

# Situational Policing: Neighbourhood Development and Crime Control

James J. Nolan, III, Norman Conti & Jack McDevitt

*Over the past two decades, the Broken Windows version of social disorganization theory has had a significant impact on law enforcement practices in the United States. Contemporary sociologists, however, have demonstrated that neighbourhood-level collective efficacy (or a lack thereof) is a more significant predictor of violent crime than are physical and social disorder (i.e., broken windows). Collective efficacy is viewed as an evolving neighbourhood-level property. We posit that neighbourhoods pass through, regress to, or get stuck in identifiable stages of development as they move toward (or away from) higher levels of collective efficacy. Giving consideration to both stage of neighbourhood development and level of neighbourhood crime and disorder, we construct four neighbourhood types: Strong, Vulnerable, Anomic and Responsive. The concept of “situational policing”, then, is introduced as a way to address effectively both the development of collective efficacy, and the occurrence of crime and disorder in each neighbourhood type.*

*Keywords: Situational policing; Community policing; Group processes; Collective efficacy*

## Introduction

Social scientists seek to explain crime from various perspectives and each particular point of view implies a logical public policy response. For instance, the “war” on illegal drugs is, at least in part, the result of a perspective that illegal drugs *cause* crime. Therefore, stopping the manufacture, sale and use of these drugs is a logical directive consistent with this perspective. In the same way, contemporary public policies aimed at reducing poverty, unemployment, and racial and gender inequities

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come directly out of empirical research that links these social maladies to crime. The aim of this article is to consider the link between public disorder and crime, and its impact on contemporary policing policies and practices. Specifically, we consider two competing claims made in recent years about this link. We observe that the more recent research is challenging the conventional notions about the causes of crimes in neighbourhoods<sup>1</sup> and, therefore, the logical police responses to them.<sup>2</sup>

### Broken Windows, Broken Efficacy

In 1982, James Q. Wilson and George Kelling published “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety” in *Atlantic Monthly*, and for the next twenty years their ideas would have a significant impact on the evolution of modern American policing. Their premise, stated simply, was that *neighbourhood disorder leads to (or causes) serious violent crime*. Wilson and Kelling view disorder as a precursor to or predictor of serious crime. They contend that physical signs of disorder signal fear and apathy among residents. Within the environment there is a reluctance to *get involved* so “broken windows” is an appropriate metaphor for all sorts of disorder, both physical and social. Here, physical disorder includes the presence of litter, graffiti, abandoned cars, vacant buildings and drug paraphernalia, while social disorder includes such things as the presence of panhandlers, prostitutes, disorderly groups and individuals who are homeless or publicly intoxicated. The treatment modality that emanated from the Broken Windows perspective was, and still is, simply to *repair the disorder* (i.e., fix the broken windows; eliminate graffiti; prosecute panhandlers, street people, drug users and loiterers). Popular, and arguably very successful, policing practices such as zero-tolerance and order-maintenance policing have been influenced by this perspective (Parenti, 2000; Goldstein, 1990; Kelling & Coles, 1996).

Rather than conceive of disorder as something separate from crime or as a direct cause of it, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999: 608) view disorder *as* crime, albeit at “different ends of the ‘seriousness’ continuum”. From this perspective, physical and social disorder are *evidence* of crimes and ordinance violations, not precursors or root causes. They hypothesize that disorder and crime are manifestations of the same explanatory processes—that is, weakened informal social controls and structural antecedents. “Collective efficacy”, a construct used to describe and assess neighbourhood-level social control, is defined by the researchers as the “cohesion among residents combined with shared expectations for the social control of public space” (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999: 603).<sup>3</sup> Structural constraints include concentrated disadvantage, residential (in)stability, population density and mixed-land use (private and commercial). In Sampson and Raudenbush’s (1999) survey of 196 Chicago neighbourhoods, they found that neighbourhood-level collective efficacy was the most significant predictor of disorder and crime. When neighbourhood characteristics (i.e., collective efficacy and structural characteristics) were considered, the connection between disorder and crime, as advanced by Wilson and Kelling, all but disappeared. They found that, when collective efficacy and structural constraints are

held constant, neighbourhoods high in disorder do not experience elevated crime rates.

The problem created by these research findings is that the police are trained to *see* (and, therefore, respond to and deal with) only crime and disorder. It is part of what Goodwin (1994) calls the “professional vision”. Police are not necessarily trained to *see* or assess neighbourhood-level properties like collective efficacy. Therefore, many community-policing strategies do not formally or systematically take into account neighbourhood-level collective efficacy or the social processes that affect its development. In fact, in our view many policing strategies (such as “zero-tolerance”) that are deemed effective in reducing crime and disorder can actually *work against* the development of neighbourhood-level collective efficacy. In the pages that follow, we consider the implications of the Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) findings for modern policing policies. Specifically, we consider the value of viewing neighbourhoods as dynamic wholes with collective properties (such as efficacy) and how this conception of neighbourhood might alter our views on effective policing practices.

