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HUNGARIAN APPROACH TO COMMUNITY POLICING

Introduction:

For over twenty years, the *Broken Windows Theory* – that neighborhood disorder leads to serious violent crime – has influenced policing¹. Many authorities believed that physical and social disorder serve as predictors of violent crime. To this end, practices, such as zero-tolerance and order maintenance policing, have become popular. More recently, researchers have raised important questions about any causal link between disorder and crime because they say the two are, essentially, the same thing. In other words, disorder is crime – they just differ in seriousness.

Police is one of the most conservative organization. Law enforcement agencies, as administrative organizations are basically interested in stabilization and not willing to serve changes. The newest challenges of the global *security-climate change* in the twenty-first century enhanced the importance of the more community oriented policing techniques, methods and forces. This new approach requires definitely proactive paradigm from police bodies that also makes contradiction in their activities, simply because policing itself is always conflicting. Some globally impacting phenomenon like terrorism changed the focus on public security.

Collective efficacy:

While examining different groups of people there had been distinguished three main stages of group development as follows:

¹ J. Q. Wilson and G. L. Kelling, „Broken Windows: Police and Neighborhood Safety” The Atlantic Monthly 249 (1982): 29-38

1. Dependence: The group depends on the leader for direction and the members share the assumption that the individual is competent and able to provide effective leadership.
2. Conflict: The group experiences conflict that, likely, occurs over incongruent assumptions about its goals, the roles of the members, or whether the leader can meet the unrealistic expectations of the membership.
3. Interdependence: The group successfully has resolved its conflicts and members work together interdependently toward their agreed-upon goals.

A consideration of how this developmental sequence might play out in a community dealing with crime and/or disorder can make this concept clearer.

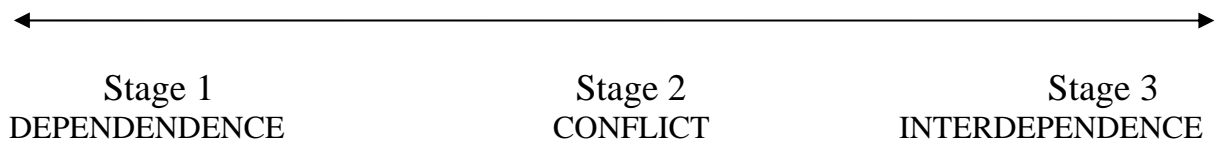
1. Dependence as the first stage means when community members depend on the police to solve problems related to public order, and officers are willing and sometimes able to do so. Most residents view officers as competent and respect them. As long as the police can address most of the problems of community disorder, people will remain satisfied with their services and continue to depend on them. **Officers may view the residents as unable or unwilling to care for itself. They may see themselves as having mandate to protect the community.** If police cannot meet the people's expectations, the community moves to the next stage of development.
2. Conflict as the second stage is the situation where police cannot address community problems or keep the situation safe, residents become dissatisfied and frustrated – both with the authorities and with each other. They still see officers having the primary responsibility for maintaining order in the neighborhood and keeping them safe, but they consider the police ineffective. **Individual residents may decide to act on their own because of negative view of officers and recognition that the community has yet to develop the structures, processes, and trusting relationships that would inspire collective action.** The dissatisfaction and frustration that exist in complaints

against the police. In defending themselves, officers may consider additional programs, such as high-visibility foot or bicycle patrols, trying to appease their confidence. At this point, police may feel vulnerable because they face unrealistic expectations with limited resources. To move out of stage two and toward stage three, interdependence (i.e., collective efficacy), police officers must give up the notion that they alone can protect the community against public order. Both the police and the residents must recognize the importance of collective action and informal controls in restoring and maintaining order in the community before the community can move toward stage three. Promises by the police that they will work harder or deploy more policemen to the location serves only to move the community back to stage one (dependence).

3. Interdependence can be real when once the community and the police come to recognize their mutual responsibilities in restoring order and neighborhood safety; development of the social networks and processes needed to make this happen begins. At this point, police may play a less prominent and less directive role in the maintenance of public order. As they continue to work together interdependently, police and residents likely will develop stronger and more trusting relationships. In this final stage of community development, solid community networks exist to ensure order and safety. Police work with the community as needed to deal with situations beyond the scope and capability of the residents.

This approach automatically leads to the consequence that effective policing involves not only reducing crime and disorder but facilitating community development. **Matching the policing style to the community type represents only the first step in the process.** From this point, police must find the appropriate methods for moving the community in the right direction, toward the desired end goal – strong neighborhood.

Figure 1. Stages of Community Development



Stage 1) Dependence – Residents rely on the police to solve problems of public order,

Stage 2) Conflict – Residents are in conflict with the police because they perceive them as ineffective in maintaining public order.

Stage 3) Interdependence – Residents rely on each other to ensure enforcement of community values/norms/laws.

