

Proactive Policing as a Strategy to Prevent Youth Brawls

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Abstract

Cases of brawls between groups of teenagers are not a new phenomenon in the midst of social life. Actions of brawls carried out by groups of delinquent youth continued to flourish and also resulted in injuries and even fatalities. Technological developments also affect the method of carrying out brawls. Groups of teenagers use social media accounts to challenge each other to take brawls at locations that are also determined through social media messages. The timing of brawls is also not only carried out during the day but also at night and early in the morning as in several examples of brawl cases that occurred in 2023. This can disrupt security and public order in the community. Prevention strategies using the Proactive Policing method need to be carried out to prevent brawls from occurring. The Proactive Policing strategy in this case is carried out by forming a joint patrol team to carry out systematic patrol activities in the community and also cyber patrols to monitor social media accounts that have indications of provoking brawls.

Keywords: *Delinquency, juvenile brawl, policing, prevention*

Introduction

Adolescence is a very dynamic phase of life between childhood and young adulthood. Adolescence is a time when a person experiences significant changes in terms of physical and emotional growth (Boyden et.al., 2019). In adolescence, the process of forming values, attitudes, and behaviors occurs and determines how this phase of a person's life develops as they grow older. When going through adolescence, a teenager will explore themselves by doing various things to be able to form the expected self-identity such as joining a peer group. Through peer groups, adolescents are also able to perform various actions, including risky actions. It can be said that adolescents are more likely to perform risky actions than children and adults (Steinberg in Albert et.al., 2013).

The influence of peer groups is quite significant in every adolescent behavior both positive and negative such as delinquent behavior. One of the strongest predictors of delinquent behavior carried out in adolescence is association with the delinquent peer group (Albert et.al., 2013). According to Zimring (in Albert et.al., 2013), adolescents tend to commit delinquent

acts in peer groups. In line with this, based on data collected by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), there are 2,883 children facing the law, including cases of mobbing and brawls between students (Validnews, 2022). Based on this data, as of September 2022, there are 131 children facing the law. Cases of brawls between students are increasingly rife and even more alarming after school activities have resumed offline with the death toll. As in the case of a student brawl that occurred in Kotamobagu, North Sulawesi in June 2022, a child died after being beaten by nine of his schoolmates. Likewise with cases of brawls between students who use sharp weapons. There is a case of a brawl in the Cengkareng area, West Jakarta carried out by a group of students using sharp weapons such as two clurits secured by the police (detiknews, 2023).

The development of technology also affects the factors that result in brawls carried out between groups of adolescents. In three cases of brawls between groups of teenagers that occurred in Tangerang City, Depok City, Bogor City, there were a total of 40 children who faced the law secured by the police (Kompas, 2023). Based on the

three brawl cases, the initial cause of the brawl was because the groups of teenagers challenged each other on *Instagram* social media where the student group accounts broadcast live on *Instagram* accounts and challenged other groups of teenagers to duels with sharp weapons. After exchanging messages on *Instagram*, the group of teenagers met in person at the promised place and staged a brawl at that location.

Brawls that occur in addition to harming the teenagers involved because they damage their own adolescence as a result of facing the law can also cause damage to the surrounding environment and spread unrest among residents around the location of the brawl. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a strategy to prevent brawls between groups of teenagers by the police as community protectors.

Situational crime prevention theory is defined as "*comprising measures directed at highly specific forms of crime that involve the management, design, or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent a way as possible so as to reduce the opportunities for crime and increase its risks as perceived by a wide range of offenders*"

Situational crime prevention (SCP) is a theory developed by Ronald Clarke in 1983 consisting of actions involving systematic management, design, or manipulation of the surrounding environment aimed at reducing the opportunity to commit crimes for specific categories of crime by increasing the risk and difficulty of committing crimes (Clarke, 1995).

In its development, SCP was strengthened by several theories including *Routine Activity Theory* initiated by Cohen and Felson (1979). *Routine Activity Theory* focuses on patterns that allow crime to occur based on external factors (Mohammad et.al., 2020). The definition of *Routine Activity Theory* is also put forward by Ashworth and Zedner (2014), namely crime prevention as a significant reduction of dangerous potential perpetrators or reduction of potentially dangerous behavior into tolerable levels (Vestby, 2023).

According to this theory, potential criminals can realize their intention to commit crimes based on three mutually sustaining elements: the absence of guardian care, appropriate targets, and motivated offenders. These three elements are also referred to as the *crime*

triangle. In order for a potential perpetrator to be compelled to commit a crime, a situation that does not have guards that can prevent the crime from occurring and someone or something who can become a potential victim are both things that can influence.