### **The (Dys)function of Group Deviance: The Police Mandate and Its Unintended Consequences**

In this type of discussion, it is important to provide a general framework for understanding the role of deviance in a community and the symbiotic relationship between the police and the community as they work to control it. From early sociologists such as Emile Durkheim (1958), it is clear that deviance is an essential element in the life of any collective. The societal reaction to deviance is an important mechanism for generating solidarity. Group identity is generated when the “collective” is juxtaposed against some “other”. Be it a nation, group or individual, that “other” comes to symbolize all that the group is not, and in this process there is an implicit definition of the collective and its boundaries. Following Durkheim and many others, consider the contemporary writings of sociologist Kai Erikson:

The deviant act, then, creates a sense of mutuality among the people of a community by supplying a focus for group feeling. Like a war, a flood, or some other emergency, deviance makes people more alert to the interests they share in common and draws attention to those values which constitute the “collective conscience” of the community. Unless the rhythm of group life is punctuated by occasional moments of deviant behavior, presumably, social organization would be impossible. (Erikson, 1966: 4)

While this perspective may hold true for environments where deviant behaviour is confined to occasional moments, it is likely to be something else entirely where deviance is more than a mere punctuation. In describing levels of deviance in a community, Durkheim (1958) makes the distinction between what is normal and what is pathological. He argues that formal responses to the pathological levels of deviance can make things even more pathological. Consider what is referred to as, the “high crime area”. The impact of deviance on the community in this environment may be vastly different than that of the “low crime area”. A high rate of

deviance necessitates formal agents of social control (i.e., the police) playing a greater role in the life of the community. With this the community is giving, ever more, control of its daily existence over to its formal authorities. Aside from the potential for a sense of resentment actually leading to the definition of police as an “other”, this situation can serve to further disorganize a neighbourhood. With police taking on a perpetually larger role in the community, including its typical law enforcement function, the community develops a greater dependence upon these official forces of order and becomes less functional in terms of its own ability to enact informal controls.

As this community-level dependence on the police to resolve issues of crime and disorder grows, there is some question as to whether the police can really be effective anyway. Peter Manning describes this concern in the following passage:

The police have trouble. Among the many occupations now in crisis, they best symbolize the shifts and strains in our changing socio-political order. They have been assigned the task of crime prevention, crime detection and the apprehension of criminals. Based on their legal monopoly of violence, they have staked out a mandate that claims to include the efficient, apolitical, and professional enforcement of the law. ... The police have staked out a vast and unmanageable social domain. And what has happened as a result of their inability to accomplish their self-proclaimed mandate is that the police have resorted to manipulation of appearances. (Manning, 1978: 8)

For decades Manning, among others, has argued that policing in America is largely theatrical. Since police are expected to manage a problem that results from social processes far beyond their control, the bulk of their effort is devoted to giving the false impression that they are, in fact, controlling it. As a result of this situation, the police are frustrated by an impossible job and citizens are dissatisfied with their lack luster results. Beyond disappointment in service delivery there still remains the larger issue—turning the important function of community safety over to an organization that cannot reasonably be expected to perform it. Manning (1978: 11) argues convincingly that the foundation of the police mandate leads to a failure, “in a serious way to meet the need of controlling crime”. Furthermore, it is our contention that this false promise of security is a factor impeding the development of collective efficacy at the neighbourhood level.

Egon Bittner (1970) argues that the police are, at best, a resource of last resort. He suggests that the real value of the police is their potential to exercise force on behalf of some citizens against others. When people “call the cops” they are effectively pushing the situation outside the bounds of everyday life and community. This situation constitutes a virtual surrender to a higher authority. Here, the situation has evolved beyond the range of what the group believes it can accommodate, so the police are employed to remove it, or its participants, from the common domain. With this there is only a minor disruption in the smooth flow of social interaction. However, as their utilization increases there is a risk of learned helplessness (or dependence) on the part of the community.

Formal social control acknowledges and perpetuates the dependence of the group on an external force of order. If this is a scenario where the majority identify with

the legitimate authorities and perceive the deviant act as an attack on the wider social values, then a dramatic performance of the social control function both restores order and generates solidarity. However, as this performance increases in frequency, the function of deviance and collective efficacy, envisioned as informal social control, are likely forsaken. Consider Erikson's further discussion of deviance below. He compares the official forces of social control (here correctional and mental health institutions) to the immune system of a biological organism.

[H]ow does a community decide which of these behavioral details are important enough to merit special attention? And why, having made this decision, does it build institutions like prisons and asylums to detain the persons who perform them? The conventional answer to that question, of course, is to protect itself against the "harmful" effects of deviation, in much the same way that an organism mobilizes its resources to combat an invasion of germs. Yet this simple view of the matter is apt to pose more problems than it actually settles. (Erikson, 1966: 8)

Notice that Erikson is observing the latent functions of social control. He recognizes that while formal control is a necessary element of the social order, there is a level of complexity within the operation that can produce all manners of unintended consequences. This article is an attempt to illustrate one of the ways in which formal attempts to control crime in neighbourhoods can malfunction. By doing their job well under certain environmental conditions, the police may unwittingly contribute to a greater problem. It is our contention that formal police interventions are not analogous to the natural functions of a biological organism alluded to in the above quotation; they are, in fact, antithetical to them. These encounters are, more accurately, analogous to the efforts of emergency medicine. While supremely useful in the most critical of circumstances, they are, in no constructive sense, an everyday vehicle for health or survival. Such is the case in the community.

