

## Original Article

# When scripts and guardianship unite: A script model to facilitate intervention of capable guardians in public settings

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**Abstract** A number of empirical studies in criminology have been conducted to highlight the benefits of offender scripting for situational prevention purposes. However, surprisingly, scripts have never been adopted to examine the decision making and behavioral processes of agents directly involved in crime control and crime prevention. In this article, we complete a theoretical exercise. Rather than using scripts to analyze crime events from the perspective of offenders, we use scripts to examine crime events from the perspective of guardians against crime. Specifically, this article introduces script analysis as an approach to design a model which has the potential to facilitate intervention of guardians against crime in public settings. An intervention script consisting of 12 stages is identified. We then show the promising utility of this script as a framework to generate potential situational prevention measures.

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## Introduction

Opportunities for capable guardianship against crime abound across a range of situational contexts. Imagine you are walking in the city and you notice a young man trying to snatch the purse of an elderly lady. Imagine another scenario in which a group of young men in the park are physical and verbally harassing a young couple walking nearby. Now imagine that in each of these scenarios you are in an obvious position to assist or protect the elderly lady and the young couple from being victimized. What would you do as an ordinary, informal citizen? Would you intervene? If so how would you intervene? Likewise, outside of the public domain, similar situations arise which offer opportunities for capable guardianship in more structured contexts such as offices, schools, hospitals, airports and so on. Imagine, for instance, that you are an airline employee as a ground staff member at a major international airport. Several travelers approach the airline counter to report two large, unattended bags that have been suspiciously abandoned nearby. Would you know what course of action to take to mobilize an effective intervention response to the potentially risky situation?

In their review on the prevention of organized crime, Levi and Maguire (2004) showed, through the use of case studies of organized crimes, that script analysis was potentially the most effective tool for targeted prevention initiatives. They strongly argued for the need to promote script analysis in the study of crime events for prevention purposes. Not only do we agree with Levi and Maguire but we also move the approach of script analysis beyond the use of offender scripts. We complete a theoretical exercise by adopting script analysis to develop the step-by-step intervention process of capable guardians against crime in public settings, and show simultaneously the great potential of completing this exercise for generating potential situational prevention measures to facilitate intervention.

## **Guardianship Against Crime**

Guardianship is one of the core situational crime prevention strategies employed to disrupt or prevent crime. The crime event model from the routine activity approach explains that the occurrence of crime is dependent upon the absence of a capable guardian when a likely offender and suitable target converge in time and space (Cohen and Felson, 1979). A capable guardian is therefore any person<sup>1</sup> whose presence reduces the likelihood that crime will occur (Felson, 1995). Felson (1995) explains that the guardian is an informal person or ordinary citizen who is likely to be on the spot when a crime occurs and is able to protect potential targets of crime during the course of their routine activities. A guardian can therefore be a neighbor, passer-by, relative, teacher or any person who is present when the opportunity for crime arises (see also Hollis *et al.*, 2013). These are the people who, by virtue of their proximity to the potential crime event, have the greatest potential to control crime by discouraging offenders.

According to Reynald (2011b) the concept of guardianship from the routine activity approach can be located under the broad umbrella of informal social control, since supervision by the guardians over the targets or places can be enhanced by social bonds and informed by social norms which leads ultimately to crime control (see Felson, 1986). However, what makes guardianship dynamic and distinct from informal social control is that it can function on the individual level, independently of collective, social processes. Guardianship has traditionally been examined within the residential context, and as such, its relationship with informal social control has been a point of focus (see Reynald, 2011b). In this article, however, we turn the spotlight on guardianship as a micro-level process by examining it from the perspective of the individual guardian.

In order to dissect the decision-making process of guardians in preventing or controlling crime, it is necessary to begin our analysis at the individual level. The effectiveness of guardianship as a crime control strategy requires the availability or presence of a guardian, and is enhanced by increasing supervision or surveillance over potential crime targets and intervention when necessary to discourage or disrupt crime (Reynald, 2009, 2011a, b). Three fundamental dimensions of capable guardianship are thus availability, supervision/monitoring and intervention. From the offender's perspective, the higher the intensity of guardianship surrounding a target/victim, the greater is the risk of getting caught. By ensuring the offender's perception of the increased risk of being detected, increasing guardianship serves as a situational strategy that reduces the likelihood of crime. Having been defined as



situation-specific supervision of people or property that prevents criminal violations (Felson and Cohen, 1980), the concept of guardianship is focused on the act of supervision or surveillance over potential targets as a form of crime control. Monitoring reinforces the effectiveness of guardians by enhancing their awareness and contextual knowledge in situations where there is the potential for crime. This, in turn, facilitates intervention by guardians (Reynald, 2010).

