



Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order And Reducing Crime In Our Communities

By George L. Kelling, Catherine M. Coles

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Based on a groundbreaking theory of crime prevention, this practical and empowering book shows how citizens, business owners, and police can work together to ensure the safety of their communities. George Kelling, one of America's leading criminologists, has proven the success of his method across the country, from the New York City subways to the public parks of Seattle. Here, Kelling and urban anthropologist and lawyer Catherine Coles demonstrate that by controlling disorderly behavior in public spaces, we can create an environment where serious crime cannot flourish, and they explain how to adapt these effective methods for use in our own homes and communities.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Broken windows breed disorder. So said George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson in a groundbreaking article for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1982. Now Kelling returns with Catherine M. Coles to call community policing and the aggressive protection of public spaces the best crime-control options available. Three-strikes-and-you're-out is fine as far as it goes, say the authors, but it focuses on punishment rather than prevention. Kelling and Coles make sensible suggestions for restoring law and order to the places where they no longer seem to exist. Their argument is aided immensely by real-life examples of how their "broken windows" strategy has reduced crime where it's been tried.

From Publishers Weekly

This book offers a dry but convincing argument for community policing and other approaches to civic order that pay attention to small incivilities like aggressive panhandling and fare-beating. The book's title derives from an influential 1982 *Atlantic Monthly* article by criminologist Kelling and James Q. Wilson, which argued that obvious neighborhood decay—like unattended broken windows—furthered criminal behavior. The authors cite several factors—including the rise of individualism, the decriminalization of drunkenness and the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill—that contribute to public disorder. Many of the homeless, they note, are not merely down on their luck but suffer serious behavioral problems. They explain how civic reforms during the 1950s that professionalized police services shifted police work from crime prevention to crime response, thus creating some of the unintended consequences that more recent reforms have had to address. Beginning most notably with the New York City Transit Police, for whom Kelling consulted, police departments have recently focused on minor offenses, capturing a large number of serious criminals in the process. Other police departments, with the assistance of civic groups, have begun similar work. The authors provide cogent advice, backed by copious endnotes, on how to implement similar strategies. They say too little about the challenges in recruiting and training police for community strategies, however, although they do acknowledge that some New York outreach workers have been accused of abusing street people. Coles is a lawyer and anthropologist.

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From Library Journal

The term broken windows, a metaphor for increasing public community disorder, was coined by Wilson and Kelling in a March 1982 *Atlantic* article. Their antidote to "broken windows"—community policing—is actually a revival of the 19th-century policeman on the beat. Community policing focuses on quality-of-life crimes (vandalism, fare beating, etc.) rather than felonies and attempts to change the operative police model to one of order maintenance and crime prevention. Kelling has been associated over the last 20 years with the Kennedy School, the National Institute of Justice, the New York City Transit Police, and as a consultant in many locales for practical research and application of this model. Although he has published much, this readable monograph is his most popular and substantial treatment to date. It includes case studies of New York, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Seattle and a frank discussion of the biggest problem with community policing: it relies heavily on police discretion. Everyone should read this book; it would inject realism and hope into public policy discussion.

Janice Dunham, John Jay Coll. Lib., New York

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Users Review

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