### **Neighbourhoods, Groups and the Development of Collective Efficacy**

The fact that groups, organizations, and whole societies have collective properties (like efficacy) has been well-established (Durkheim, 1897; Lewin, 1951; Bion, 1959; Chan, 1998). So much of what we now know about the properties of collective entities comes from the study of groups, which was an emerging focus of scientific study in the 1940s and continues today (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). In order to apply our knowledge of groups and group processes to the dynamics of neighbourhoods, we must clearly define what we mean by the term "neighbourhood".

#### *Conceptualizing Neighbourhood*

"Neighbourhood" is a familiar term that can be operationally defined in a number of ways for investigative purposes. For example, Milgram (1972) described "neighbourhood" as having psychological boundaries in the form of an area of comfortable familiarity. Applying this definition to his experiences in New York City,

he estimated that neighbourhood might be a five-block area (plus or minus two blocks). By comparison, in their study of Chicago neighbourhoods, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) defined “neighbourhoods” broadly as census tracts.<sup>4</sup> Here, the conception plays out in ecological units rather than cognitive or affective identity.

This dynamic opposition suggests that there may be no simple definition of “neighbourhood” that is appropriate in any and all circumstances. What Suttles (1974) offers in place of a single definition is the conceptualization of neighbourhood as a multi-leveled phenomenon. The most basic of his four levels is the “face block” where residents live together on the same block, use many of the same resources and have the most face-to-face encounters. The second level, the “defended neighbourhood”, is the smallest unit with a corporate identity where residents “assume a relative degree of security on the streets as compared to adjacent areas”. The third level, “community of limited liability”, is an area defined by external commercial or governmental interests (i.e., having institutionalized boundaries for statistical reporting of social characteristics and problems, among other things). The fourth, and final, level in Suttles’ model is the “expanded community of limited liability”, which might consist of an entire area of a city, such as the East Side of Chicago.

We agree with Galster (2001) that the researcher should choose a different parsing of space depending on the attributes of interest. Our interests in the concept of “neighbourhood development”, which will be described later in this article, refers to the psychosocial development of the neighbourhood-as-a-whole. Although, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) identified “collective efficacy”, a neighbourhood-level attribute, in a large geographic area,<sup>5</sup> we attempt to view the process of development in a much smaller unit of analysis. Similar to what, Kearns and Parkinson (2001: 2103) call the “home area”—defined as an area of “5–10 minutes walk from one’s home”—and what Suttles referred to as “face-block” and “defended neighbourhood” we consider neighbourhood in its smallest, most intimate form. We define “neighbourhood” as the geographic area closest to one’s home where residents are most likely to meet face-to-face and share mutual public safety problems and concerns. In a city or town, a neighbourhood might be the block where one lives or a two-block area around one’s home. From this perspective, one way to identify a person’s neighbourhood is to ask him or her to think of people who live within close proximity who would be called together if a serious crime or social problem occurred close to home.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Neighbourhood as a Group*

Collective efficacy, in a general sense, is a shared property or attribute observed in the group-as-a-whole. In order to assert that group-level phenomena such as this occur in neighbourhoods, we must be able to argue that neighbourhoods *are* groups. For Cooley (1909), neighbourhoods are considered “primary groups” in that they are characterized by face-to-face interaction and cooperation. Both Cartwright and Zander (1968) and Lewin (1948) defined groups in terms of the interdependence of

its members. Homans' (1950) conception of a group acknowledges that there must be a sentiment common to all members. The core sentiment brings people together in some activity or for some purpose and involves a structure of interpersonal interaction. Merton (1957: 285–286) defined groups as having three criteria: frequency of interaction (in accord with established patterns); the interacting members define themselves as “members”; and the interacting members are defined by others as members. And, Deutsch (1949) defines a group as existing to the extent that the individuals composing it are pursuing common goals.

Following this line of thinking, we define a group—and by extension a neighbourhood—as having the following characteristics: interdependence among its members (in the sense that an event that happens to one member is likely to affect all members); frequency of contact such that patterns of interaction between members occur (including such behaviours as a wave, nod, small talk, etc.); a recognition by members and non-members regarding who belongs to the group/neighbourhood; and a common goal or goals (either explicit or implicit). We make note here, as does Sampson and Raudenbush (1999), of the *assumed* common goal of neighbourhood residents to live in safe environments free of crime and disorder.

### *The Changing Nature of Groups*

By extending our definition of groups to local neighbourhoods, one can begin to recognize the processes that affect a neighbourhood's development toward more mature levels of interaction and functioning. Just as individuals develop through predictable life stages from childhood to adulthood (Erickson, 1950), so too do groups pass through, regress to or get stuck in identifiable stages (e.g., Bennis & Shephard, 1956; Bion, 1959; Parsons, 1961; Tuckman, 1965; Wheelan, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 2000). What is common among the many perspectives of group change and development is that the group-as-a-whole has its own unique personality and characteristics at each identifiable stage. Moreover, these group qualities are different from the sum of the individual personalities and characteristics of its members.