The willingness to intervene is a dimension of guardianship that has been underexplored within the context of the crime event. Social psychology research on bystander intervention in crime events shows that the vast majority of people who are present when a crime incident occurs choose not to intervene, irrespective of the context and type of the crime witnessed (*see* Latané and Darley, 1970; Bickman and Green, 1975; Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1977). On the basis of a range of studies they conducted to study public intervention in staged crime events and staged incidents of people in distress, Latané and Darley (1970, p. 36) determined that the willingness to intervene depends most significantly on whether the bystander 'notices an event or not, perceives it as an emergency or not, and has sufficient skill to intervene or not.' Huston *et al* (1981) also found evidence to support this idea that individual factors, such as the bystander's physical capability and skill/training affect their perception of their competence as interveners and, therefore, determines their decision about whether or not to intervene in crime events. Within criminology, Hart and Miethe (2008) investigated the situational context and effectiveness of bystander intervention into violent crimes. Results showed that helping by bystanders exceeded its normative average in situations involving stranger robberies in public places. Across all situations, results revealed that bystanders were 3.5 times more likely to help rather than hurt when they intervened to disrupt violent crime events in progress.

This willingness of available guardians to intervene has also been investigated within criminology using qualitative data to develop an understanding of the decision-making process involved in the choice to intervene. Reynald (2010) conducted interviews with guardians about their willingness to intervene in past incidents of crime that they witnessed in and around their residential space. Consistent with the social psychology literature on bystander intervention, only 16 per cent of a sample of 217 residents reported the willingness to intervene directly, irrespective of the type of crime event they witnessed. Of equal interest was the fact that 20 per cent of the sample admitted they would not take any action to intervene, either directly or indirectly, upon observing suspicious crime-related activity. The majority of the sample reported their preference for intervening indirectly by calling the police, explaining that their choice would be dictated by the severity of the crime event in progress.

This study of the varying responses to crime helped elucidate some of the core stages involved in guardians' willingness to take action to disrupt crime events in progress. Six predominant factors emerged as instrumental in affecting whether or not available guardians decide to intervene when they observe crime events in their immediate residential surroundings. Reynald's (2010) decision-making model revealed that the *sense of responsibility* guardians feel for protecting the people and property targets in their immediate surroundings plays a critical role both in their willingness to supervise and their willingness to intervene. This sense of responsibility for protecting people and property within their residential space was intimately linked with their *perception of the residential environment* in terms of whether or not they had positive or negative views

associated with their space. Both these factors were associated with neighborhood demographic factors.

In addition to *sense of responsibility*, the other key factors directly associated with the decision to intervene and the type of intervention chosen were *training* in security or policing, *physical competence* or physical capability to intervene to stop crime events, the *risk to personal safety* and the *availability of tools for protection*. Results from interviews revealed that once a crime event is observed by an available guardian, his/her willingness to intervene results from an assessment of a range of individual and situational factors that can be broadly categorized in terms of: (i) perceived risk to personal safety, (ii) perceived capability and (iii) perceived responsibility. When the perceived risk to safety is low and the perceived capability and responsibility is high, available guardians expressed a greater willingness to take some form of direct or indirect action to intervene.

The results of this study revealed that there are distinct decision-making stages that determine the critical action dimensions of guardianship – supervision and intervention. In particular, they suggest that once a crime event is observed, an available guardian's willingness to intervene is the product of a series of rational choices and the evaluation of the costs and benefits involved. This is not to say that guardian decisions are fully 'rational'. As it is the case with offenders, we acknowledge that decisions made by guardians are bounded in nature in the sense that they can be affected by time constraints, intoxication and availability of information on the context under which the crime may be committed. Recently, a number of scholars have also shown the influence of emotions on offender decision making (Van Gelder *et al*, 2013). This body of work is also applicable to guardian decision making. However, regardless of the nature of decision, that is, whether it is split second or ill informed for instance, we argue that a decision is still made by the guardian (Clarke, 2008).