Types of communities:

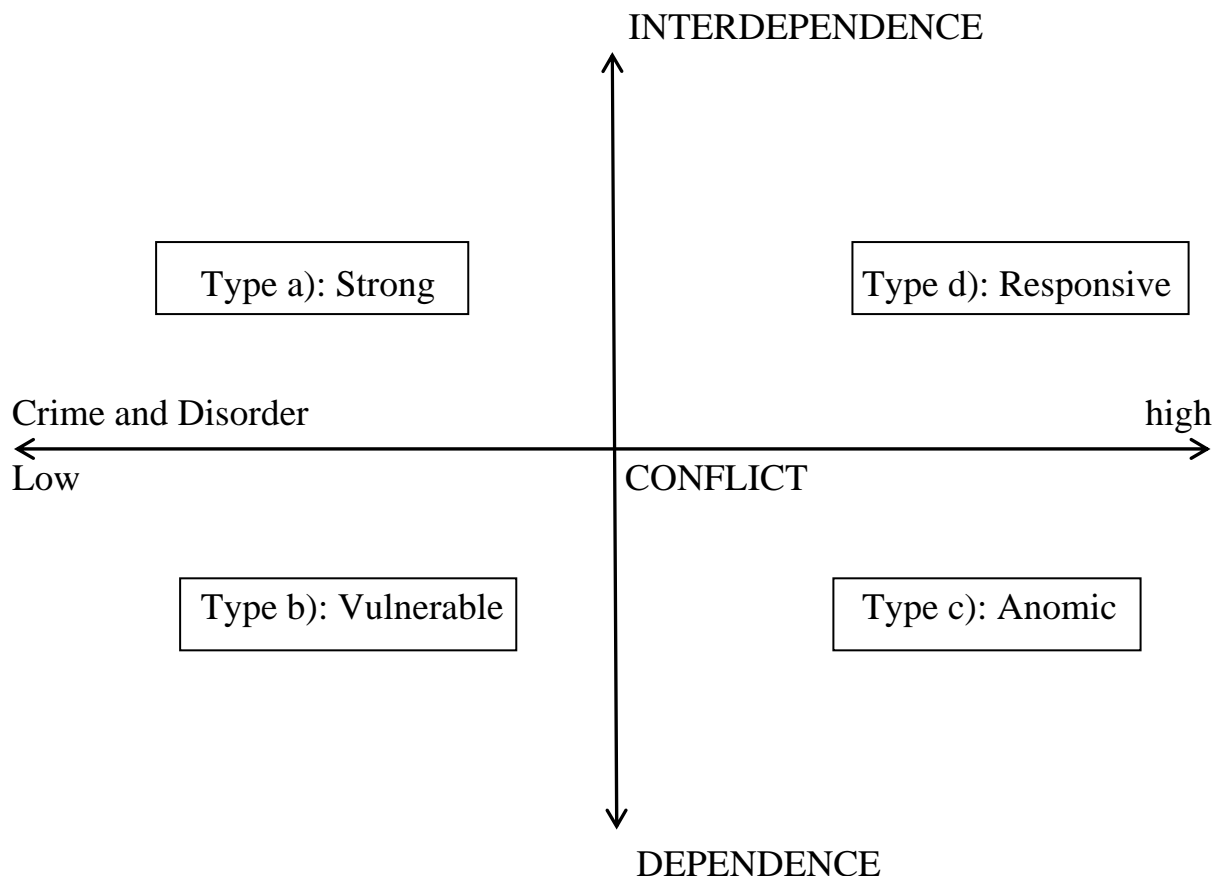
Obviously, neighborhoods will differ in their ability to move along the group development stages. Some are stronger than others and have more resources or capacities to help them evolve. This realization leads to four types of neighborhoods.

- a) Strong: These communities experience low levels of crime and have residents that interact interdependently (or are organizing themselves to do so) on issues of community disorder.
- b) Vulnerable: Similarly vulnerable neighborhoods have low rates of crime and disorder, but they also feature minimal levels of neighborhood development. When a particular form of disorder (for example: graffiti, trash, loud music, or barking dogs) emerges, residents depend on police to deal with it. As long as police can solve these problems, neighbors gladly will turn over their responsibilities to them. However, as disorder and crime grow beyond the capacity of police to deal effectively with them, residents can become dissatisfied with police services, and conflict

can develop. A vulnerable neighborhood is comparable to a person who, although not yet sick, has a weak immune system, and therefore a high susceptibility to illness.

- c) Anomic: These communities have a high rate of crime and disorder and low level of neighborhood development. Residents typically are both dependent on police to take care of community safety problems and dissatisfied because of their lack of success. Police respond to excessive numbers of neighborhood complaints far beyond their ability to handle them successfully, resulting in tension and frustration between police and the community.
- d) Responsive: These neighborhoods experience high levels of crime and disorder, but residents work together with the police to resolve problems.

Figure 2. Neighborhood Types



How to police in different type of communities:

Each and every type of communities requires different approach from the police. Strong neighborhoods need supporting and recognizing policing style. Residents of strong neighborhoods may not have concern about crime and disorder because they experience few such problems. As it is illustrated on figure 2, this type of communities has a strong interdependence and face low level of crime and disorder. Police assigned to these communities might offer police resources that support and enhance local, community based efforts. They also may work to expand neighborhood access to resources and decision-making processes and broaden the involvement of residents. The police department might want to recognize community members or groups who have had particular successes. Strong neighborhoods generally demand and need the least amount of police services.