Stages of group development are often viewed as being sequential such that they must pass through one or more preliminary stages before they can reach the more advanced stages. Although the group-level attribute is often considered a shared psychological state, it is the *behaviour* of the group members that is most easily observable. Consider, for example, an undergraduate sociology course that is designed to have students working together interdependently (i.e., sharing in the learning and teaching). During the first few classes the observable group-level property might be described as a psychological “dependence”. The observed behaviour includes students sitting quietly and attentively waiting for the teacher to tell them about the course objectives and assignments. Class members assume that the teacher is competent and will provide them with all they will need to know. Over time, students begin to realize that the teacher is not going to do all the work; they too must actively participate. The group-level property at this point in the semester might be described as “dissatisfaction” or “conflict”. The observable behaviours

would include student absences, complaints about the course and arguments (between and among students). This conflict arises because of the desire on the part of some, if not most, of the students to move back to the comfort of “dependence” on the teacher to do the work.

At this point in the developmental process, the group could either progress, regress or remain stuck in this stage marked by dissatisfaction and conflict. Moving out of this second stage toward a more mature stage of “interdependence”, the group-level property might be described as “resolution” and may involve observable behaviour such as the establishment of new norms and communicative processes between and among the teacher and students. By the end of the semester, if the group is working at its maximum potential, the students will be actively engaged in the process of learning together. The group-level property at this point might be described as “interdependence” and the observable behaviour would include the active sharing of insights and ideas between and among the students and the teacher. In this example, it is important to understand the role of the teacher in facilitating the successful development of the group. If during the conflict stage the teacher had decided to do more lecturing (i.e., more of the work), the group might have regressed backward toward the earlier stage of dependence or remained stuck in the conflict stage.

#### *Neighbourhood Development toward Collective Efficacy*

In the Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) study, the researchers identified a group-level property—collective efficacy—that had significant predictive value for crime and disorder. Assuming this is true, how can we apply our understanding of group development to the development of collective efficacy in neighbourhoods? Collective efficacy exists in relationship to a specific task such as, for our purpose, the maintenance of public order and community safety. We acknowledge that structural conditions, such as concentrated disadvantage and the mixing of both commercial and residential properties, work against the development of neighbourhood-level collective efficacy, but we believe that effective social processes can serve to mitigate the impact of these conditions so that the community can overcome them.

#### *The Developmental Sequence*

Our basic premise is that neighbourhood-level processes either move residents toward or away from high levels of collective efficacy. Like the teacher in the above example, the police play a vital role in this process. Police policies and practices can either help to facilitate neighbourhood development through the stages or they can cause the neighbourhood to regress or get stuck in early stages. The following is a description of the nature of neighbourhood development as it pertains to collective efficacy in the maintenance of order in public places.



*Stage 1: Dependence (on the Police)*

In the first stage of neighbourhood development, community members want the police to solve problems related to public order and the police are willing, and sometimes able, to do so. At this stage, the police are viewed as competent and respected by most residents. As long as the police are able to solve all the problems of community disorder, the community members will remain satisfied with their services and continue to depend on them. In this stage, the police may view the neighbourhood as unable or unwilling to care for itself. They see themselves as having a mandate to protect the community (as in Manning's view presented earlier). When the police are not able to meet the neighbourhood expectations, they move to the next stage of development.

*Stage 2: Conflict/Dissatisfaction (with the Police)*

In situations where the police are unable to "enforce away" community problems or to effectively keep the neighbourhood safe, residents become dissatisfied and frustrated. Residents still see the police as having the primary responsibility for maintaining order in the neighbourhood and keeping the residents safe, but they believe the police are just not doing a very good job. Individual residents might decide to take action on their own because the police are viewed as ineffective and the neighbourhood has yet to develop the structures, processes and trusting relationships that would inspire collective action. The dissatisfaction and frustration that exist in the community may result in complaints against the police. In defending themselves, the police may consider new and innovative programmes, such as high-visibility foot or bike patrols, in order to appease the residents and try to regain their confidence. At this point, the police may feel vulnerable; they are asked to meet unrealistic expectations with existing resources. In order to move out of Stage 2 in the desired direction toward interdependence (and collective efficacy), the police must give up the notion that they alone can protect the neighbourhood against public disorder. Both the police and the neighbourhood residents must come to recognize the importance of collective action and informal social controls in restoring and maintaining order in the neighbourhood before the neighbourhood can move toward Stage 3.

*Stage 3: Resolution*

Once the community and the police come to recognize their mutual responsibilities in restoring order and neighbourhood safety, members begin to develop the social networks and processes needed to make this happen. The police at this point may play a less prominent and less directive role in the maintenance of public order. As they continue to work together toward collective efficacy (in regards to the maintenance of order in public spaces), the police and neighbours will likely develop stronger and more trusting relationships.

*Stage 4: Interdependence (Collective Efficacy)*

In this final stage of development, strong, trusting community networks exist in order to maintain control over neighbourhood order and safety. The police work with the community as needed to deal with situations that are beyond the scope and capability of residents. Table 1 provides a description of this developmental process. Above the table, the arrows at both ends of the line indicate that the process is linear, but that it flows in both directions between stages 1 and 4. In theory, the stages of group development from 1 to 4 are sequential. However, a group (or neighbourhood) may skip steps when the development process is reversed—for example, it may go directly from stage 4 to stage 1 in times of crisis or when the membership changes. The table itself describes the roles, responsibilities and perceptions of the police, the community and social service providers at each stage of development.