In order to develop this line of research, these guardianship decision-making stages need to be further extrapolated by developing an understanding of the mechanisms that facilitate intervention by guardians, as well as those that hinder it. This development also requires understanding the series of actions leading to successful interventions and how these may be integrated to form cohesive prevention strategies. A systematic construction of how these mechanisms interrelate to produce not only the decision to intervene or not but also the actions leading to successful interventions is a critical first step in realizing how intervention by guardians can be encouraged. This decision-making model will be used as the foundation for the current article and will be integrated in a script framework to show how these decisions and action stages can be influenced to facilitate desirable guardianship behaviors for the purposes of crime prevention.

## **The Concept of Script and Crime Scripts**

The concept of script was developed in the context of a computer simulation of the human cognitive structures and processes involved in understanding text. Scripts represent knowledge of events and event sequences (Schank and Abelson, 1977; Abelson, 1981). More specifically, scripts are members of a family of hypothesized knowledge structures, or schemas. A schema is a cognitive structure that serves to organize our representations of past behavior and experience. This structure comprises assumptions and expectations about the



social world which will guide a person in construing new experience. The script is a special type of schema, known as an ‘event’ schema, since it organizes our knowledge about how to understand and behave in everyday life (Cornish, 1994a). An easy way to understand what scripts are is to refer to the restaurant script example used by Schank and Abelson (1977). As the script consists of a sequence of actions performed to achieve a desired goal, a restaurant script simply organizes the sequence of actions that must be taken in a restaurant to eat: enter, wait to be seated, get the menu, order, eat, get the check, pay and exit.

Applied to crime, the script concept makes the process of crime commission easier to untangle and understand. As indicated by Cornish (1994a, b), crime commission is an event that comprises a number of different steps from start to finish. Drawing from rational choice perspective and earlier work on the crime event model (Clarke and Cornish, 1985; Cornish and Clarke, 1986, 2008), Cornish (1994a) brought the script concept into the field of criminology in order to: (i) provide a framework to systematically investigate and identify all of the stages of the crime-commission process of a specific crime, decisions and actions that must be taken at each stage and the resources required for successful completion of the crime, and (ii) assist in providing an opportunity for additional intervention points for prevention. A crime script simply represents the complete sequence of actions adopted before, during, and following the commission of a particular crime.

Although crime scripts do not sit in mainstream criminology, they have now been applied to a variety of crimes with a clear focus on potential situational prevention measures. These include crimes against passengers and employees in public transport (Smith and Cornish, 2006), child sexual abuse (Leclerc *et al*, 2011), child sex trafficking (Brayley *et al*, 2011), methamphetamine manufacturing in clandestine laboratories (Chiu *et al*, 2011), cigarette smuggling (Hiropoulos *et al*, 2013), suicide bombing in terrorism (Clarke and Newman, 2006), the infiltration of Italian organized crime groups in the public construction industry (Savona, 2010) and human trafficking (Savona *et al*, 2013).

Eklom and Tilley (2000) correctly pointed out that offenders can adapt and innovate in their script against crime prevention and that, consequently, preventers must be able to evolve accordingly. We take this view further and argue for the use of scripts to outline the process of those who can prevent crime. Specifically, scripts have never been adopted to investigate the decision-making and behavioral processes of capable guardians against crime (Leclerc, 2013a, b; see also Eklom, 2012). In this article, script analysis is adopted as a framework to investigate the intervention process of capable guardians in public settings because: (i) it breaks down behavioral processes step-by-step and as a result, simplifies very complex sequences of actions, (ii) it taps into the decision making process underlying any sequence of actions and (iii) it provides an extensive range of intervention points to stimulate thinking and guide the design of situational prevention measures adapted to stages of the script. For these reasons, examining the script of capable guardians against crime in criminology represents a great opportunity to understand and facilitate intervention and ultimately favor crime prevention.