In vulnerable neighborhoods, crime and disorder do not represent serious problems for residents. This fact makes it difficult to motivate neighbors to organize around these issues. However residents may have concerns other than crime that they would want to work together. In many vulnerable neighborhoods, the police simply might help to develop a crime watch or other residential crime prevention group that also may become involved with addressing other nonpublic safety problems. Policing vulnerable communities involves broadening the definition of public safety to include other concerns that normally do not fit into its framework.

Anomic neighborhoods have widespread crime and disorder as well as disconnected, frustrated and fearful residents, who depend on the police for help. As police begin work in an anomic community, officers should help via more traditional means, such as stepped-up law enforcement². Once police have demonstrated to residents their commitment to working together with them by temporarily resolving some of their most significant problems, officers must participate in organizational efforts. Police do not necessarily have to serve as community organizers, but they must make sure that organizational

² Traditional law enforcement practices: e. g. drug raids and sweeps, undercover operations, and strict enforcement of relatively minor crimes

efforts are going on and support them. This is the only way for an anomic neighborhood to become a responsive one.

The residents of the responsive communities organize and work to regain control of public spaces. However, many of the social problems that give rise to crime and disorder in these neighborhoods lie far beyond their ability to deal effectively with them. Most of these issues also extend outside the expertise and resources of the police department. Other means³ become necessary to deal with the problems in these communities. Change requires a vision and a coordinated response. Police in these neighborhoods can help bring together local residents with other public service agencies.

After police identified the type of the community, they must find the appropriate methods for moving the community in the right direction, toward the desired and goal – a strong neighborhood. If crime is high and the citizens are dependent, police should use professional, service oriented approach as the logical and preferred first step. By responding to citizens complaints as law enforcers, police can begin to deal with the neighborhood crime problems and demonstrate to residents that their problems can be impacted. Nevertheless, police usually want to follow based on the utopian idea that, given increased resources or more efficient responses to calls for service, they could reduce crime without collective efforts. This assumption has proven fictional over the years because department do not have the resources needed to eliminate crime and disorder through more or better services. Even if some circumstances allowed this possibility, it would serve only to keep the neighborhood psychologically dependent.

After an initial stage of stepped-up law enforcement, a second wave of activity might include problem solving. Problem oriented policing 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, without the participation of residents. But, at some point fairly early in the process, officers must

³ Like: city and state public services, the public school system, local advocacy groups, urban planners, especially those focused on economic development, and other community services

establish dialogue with residents to include them as problem-solving partners.

As relationships build and communication develops and deepens, police and citizens must reach a shared realization that police officers alone cannot fix neighborhood problems and keep residents safe. With this common understanding, activities may begin to take place that move the neighborhood toward the responsive type, where residents are ready to organize for systems thinking and planning around crime, disorder, and related issues. Through comprehensive, system-level planning and action, the goals of reducing crime and disorder while forming interdependent neighborhood relationship can be accomplished.

A Hungarian experience:

As it is noted above modern policing is a literary challenging process with lots of unusual roles for law enforcement agencies, those can be played hardly. One methodology had been adopted and customized in the recent years in Hungary called: “Preferred futuring” originated by Lawrence L. Lippit⁴. The methods had been worked out in a background institute of the Ministry of Interior: Crime Prevention Academy (further as: Academy). The Academy was established in 2004 according to the new philosophy of the Hungarian National Crime Prevention Strategy⁵. Regarding to the Strategy’s new paradigms, the public security and safety should be implemented on the cooperation of all related and potential actors of the communities, so one of the tasks of the Academy was to assist the development of communities on this specific matter. For that reason the Academy became not only a regular training institute but a multidisciplinary centre on the field of crime prevention.

Using modern methods from the education sphere and the main principals of informal and non-formal learning, *training* proved to be a good way to make instigations.

⁴ Lawrence L. Lippitt: Preferred Futuring, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1998

⁵ Parliamentary Resolution [no. 115/2003. (X. 28.)] had been adopted in Hungary namely: The National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention (Strategy)

In the Academy's consideration 'preferred futuring' was a short-term (4-5 days) training with the aim to:

- make trainees know about the different aspects (theoretical, legal, international, vocational) of crime prevention and public safety;
- make community members know about policing,
- make the police know about their communities,
- define the roles of the organizations and individuals,
- strategize the local crime prevention plan.

The targeted group contained representatives (mostly practitioners) from the local police, municipality council, local authorities, NGO's, local media, schools, prosecution, penitentiary institutes, medical centers, security associations, business ventures, private companies. Beside the goals of the training as mentioned above there had been another essentially important expected result of these courses: that was improving the self-knowledge of each participating organization including police. Since, police (and possibly other organs in the communities) are usually *running after* the specific cases it is often experienced phenomenon that any development of them is being very difficult. The self-analyses that are provided during the training can be implemented in a multidisciplinary environment and is a multi faceted reflection process.