In presenting this developmental model, we do not intend to imply that a neighbourhood must pass through all stages before it is able to achieve any level of collective efficacy or that it is exclusively in any one stage. Instead, this model should be viewed in terms of where the neighbourhood is expending *most* of its finite time and energy. For illustrative purposes, consider how four different neighbourhoods might respond to acts against the public order (e.g., children skipping school, children or adults littering or spray painting graffiti, groups of youths playing loud music or drinking alcohol in public places). Table 2 compares these neighbourhoods by the distribution of time spent in each of the developmental stages. In this example, residents in Neighbourhood A might spend 75 per cent of their collective time and energy dialing 911 for police action. This leaves them 10 per cent for complaining (formally or informally) about the ineffectiveness of the police, 5 per cent toward forming new community-based organizations or networks to deal with community disorder and 10 per cent for working together to actually resolve issues relating to community disorder. Although Neighbourhood A may report some level of interdependent effort toward reducing community disorder, it is clearly in Stage I—that is, very dependent on the police to solve its problems. Compare Neighbourhood A with Neighbourhood B that spends most of its time and energy in conflict with the police. Neighbourhood C devotes most of its effort to building new relationships with its members in order to deal with these issues of community disorder. Residents of Neighbourhood D spend the majority of their time and energy working together, interdependently, in order to keep their neighbourhood safe. The important point here is to recognize that in order to increase neighbourhood-level interdependence and collective efficacy (Stage 4), the time and energy expended on Stage 1 and 2 activities must decrease.

**Implications for Situational Policing***A Typology of Neighbourhoods*

Conceiving of disorder and neighbourhood development along horizontal and vertical axes gives rise to four neighbourhood types: Strong, Vulnerable, Anomic and

Table 1. Stages of neighbourhood development

Stage 1 DEPENDENCE	Stage 2 DISSATISFACTION Stage 1:DEPENDENCE (on police for social control)	Stage 2: DISSATISFACTION (with police)	Stage 3: RESOLUTION	Stage 4 INTERDEPENDENCE (collective efficacy)
Role of government/police	<b>To make communities safe by enforcing laws and delivering other needed law enforcement services.</b>	<b>To defend itself and/or offer creative solutions.</b> The inability of the police to meet community's (unrealistic) expectations (at realistic costs) causes dissatisfaction and frustration. Community blames ineffective police for problems. Police defend its actions, programmes; blames community for failure.	<b>To work with communities to identify mutual goals, then to define new roles, structures, relationships and processes for reaching these goals.</b> A renewed recognition of citizens' roles in creating safe communities.	<b>To participate with individuals, families and communities as equal partners in developing strategies that make communities safe.</b> Police viewed as a resource to help strengthen community.
Role of community	<b>Satisfied recipient of services.</b> Community willing to allow police to enforce laws in an effort to maintain public order.	<b>Disatisfied recipients of services.</b> Communities demand more and better law enforcement and social services. When government cannot meet the demand, communities become dissatisfied/angry/hostile/ and so on.	<b>To establish ongoing relationships with other community members and the police aimed at restoring and maintaining order and safety in the community.</b>	<b>To work with each other and the police in order to maintain order and safety in the community.</b>
Responsibility for public order	<b>Police</b>	<b>Individuals</b> —because police are unable to do it and the community is not mobilized. May view police intervention as insufficient or inappropriate.	<b>Community members working with each other and the police</b> building trusting relationships and working processes within that will create optimal levels of public order.	<b>Community members primarily</b> working together to maintain order and make community safe.
Social service delivery	Government delivers services to those in need. Community and government generally satisfied with this arrangement.	Government delivers services to <b>dissatisfied</b> individuals and families. The community perceives government as being insensitive to needs because of inefficient, ineffective service delivery.	Government and community building networks to coordinate service delivery in ways that are collaborative and empowering.	Communities utilize the unique skills, talents and abilities of its institutions and members. Government supports these efforts in ways that help the community to flourish.
Government's image of itself	<b>Loving parents.</b> Wants to protect and care for their children (community). Government as "expert".	<b>Authoritarian parent.</b> Wants to assist individuals in the community because they (government) know "what is best".	<b>Facilitator.</b> Assists community in designing structure to solve problems, build relationships, create desired future and so on.)	<b>Adult partner.</b> Participates with community members in planning and implementing strategies that keep the whole community safe.
Government's image of community	<b>Infant or young child.</b> Viewed as being unable or unwilling to care for self. "A place with problems.&rdquo	<b>Adolescent.</b> Views government's continued efforts to help as intrusive.	<b>Young adult.</b> Participates with government in designing structure to solve problems, build relationships, create desired future and so on.	<b>Mature adult.</b> Freely participates with government and other community members to make the whole community safe.

\*Adapted from Wheelan's (1994) integrated group development model.