## Current Contribution

The first objective of this article is to complete a theoretical exercise by adopting script analysis as an approach to design a template model which showcase its potential to facilitate

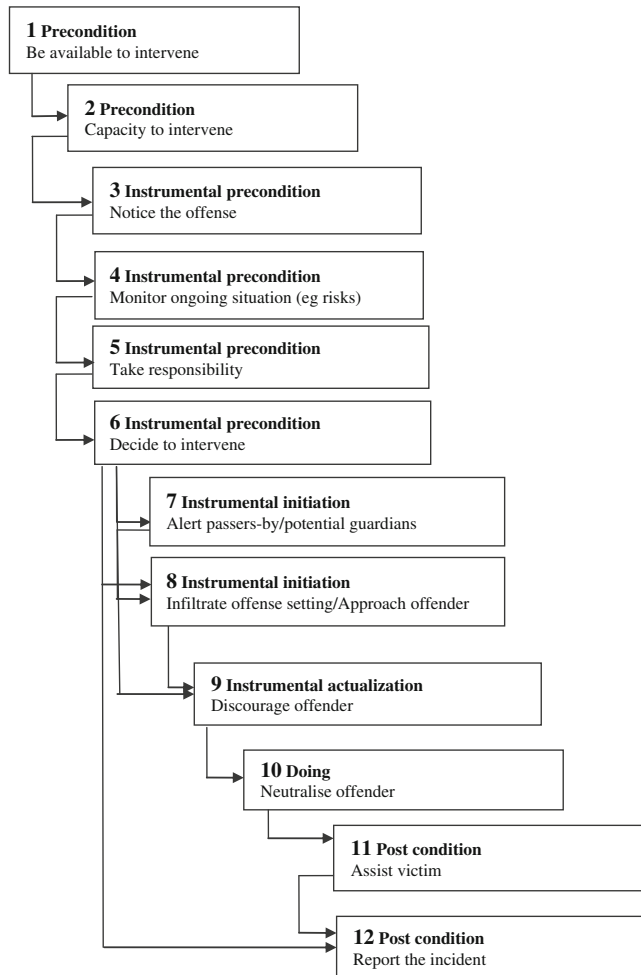
intervention of guardians against crime in public settings and guide empirical research on scripting guardianship in specific circumstances. The second objective is to use this script model to stimulate thinking around the development of situational crime-prevention measures. By completing this exercise, we seek to sensitize academics, practitioners and policy makers to the potential of script analysis to facilitate intervention against crime. We thus follow Levi and Maguire (2004) and promote script analysis as an effective way to respond to crime events through prevention-focused thinking (see also Ekblom and Tilley (2000)). First, we draw on Reynald's (2010) decision-making model to develop the first part of the intervention script (stages 1 to 6). Second, the script scenes that breaks down any event from start to finish (that is, instrumental initiation and so on, see Cornish, 1994a) are used to guide us into extending the model into a script until its completion (stages 7–12). For these particular stages, insights from relevant studies conducted on bystander intervention during violent interchanges are brought into play for further understanding and describing the intervention process of guardians against crime (for example, Luckenbill, 1977; Felson and Steadman, 1983; Hart and Miethe, 2008). The second objective is achieved by using the classification of situational measures designed by Cornish and Clarke (2003). Specifically, we examine techniques that have the potential to be applied at each step of the script to facilitate the completion of the intervention process of capable guardians against crime in public settings.

## **The Intervention Script of Capable Guardians Against Crime in Public Settings**

Figure 1 presents the script of the intervention process of capable guardians against crime in public settings. This figure demonstrates the step-by-step process that capable guardians must follow in order to intervene and prevent crime in public settings. It also shows that both direct and indirect intervention can lead to crime prevention but also that some variations may occur in the process leading to a successful intervention. In this process, direct intervention is distinguished from indirect intervention because the former is the tipping point of an immediate and effective process in response to crime. Because of its instant and unequivocal nature direct intervention is, in general, more likely to lead to crime disruption (Reynald, 2010).

### **Preconditions for intervention**

The first step of the script of capable guardians against crime in public settings is the availability to intervene, which is a precondition for intervention. The presence of a capable guardian implies that somebody is available to intervene. No intervention is possible without the presence of a guardian on the spot of the crime when committed (Felson and Boba, 2010), thus availability is viewed as the primary precondition for intervention. To intervene, another pre-condition must be present. The guardian must also have some capacity to intervene during the crime event. The physical capacity to intervene has been reported as an important factor in the decision to intervene (Huston *et al*, 1981; Reynald, 2010). As indirect intervention is also part of the script, we refer to the capacity to intervene in a broader sense. The capacity to intervene in terms of direct intervention implies that elderly people or people



**Figure 1:** Intervention script of capable guardians against crime in public settings.

with physical disabilities are less likely to intervene and interrupt the commission of a crime. However, the capacity to intervene in terms of indirect intervention such as asking for help or calling the police implies that people who are physically vulnerable are also able to intervene.