According to Cohen and Felson (1979), the element of absence of guardian care has a relationship with crime control through routine activities. If the element of control through routine activities is reduced, then the possibility of potential perpetrators to realize crime will increase. The motivated perpetrator element is related to the occurrence of a crime, potential perpetrators have criminal tendencies and the ability to make it happen. While the potential target element not only talks about routine activities that can inflict potential victims on the perpetrator, it can also generate space for potential perpetrators to commit crimes or protect others who commit crimes.

In this paper, the focus of discussion is related to preventing brawl cases between groups of adolescents involving elements of protection in the environment both vulnerable and not vulnerable from juvenile brawls by law

enforcement officials, which in this case is the police.

In situational crime prevention, there are seven dimensions of distance proposed by Brantingham (in Felson, 2018), namely: (1) site level that includes one room or one property; (2) place level refers to a group of properties within one small area; (3) zone level refers to entertainment zones or residential and business neighborhoods; (4) the metro level covers the metropolitan city area; (5) corporate level refers to a broader multi-site corporation; (6) a national level covering a single country; and (7) international level which includes levels between countries.

In dealing with situational crime prevention, policing methods are carried out as one of the ways to prevent future crime events and chaos. *Proactive policing* according to Weisbord et.al (2019) is a policing method consisting of strategies aimed at the prevention and reduction of crime and disorder that includes an emphasis on prevention, mobilizing resources based on police initiatives, and targeting broader basic forces in places that are likely to encourage crime and disorder (Vestby, 2023).

What distinguishes *proactive policing* from standard policing methods is that in standard policing, there is an emphasis on reactive action against certain crime events and disturbances after they occur and mobilizing police resources based on requests coming from outside the police. While in *proactive policing*, police institutions can determine their methods and objectives in preventing crime and disturbance.

Based on the discussion of the definitions above, *proactive policing* is used as a method to prevent youth brawls before they occur and cause damage to facilities and settlements and casualties that arise.

Method

The author uses the literature review method in explaining *proactive policing* as a strategy to prevent brawls between groups of adolescents using reference materials and literature that has been collected.

Discussion

Brawls between groups of teenagers are not a new phenomenon and continue to occur every year. Conflict between two or more groups of adolescents involving violence when viewed from the perspective of *Routine*

Activity Theory, there are elements of cause that are interrelated.

In the absence of guardian care, the role of parents is always important in every type of delinquency case, including brawl cases. Parents as *handlers* should supervise their children's activities outside of school hours. In fact, the role of parents as *handlers* in this case can prevent children from doing brawls when the child already has the intention to do so. Parents have a big role in supervising children's activities on social media and when children carry out activities outside school hours (timesindonesia, 2023). Proper care and parenting by parents will reduce the gap in opportunities for children to carry out brawl actions in places and times that are in accordance with the intended target to be opponents of the brawl action. This is in line with what Cohen and Felson (1979) argued about the role of *handlers*, namely as controllers of potential actors, managers of arrangements, and guards of potential targets.

In addition to parents, the role of teachers and the surrounding community also has an influence in preventing brawls between groups of teenagers. The role of teachers in this case is emphasized on supervision during

teaching and learning activities and monitoring the association of students while they are at school. Meanwhile, the surrounding community has a role in monitoring the environment where they live from inside their respective homes, especially if in the neighborhood there is a certain location where teenagers are possible to gather. Similarly, the police also have a role in monitoring the environment from the outside.

However, the role of parents as *handlers* still has the largest portion because many of the brawls that occur are carried out at night and even early in the morning where at these times children should be at home with the supervision of their respective parents. As in the eight brawl cases in the DKI Jakarta and Tangerang areas reported in March 2023, including two cases reported after the action occurred and six cases prevented by the police (medcom, 2023). The perpetrators involved in the brawl were mostly child perpetrators. The eight cases all occurred in the evening and early morning during Ramadan. The absence of care from the parents of child perpetrators at that time became one of the factors causing the opening of opportunities for potential perpetrators to carry out brawls by

allowing them to gather with friends at times that should be night rest and family gatherings at home.

In the element of motivated potential actors, in the context of brawls between groups of adolescents is closely related to relationships within peer groups. According to Jacobs and Wright (in Mohammad et.al., 2020), motivation is described as a phenomenon where the decision to commit a crime is activated. Motivation itself is situational which means that the potential perpetrator is motivated to commit a crime because of the situation that supports the potential perpetrator to do it. The tendency to commit criminal acts or disorder stems from situational stimuli such as pressure or exposure. When associated with brawl cases between groups of adolescents, potential perpetrators become motivated due to exposure to pressure from peers in their peer group. Colleagues in deviant peer groups will provide stimuli that tend to deviate as well. Vice versa, adolescents who belong to peer groups that are not deviant will also get non-deviant stimulus. In line with what Baerveldt explained (in Mohammad et.al., 2020) regarding the value of friendship, when a teenager gets the emotional bond he wants through friendship with a

deviant peer group, the teenager will try to do anything to maintain his place in the group and get validation from his group mates. Validation or recognition from his peers is a reward received even though what he does with his peer group is not acceptable in society.