**Table 2** Distribution of time spent in each of the stages (percentage)

	Stage 1: Dependence	Stage 2: Conflict	Stage 3: Resolution	Stage 4: Interdependence	Total time and energy
Neighbourhood A	75	10	5	10	100
Neighbourhood B	30	45	10	15	100
Neighbourhood C	25	15	50	10	100
Neighbourhood D	20	15	15	50	100

Responsive (see Figure 1). A Strong neighbourhood is one where crime is low and the neighbourhood members are either interacting interdependently on issues of community disorder or they are organizing themselves to do so (stage 3 or 4 on the developmental scale). Like Strong neighbourhoods, Vulnerable neighbourhoods have low levels of crime and disorder, but they are also low in terms of neighbourhood development. In these neighbourhoods, when a particular form of disorder emerges (graffiti, trash, loud music, barking dogs), residents depend on the police to deal with it. As long as the police have the resources and ability to solve these problems, neighbours will gladly turn over their responsibilities to them. However, as disorder and crime grow beyond the capacity of the police to deal effectively with them, neighbourhood residents can become dissatisfied with police services and conflict can develop. A Vulnerable neighbourhood is analogous to a person who is not yet sick, but who has a weak immune system. Anomic neighbourhoods are those that are high in crime and disorder and low in neighbourhood development. In these neighbourhoods, residents are typically both dependent on the police to take care of community safety problems and dissatisfied because of their lack of success. In Anomic neighbourhoods, the police are called on to respond to excessive numbers of neighbourhood complaints, far beyond their abilities to handle them successfully. Responsive neighbourhoods are those that are high in crime and disorder, but are working together with the police to resolve them. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the four neighbourhood types.

### *Situational Policing*<sup>7</sup>

The literature on policing styles generally refers to a standard mode of operation for a particular police agency (see, e.g., Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990; Oliver, 2001; Thurman et al., 2001). These policing styles reflect both the organizational culture and the trends of the times. For example, in recent years many police agencies have moved away from the professional, crime-fighting model of policing—where emphasis was placed on rapid response time, special investigations and arrests for serious crimes—to the community-policing model—where community involvement, problem solving and eliminating disorder are emphasized. It is our intention to advance the idea that policing styles should not be selected on the basis of a police

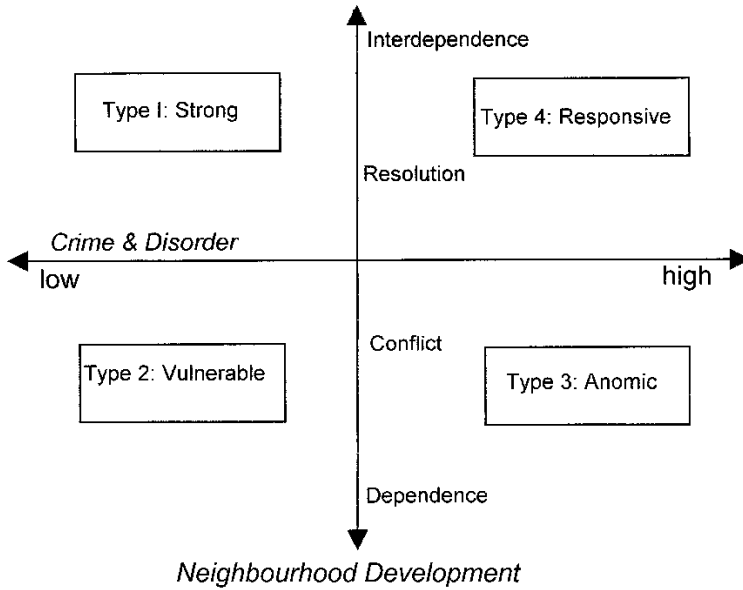


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Types

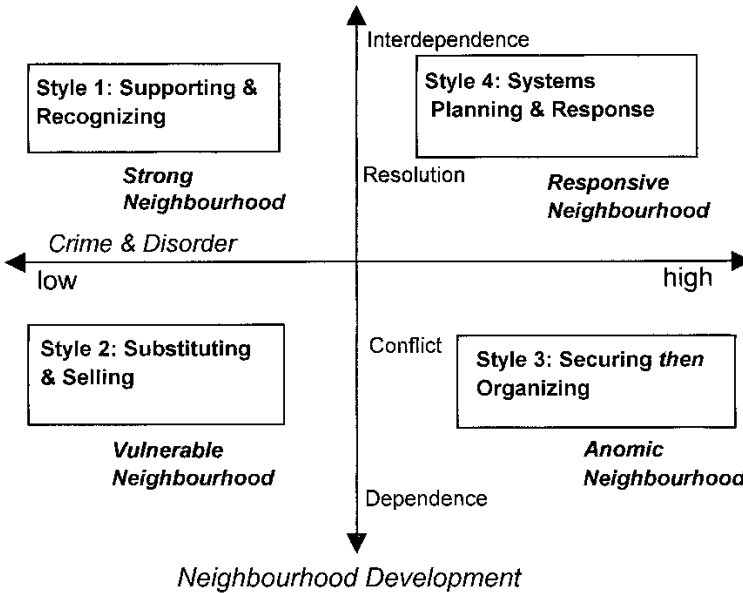


Figure 2: Policing Styles

organization's standard mode of operation, but should reflect the conditions of the neighbourhood. In this regard, we refer back to the four neighbourhood types and match these with four preferred policing styles: Supporting and Recognizing, Substi-

tuting and Selling, Securing then Organizing, and Systems Planning and Response (see Figure 2).