### Instrumental preconditions for intervention

In addition to the pre-conditions there is a series of four instrumental pre-conditions, all essential for direct intervention. Obviously, one cannot physically intervene without being present and noticing the event first. Noticing the event and perceiving it as an offense has also been reported as highly influential in determining the willingness to intervene (Latané



and Darley, 1970). Noticing the event boosts the probability of intervening. However, one can still intervene indirectly without witnessing the event by calling the police, for instance, if somebody tells that person that somebody else is in danger. The second instrumental precondition is to monitor the ongoing criminal situation after noticing it. As shown by Reynald (2010), monitoring helps make guardians more knowledgeable and conscious of their environment, which favors the completion of the intervention script. Although supervising the environment before the crime event occurs is a bonus to facilitate guardianship, the importance of ongoing monitoring during the crime event is essential. In fact, intervention requires some form of monitoring when the crime takes place. It is during then that the potential guardian conducts an assessment and decides whether or not to take responsibility and intervene – the last two instrumental pre-conditions. Reynald (2010) also found that feeling responsible for protecting people and property targets is critical for both monitoring before the crime occurs and the willingness to intervene when crime is committed. This instrumental precondition is vital because it heavily influences the decision of whether or not to intervene. The sense of and the capacity to take responsibility are most likely based on individual factors (for example, personality of the potential guardian), but also on situational factors such as the severity of the crime being committed, the capacity and likelihood of the victim's self-protection, and the risks of being injured as a consequence of intervening. Taking responsibility and deciding to intervene are likely to be the result of spur-of-the-moment decisions, which is supported by Felson (1995) who explains variations in the level of responsibility individuals can take for guarding people or property against victimization.

### **Instrumental initiation & actualization of intervention**

After deciding to intervene, the instrumental initiation of the intervention begins. The script shows that the capable guardian can initiate the intervention by first infiltrating the offense setting and approaching the offender with or without alerting passers-by or other potential guardians. For the purposes of this article, the offense setting can be defined as the location at which the interaction between the offender and others takes place. The interaction between the guardian and the offender is initiated at this stage. Then follows the stage where the guardian interacts with the offender and tries to discourage him/her from completing the crime. This interaction can take the form of mediation, negotiation or threats. In the event that the offender is not stopped at this stage, the guardian must proceed to the next stage of physically neutralizing the offender in order to ensure the prevention of the offense. This can be achieved through the use of physical force or the use of an available object for protection, intimidation or restraint of the offender. At this stage, the offender may either be subdued or decide to flee the scene. Once the intervention has occurred, the guardian may proceed to the post-conditions of assisting the victim, and then reporting the incident to the police.

Very few studies have examined the interaction between guardians, victims and offenders. In a study on homicide, Luckenbill (1977) indicated that bystanders (or guardians) who intervened tried to stop the offender, assist the victim, and immediately notify the police. Only 35 per cent of bystanders tried to stop the crime from being committed. In a similar study, Felson and Steadman (1983) found that 21 per cent of bystanders used physical force to neutralize the offender in cases of homicide and 28 per cent did in cases of assaults. The evidence found in these two studies as to the effectiveness of using physical





force is mixed. However, the findings also suggest that mediation might be an effective intervention strategy. Regarding these findings, one has to remember that situational factors may play a major role in determining whether or not physical force is effective. Indeed, Hart and Miethe (2008) found that the situational context of bystander intervention into violent crimes has an important impact in determining whether or not the intervention is successful.

### **Post-intervention conditions**

The last two stages of the intervention script are post conditions necessary to ensure a successful intervention. After neutralizing the offender, the guardian may proceed by assisting the victim, particularly if he/she was injured during the crime event. Thereafter, the guardian may report the incident to the police to maximize the likelihood that the offender is arrested, the victim is kept safe and the incident is officially recorded. It should be noted that after making the decision to intervene in stage 6, the guardian may well-choose to immediately report the incident to the police before or instead of a direct intervention.