This can all be reflected in the examples of brawl cases that have been described before, which are all actions carried out in groups between teenagers. Therefore, if the prevention strategy against brawls is successful, it will be able to reduce the gap of opportunity for motivated potential actors to seek the rewards they expect from their social circle by carrying out brawls or other delinquent actions.

Meanwhile, for the element of potential targets, according to Cohen and Felson (1979), motivated actors and potential targets can only meet if there is a lifestyle that brings the two together (Mohammad et.al., 2020). Changes to facilities and technology make it possible to create various illegal activities. For example, several brawl cases occurred in early 2023 where the groups involved used *Instagram* as a medium for them to find potential targets and locations to launch planned brawls. In addition, changes to routine activities create

opportunities that allow potential actors and potential targets to meet. If these routine activities arise due to lack of supervision and guardian care, the greater the potential for a teenager to spend his time unsupervised to meet with deviant peer groups. Like when a group of teenagers gather in a certain location that lacks supervision and is far from the supervision of their respective parents, it will create opportunities for the group of teenagers to carry out delinquent actions such as brawls against other groups of teenagers. Such unsupervised activities will provoke potential targets for motivated actors.

In the context of preventing brawls between groups of adolescents using the *proactive policing method*, preventive strategies must be applied because the main orientation of this strategy is preventive measures for brawls long before the action breaks out. This strategy has begun to be realized by the National Police Security Maintenance Agency (Baharkam), which in June 2023 has just launched the Precision Pioneer Patrol program. Initially, this program was only applied to the working area of the Metro Jaya Regional Police before it began to be applied to the working area

of each Polda throughout Indonesia (detiknews, 2023).

This program itself is an active crime prevention carried out by the police by making recoveries that can minimize the factors of crime in the community, especially street crime (Kompas, 2023). Through a concept that is compiled thoroughly, the police as law enforcement officers carry out patrol strategies to prevent various disturbances of order and security, such as wild racing actions by motorcycle gangs and brawls between groups of teenagers.

The concept of this patrol program is prepared with a clear road map with measurable indicators and objectives so that the patrol team that goes into the field remains in one command and does not cause confusion in the community (Kompas, 2023). In addition to patrolling with the team, cooperation with the surrounding community is necessary so that both the Precision Pioneer Patrol team and the community in the environment around the patrol can supervise each other's environment.

With good monitoring of the environment through patrol activities, it is hoped that areas in the patrol

environment that initially lacked police guard and community supervision become areas that get full monitoring so that there is no gap in opportunities for motivated perpetrators to carry out brawls because the environment is fully protected by the patrol team and eliminates the presence of potential targets. What's more, this patrol program is carried out with complete vehicles and equipment such as helmet cameras, iron rods, to alcohol and narcotics content test kits.

The patrol program that was implemented also chose the time of patrol implementation which became a time prone to brawls, namely from 10 pm to 5 am. With the preparation and implementation of such a patrol program, it is hoped that motivated potential actors will increasingly discourage their intention to carry out brawl actions because each environment receives full supervision and it is not possible for deviant peer groups to gather and launch brawl actions. This is also in line with the crime prevention strategy through *Routine Activity Theory* by emphasizing the element of guardian guarding. When this element is fulfilled properly, potential actors are motivated and potential targets will not meet and

brawls can be prevented before they occur.

In addition to patrolling directly in the community, cyber patrols also need to be carried out to prevent potential actors from being motivated to provoke that lead to brawls. As in the eight brawl cases in the DKI Jakarta and Tangerang areas detected and secured by the police in early 2023, they have a similar and patterned initial method, namely challenging each other on social media such as *Instagram* through the accounts of each group of teenagers and then promising to meet at the specified location to launch the action. Supervision carried out both in the community and cyberspace will further narrow the space for motivated potential actors to look for suitable potential targets.

Reflection

The case of brawls between groups of teenagers is one of the delinquent actions that still continues to occur and causes injuries and fatalities every year. The method of action has also developed following the development of current technology, namely the action of challenging each other on social media to carry out direct brawl actions. The strategy of preventing crime against brawls can be done with the *Proactive*

Policing method, namely by carrying out patrol programs by the police as law enforcement officers both in the community and cyberspace. It is hoped that this strategy can close the gap of opportunity for potential actors to be motivated to find suitable potential targets because the space for them to move has been monitored by the police who also work with the surrounding community.

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