*Policing Style 1: Supporting and Recognizing (Strong Neighbourhoods)*

Residents of Strong neighbourhoods may not be concerned about crime and disorder because they do not exist to a degree that seems problematic. Police officers assigned to Strong neighbourhoods might offer police resources that support and enhance indigenous, community-based efforts to organize. They might also work to expand neighbourhood access to resources and decision making along with broadening the involvement of neighbourhood members. The police department might want to recognize individual community members or groups of members who have had particular successes.

*Policing Style 2: Substituting and Selling (Vulnerable Neighbourhoods)*

Just as in Strong neighbourhoods, crime and disorder are not serious problems for residents of Vulnerable neighbourhoods. This fact makes it difficult to motivate residents to organize around these issues. However, in Vulnerable neighbourhoods, residents might have different issues (other than crime) that they would be motivated to work on together. For example, several years ago the first author (Nolan) lived in a Vulnerable city neighbourhood. In this neighbourhood (a 16-square block area) there lived about sixty families with young children. In most of these families, child-care was a huge issue. Recognizing this, the community organized a babysitting cooperative where the families would take turns watching each other's children for points—4 points per hour. Each month the points were balanced and a report was given to each member. Through this cooperative arrangement, strong relationships were formed among neighbourhood residents. Over the years, when crime and disorder began to appear, the neighbourhood was well prepared to work with the police interdependently. Policing Vulnerable neighbourhoods involves a broadening of the definition of public safety to include other problems that do not normally fit into the public safety framework.

*Policing Style 3: Securing then Organizing (Anomic Neighbourhoods)*

In Anomic neighbourhoods, crime and disorder are rampant and the residents are disconnected, frustrated and fearful. Collectively, residents in Anomic neighbourhoods are dependent on the police to help them. The appropriate action on the part of the police as they begin their work in an Anomic neighbourhood is to help residents via more traditional means such as stepped-up law enforcement. Traditional law enforcement practices such as drug raids and sweeps, undercover operations and strict enforcement of relatively minor crimes are examples of some appropriate first steps in dealing with crime and disorder in Anomic neighbourhoods. Once police have demonstrated to residents that they are committed to

working together with them by temporarily resolving some of their most significant problems, the police must participate in organizational efforts. The police do not necessarily need to be the community organizers, but must make sure that community organizing is going on and support it. This is the only way for an Anomic Neighbourhood to become a Responsive one.

*Policing Style 4: Systems Planning and Response (Responsive Neighbourhoods)*

In Responsive neighbourhoods, residents are organizing and working to regain control of public spaces. However, many of the social problems that give rise to crime and disorder in these neighbourhoods lie far outside their ability to deal effectively with them. Most of these problems also extend outside the expertise and ability of the police department. Other resources must be brought to bear on the problems in the Responsive neighbourhoods—for instance, city and state public safety and social services, the public school system, local advocacy groups, urban planners (especially focused on economic development) and other neighbourhood-based services.<sup>8</sup> These groups must create a vision for change and develop a coordinated response to make it happen.

*Situational Policing in Motion*

It is our contention that effective policing involves both the reduction of crime and disorder *and* the successful facilitation of neighbourhood development. In other words, the primary goal for the police is to move the neighbourhood along two dimensions: toward low levels of crime disorder and toward high levels of collective efficacy. In order to reach this goal, police officers and administrators might find it useful to view their work as a process that must be facilitated rather than simply a task to be accomplished. What we mean is that the neighbourhood conditions and characteristics described in this article are not static, but are constantly in motion. The movement occurs both in terms of neighbourhood crime and disorder and in terms of neighbourhood development. Therefore, matching the policing style to the neighbourhood type is only the starting point in the process. From this point, the police must find the appropriate methods for moving the neighbourhood in the right direction toward the desired end goal—a Strong neighbourhood.

In order to illustrate, let us consider the Anomic neighbourhood as our starting point. Along the right side of Figure 3 are policing strategies designed to move neighbourhoods toward the Responsive then to the Strong quadrants. If crime is high and the citizens are dependent (Stage 1), a professional service-oriented approach is both a logical and preferred first step. By responding to citizen complaints as law enforcers, the police can begin to deal with the neighbourhood crime problems while meeting the psychological needs and expectations of the dependant neighbourhood. The dotted line at the bottom of Figure 3 indicates the direction police usually want to go based on the utopian assumption that given more resources or more efficient responses to calls for service, they could reduce crime