## **Situational Crime Prevention and Beyond**

### **Situational crime prevention**

The objective of this article was to adopt a script approach in order to develop the step-by-step intervention process of capable guardians against crime in public settings. We now turn our discussion to the ways in which this script can be applied. The application of potential situational measures onto the script is also an exercise to showcase how this could be achieved if empirical data were available. Using the classification of 25 measures proposed by Cornish and Clarke (2003), the script is used to think of situational measures for each step of the intervention process of capable guardians. As the ultimate goal is to think about potential prevention measures that could facilitate the completion of the intervention script, as opposed to disrupt the script, a theoretical twist is necessary so that the aim of each general measure is reversed. While situational crime prevention strategies are typically used to manipulate crime opportunities in order to discourage offending, the examples provided in Table 1 reverse this logic to show how situational crime-prevention strategies can be applied to encourage guardianship. Jacques and Reynald (2012) applied similar reverse logic to show how offenders use situational crime prevention strategies and techniques to guard against law enforcement and victimization.

Instead of using situational crime-prevention techniques that would increase the risk and effort while reducing the rewards involved in offending, Table 1 illustrates how guardianship can be facilitated by reducing the risk and effort and increasing the rewards associated with various stages of the guardianship process. For example, Table 1 shows that in order to facilitate *Stage 1*, the availability of guardians to intervene in crime or related events in public spaces, situational crime-prevention techniques designed to encourage the accessibility and usage of public settings can be employed. Designing public spaces that are esthetically pleasing and simultaneously facilitate easy access and high levels of surveillance will likely encourage a steady flow of users who will be available to act as guardians when

**Table 1:** Situational prevention strategies and techniques to facilitate guardianship at selected steps of the intervention script

<i>Step of script</i>	<i>Situational crime-prevention strategy</i>	<i>Situational crime-prevention techniques</i>
1. Availability to intervene	Reduce the effort	<i>Encourage accessibility and usage of public setting</i> Design spaces that are esthetically pleasing
	Reduce the risk	Facilitate accessibility and encourage steady flow of users Increase surveillance and encourage safety
2. Capacity to intervene	Reduce the effort	<i>Increase physical capacity</i>
	Reduce the risk	Provide free self-defence training sessions
3. Notice the offense	Reduce the effort	<i>Facilitate Natural Surveillance</i> Create clear lines of sight
4. Monitor the offense		Manipulate physical design to ensure windows face public space Use CCTV
5. Take responsibility	Provide excuses	<i>Encourage Collective Awareness</i>
	Increase rewards	Use signage/announcements to promote vigilance and raise awareness of safety precautions Use signage/announcements to promote civic responsibility to assist victims <i>Introduce &amp; Promote Community Awards</i> Provide awards for civic engagement in the prevention of crime
6. Decide to intervene	Provide excuses	<i>Promote active guardianship</i> Use publicity campaigns to encourage intervention Shaming of inaction
7. Alert passers-by	Reduce the effort	Ensure that police contact information is readily available <i>Increase communication potential</i>
		Encourage presence of onsite place managers Mobilize community watch groups Install Emergency Alarm Systems
8. Approach offender	Increase the reward	<i>Promote citizen intervention laws</i> Provide and raise awareness of citizens' legal arrest powers
9. Discourage offender	Provide excuses	<i>Introduce incentives for intervention</i> Public Commendation and/or Monetary Rewards/ Compensation <i>Increase social capacity</i> Publicize police guidelines to manage dangerous situations (eg hostage situations)
		<i>Increase physical capacity</i> Provide free self-defence training sessions
10. Neutralize offender	Reduce the effort	<i>Create Social Pressure</i> Penalties for failing to assist victims in need Use publicity campaigns to encourage victim assistance
11. Assist victim	Reduce the risk	
12. Report the incident	Provide excuses	<i>Provide accessible channels of communication</i> Increase availability of emergency phone booths <i>Introduce incentives for reporting</i> Public Commendation and/or Monetary Rewards/ Compensation <i>Use mechanical surveillance</i> Use monitored CCTV cameras

Notes: Adapted from Clarke (2009).

necessary. An example of facilitating the process in *Stage 4* is that rewards for taking responsibility for others could be increased through the provision of community awards, such as an award for civic engagement within the community. Awards and recognition of



this kind are likely to heighten people's awareness of the importance of taking responsibility for making places safer, and are equally likely to encourage behaviour that reflects that. In *Stage 9*, the social capacity of guardians could be increased by providing them with police guidelines to help them manage dangerous situations such as hostage situations. This measure could provide guardians with strategic training that would assist them in discouraging the offender from completing the offense, and thereby reduce the effort required to discourage the offender. These situational crime-prevention techniques not only reduce the effort for guardians to be available at public places, they also reduce the risks involved in being available. The same rationale applies to the situational crime-prevention measures that have been assigned to other stages of the script. Table 1 therefore provides an illustration of how the script framework can be used to map potential situational prevention measures onto selected steps of the intervention process.

