
Does Scientific Research Support Broken Windows Theory?

Broken Windows Theory, and the policing strategies it recommended, was first conceived in 1982. It was eventually widely embraced by criminologists and political leaders as a way to understand crime and disorder, and strategize ways to reduce crime, disorder, and fear of crime. Recently, however, Broken Windows Policing has come under attack by politicians and political activists who make the claim that Broken Windows theory and its policing strategies are racially biased and violate civil rights. Are these claims true? This presentation will discuss what Broken Windows theory really says, and examine the research evidence that has tested this theory. We will examine how policing strategies developed from this theory and what impacts they may have had on crime and civil liberties.

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