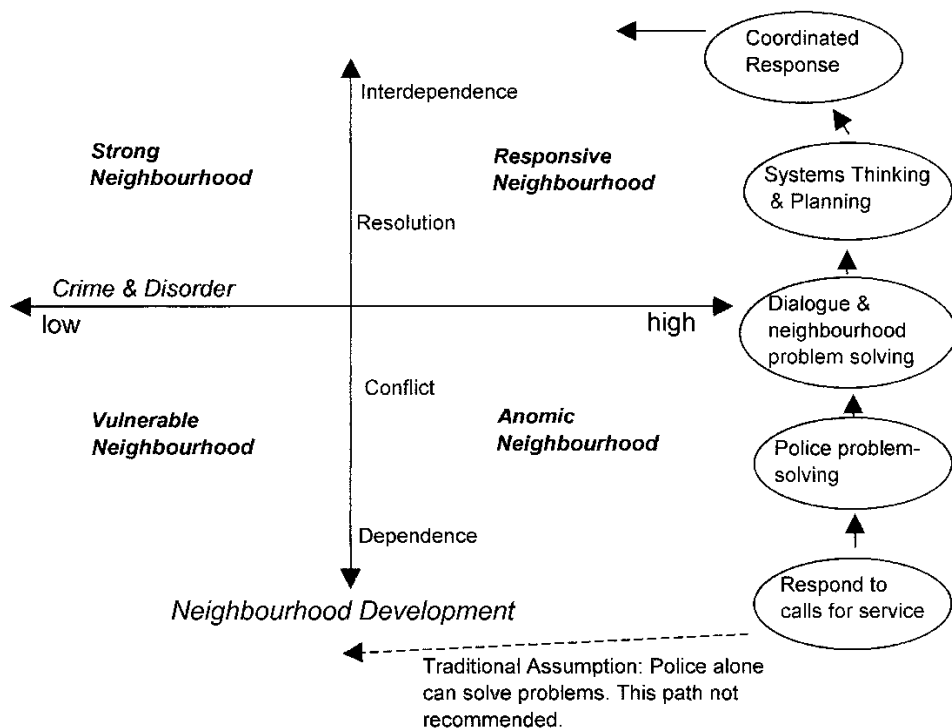


Figure 3: Situational Policing in Motion

without collective effort. As Manning (1978) suggests, this assumption has proven over the years to be fiction because the police do not have the resources needed to eliminate crime and disorder through more and better services. We can also see that even if this were possible in some circumstances, it would not be desirable because it would keep the neighbourhood psychologically dependent.

After an initial stage of stepped-up law enforcement, a second wave of activity might include problem solving as described by Goldstein (1990). Problem-oriented policing (POP) has proven effective over the years in identifying and eliminating the underlying causes of many of the calls for service. At first, the police might do problem solving on their own (i.e., without the participation of residents), but, at some point, the police must establish a dialogue with resident groups with the goal of strengthening relationships. Community-based, collaborative problem solving is a strategy that would connect the police with the community on projects of common interest. As relationships build and the dialogue develops and deepens, the police and the citizens must reach a shared realization that the police alone are incapable of fixing neighbourhood problems and keeping residents safe. With this common understanding, activities may begin to take place that move the neighbourhood toward the Responsive quadrant where residents are ready to organize for systems thinking and planning around crime, disorder and related issues. There have been a number of very successful methods developed in recent years for this level of



planning and coordinated action (see Weisbord, 1987, 1992; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995; Emery & Purser, 1996 for details). These methods could very easily be adapted to neighbourhood-level efforts aimed at restoring order. Through comprehensive, system-level planning and action, the goal of both reducing crime and disorder while forming interdependent neighbourhood relationships can be accomplished. The situational policing process is depicted in Figure 3.

### Summary and Conclusions

Although neighbourhood disorder is associated with crime, its causal relationship has been challenged. For the past twenty years or more, policing practices have been based on the belief that neighbourhood disorder *causes* serious crime. Therefore, contemporary policing strategies, such as zero-tolerance campaigns to rid neighbourhoods of visible signs of disorder, have been implemented. However, in recent years the rationale behind the “order maintenance” policing has been challenged. Recent studies show that “collective efficacy” (i.e., the neighbourhood’s ability to maintain order in public spaces) is a significant predictor of both crime *and* disorder. Although there are structural constraints to the development of collective efficacy, the police can facilitate a social process that mitigates the effects of these constraints and begins to enable the community to overcome them. By applying knowledge of group and social processes to local neighbourhoods, we argue that police *efficiency* in solving problems of community disorder may unintentionally and unwittingly contribute to the maintenance of low levels of collective efficacy at the neighbourhood level. However, we can also see how the police play a significant role in promoting collective efficacy. The model presented in this article should be viewed as a guide for the police. It bridges the philosophical gap between traditional law enforcement and community policing by identifying situations where each style is appropriate. Most importantly, the situational policing model provides a desired “end state” at which police departments can aim and against which competing strategies can be evaluated.

### Notes

- [1] By causes of crime in neighbourhoods, we take Sampson and Raudenbush’s view of neighbourhoods as “units of control” over public spaces as opposed to the “production of offenders”.
- [2] Throughout this article we discuss the role of the police in combating crime and disorder. Our thesis pertains to the order-maintenance function of the police rather than their investigative, legal and scientific functions relative to the arrest and prosecution of individuals who violate criminal laws.
- [3] As Sampson and Raudenbush describe collective efficacy, it does not require personal friendship or kinship ties, but rather shared expectations for action in the public sphere.
- [4] On average, there were 120 face blocks per census tract in this study. A face block is defined as “the block segment on one side of the street” (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999: 616).
- [5] The area used in the Sampson and Raudenbush study was probably at Suttles’ Level 3, a “community of limited liability”.

- [6] We acknowledge that in order to subject our thesis to empirical study, it will probably be necessary to define a small geographic area for which police and other social data are available.
- [7] The idea of situational policing comes partly from the literature on situational leadership—see Hershey and Blanchard (1982) as an example.
- [8] Nolan and Nuttall (1994) describe a process that was employed in a Weed & Seed (community policing) site in Wilmington, Delaware that involved the formation of a task force of city department heads that met monthly to coordinate efforts and resources on complex problems that cut across agency lines.

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