In order to maximize the utility of scripting the intervention process of capable guardians for prevention purposes, we must also think about the nature of guardianship in terms of who exactly is going to guard against crime, and what type of crime is being targeted. In other words, the principle of crime-specificity (Clarke, 2008) is also applicable here and it could be argued that the more specific the intervention script, the more likely to lead to prevention. Using the example provided by Table 1 as a guide, situational crime-prevention techniques could be designed for each stage of the script according to the context in which the script is likely to be enacted. Whether it is employees in a workplace or travelers at the airport or train station, both citizens and organizations would benefit from having a clear, step-by-step guide and knowledge of what to do at each of these stages in order to intervene successfully. Ultimately, the intervention script, or more specifically the measures designed at each stage of the script, could be tested by collecting and examining evidence on each event during which intervention occurred. This exercise would clearly enhance the capacity of guardians to intervene successfully.

### **Toward new developments in script analysis and rational choice**

This article has other important implications in terms of script analysis and rational choice theoretical developments. First, scripting the intervention process of guardians against crime is an important development in the application of script analysis in criminology. The current literature on script analysis focuses solely on offender scripts (Leclerc, 2013). The application of script analysis to guardians against crime greatly expands the scope of this approach and as a result, offers a novel opportunity for researchers to understand crime events and stimulate thinking on crime prevention. It promotes a much needed approach against the constant evolving world of crime and criminal resources (Ekblom and Tilley, 2000; Levi and Maguire, 2004). Second, the point of focus of the current criminological literature on decision making is the offender. In fact, several ground breaking studies have been conducted on burglars and robbers for instance (for example, Wright and Decker, 1994, 1997). However, very little is known on the decision-making process of guardians against crime. Guardians against crime too are making decisions and it is crucial to examine these decisions for crime-prevention purposes (Reynald, 2010). The examination of these decisions is crucial for facilitating guardianship and guiding prevention initiatives involving potential guardians. In addition, a better account and integration of the decision-making

process of guardians against crime in criminology appears essential to develop and/or improve current theoretical approaches such as rational choice and also guide future research on crime prevention. As argued by Wortley (2013), the rational choice perspective needs further development based on what is currently known about decision-making processes in cognitive sciences. As it stands at the moment, the rational choice perspective is not a suitable model for scrutinizing in fine detail the decision-making processes of actors involved in crime events. In the event that the rational choice perspective is further developed this would represent a worthwhile opportunity for the theoretical integration and explanation of the decision-making processes of guardians against crime.

## Conclusion

The main contribution of this article in criminology is twofold: (i) we first set the foundation for the use of script analysis in order to facilitate the intervention of guardians against crime in public settings, and (ii) we use the intervention script to map potential situational prevention measures to facilitate intervention, which has the capacity to have a tremendous impact on the field for expanding the scope of situational prevention.

Through the application of the concept of scripts to the practice of guardianship against crime, this research focused on dissecting the guardianship process – from availability through to intervention – by developing on empirically supported stages of decision making by guardians. The breakdown of guardianship as a course of action allowed for the identification of the fundamental stages of capable guardianship that are required to facilitate crime disruption and control through intervention. Scripting the process of guardianship, in turn, led to generating a framework for the design of specific situational measures. This unique amalgamation of the concepts of scripts and guardianship presents a theoretical and rigorous map in criminology toward effective intervention during crime. The benefits of completing this exercise are clearly beyond the advantages it offers in theorizing about the prevention of crime. The script provides a clear set of guidelines about what to do in a situation where crime occurs or is likely to be committed, and can therefore prove to be a vital tool for virtually anyone who has the responsibility, the capacity and/or the willingness to contribute to safety in public places in which people converge in everyday life. It is hoped that the theoretical exercise completed in this article will provide a useful template for scripting guardianship processes and stimulate future endeavors to empirically investigate specific forms of intervention scripts under different circumstances.

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## Note

1 In the case of CCTV, the guardian is not a person but an object designed to replace the human guardian in providing surveillance.



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