted offences which held across both populations, notably the presence of capable guardianship, these two groups were still characteristically different from one another in terms of the key offence variables (i.e. offender-victim relationship). Traditional research has treated offenders with child victims and offenders with adult victims as distinct populations and this research doesn’t suggest any differently. However, moving forward it would still be valuable to examine in more detail the extent to which offender decision making in these two offender populations differs with a view to understanding how potential prevention measures will be unique.

7.5 Future Research

Given the infancy of research looking at guardianship within the context of sexual offending, and in fact interpersonal crime more broadly, there are a number of potential avenues for future research. First, the current thesis highlights the need to more closely examine the interaction between guardianship and the different situational contexts in which these offences occur. While this was looked at in Study 3, the limited sample size put restrictions on the number of independent variables that could be included in analyses (e.g. CACC). It was also difficult to establish in this research what difference a witnessing guardian compared to an intervening guardian made, as all but one of the witnesses engaged in subsequent intervention. With a larger population, perhaps facilitated by a data collection approach similar to that which was employed in Proulx et al. (1999), more
attention could be given to these micro-situations in which guardianship predicts disruption. This would help unpack questions such as if different levels of guardianship intensity are required for disruption in private compared to private settings and if/how this impacted by other factors such as the offender-victim relationship, the modus operandi of the offender (e.g. use of physical force), or the offender’s affective state. Knowledge around this kind of information could be useful to help guide potential guardians in their decision making about how best to respond to a suspected or confirmed event of sexual abuse. This would in turn boost the current evidence being accumulated on what works in the situational prevention of sexual abuse against women, and most significantly, under what contexts.

The second avenue proposed for future research is triangulating the current findings using the victim’s perspective of the crime event. The valuable contribution which the victim perspective offers in revealing the meaning of situational cues and the way different actors in the crime event respond to these has been previously discussed in the work of Smith (2009). In the context of the current work, comparing victim accounts of disrupted and completed offences with those of offenders could further identify which factors appear to be salient in discouraging or disrupting offenders. Both within and across situational contexts, victims may also perceive certain types of responses (e.g. indirect versus direct verbal guardianship intervention) as more reassuring than others (Smith, 2009). This sort of insight is critical if the intended outcome of a crime prevention strategy is to reduce not only levels of crime, but also fear of crime. Having victim accounts of these offences would further be useful for understanding if absent guardianship is a result of the offender acting on opportunity (e.g. the victim was alone), or if offenders are consciously taking steps to isolate the victim from potential guardians. From a crime prevention perspective, understanding of what doesn’t work is just as
important as understanding what is effective because “if researchers can determine the kinds of countermeasures used by criminals to reduce the effect of crime prevention techniques, then these countermeasures can themselves be countered by law-abiding persons and governments” (Jacques & Reynald, 2012, p. 18).

7.5 Conclusion

The current thesis constitutes one of the first comprehensive attempts to unpack the role of guardianship in the prevention of sexual offending against women within an Australian context. Most notably, the use of offender self-report data collected through a crime script framework provided a first-time opportunity to understand how guardians and guardianship are perceived from the perspective of men who have sexually offended against adult women. Overall, this study supports the use of capable guardianship, as a crime reduction measure, for controlling sexual violence and abuse against women. Moreover, results point to the importance of not just a guardian’s presence or absence, but of their guardianship intensity. This illuminates the importance of the micro-situational context in operationalizing capable guardianship and that an offender’s choice to desist in the presence of a guardian is contingent on their assessment of risk versus reward. Together, these findings act as a first step toward accumulating evidence-based knowledge on the effectiveness of situational crime prevention for preventing sexual violence against women. In this way, the current thesis significantly advances what is known about how best to respond to and prevent sexual offending against women within an Australian context – particularly with regards to the potential protective influence of capable guardianship.
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Appendix A: Crime script for sexual offenses against children (Leclerc et al., 2011a, p. 221)
Appendix B: Crime script for sexual offenses against women by acquaintances
(Chiu & Leclerc, 2016, p. 65)