

# Broken windows theory in our life

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [What is the Broken Windows Theory?](#) \n \t
2. [The Effect on Common Citizens](#) \n \t
3. [Does This Theory Work?](#) \n \t
4. [How We Can Use This Theory?](#) \n \t
5. [Works Cited](#) \n

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## **What is the Broken Windows Theory?**

Imagine that you are walking towards a park by yourself, but this park seems to be run down and dirty. You can't tell when the last time someone cleaned up. If you had garbage in need of disposal, you wouldn't think twice about adding their own bit, as you would feel less guilty because it was already unclean. This is the basic concept to the Broken Windows Theory.

The Broken Windows Theory is a criminal justice theory which tries to combat petty crime by stopping deviant behavior such as panhandling and graffiti. In theory when efficiently completed stops minor crimes while also dissuading people from committing crimes sought as more serious. This is because from an outsider perspective, it would look like the people care about this particular area thus meaning the city cares, which in turn means that the police care. As the uptake continues people realize that the area is on the “come-up” and take pride in its cleanliness, thus the maintenance continues.

## **The Effect on Common Citizens**

The Broken Windows Theory is not just for the deterrence of the perpetrator but also for the benefit of the law bidding citizen. In a study that was done by the Police Foundation in D. C stated “ residents of the foot patrolled neighborhoods seemed to feel more secure than persons in other areas, tended to believe that crime had been reduced, and seemed to take fewer steps to protect themselves from crime (staying at home with the doors locked, for example). Moreover, citizens in the foot-patrol areas had a more favorable opinion of the police than did those living elsewhere. And officers walking beats had higher morale, greater job satisfaction, and a more favorable attitude toward citizens in their neighborhoods than did officers assigned to patrol cars”(The Atlantic). People tend to feel safe, when their mind is at ease. This was surprising to the researchers because they saw that there was no visible decrease in crime whatsoever in the neighborhood.

## **Does This Theory Work?**

The criminal justice world is still split on if the theory can work in real life, in all locations. There has been instances where the theory was put to practice like on 1993 in New York City. A newly elected Mayor by the name of Rudy Giuliani wanted to see change within the crime sectors. Alongside Giuliani was Police Commissioner Howard Safir, the two of them created two policies that helped the theory see success. These two policies were put in effect under the names of Quality of Life and Zero Tolerance. They had police crackdown on minor crimes that undermined the city or made the city look “ bad”. The crimes were not serious, and in fact did little harm to society. These crimes were public drinkers, subway fare evaders, public urinators and

even “ squeegee men” (people who would wipe down windshields and demand payment of stopped cars. Many people did not agree with Giuliani and Safir, but to their dismay both petty and serious crime rates fell dramatically.

## **How We Can Use This Theory?**

One of the biggest oppositions of the theory is the question of just how one implements this theory in real life. Theoretically this can be done almost in any public space. For example, take a public space like a public park. The first step would be to clean out all the garbage and graffiti in the area and surrounding area. Perhaps install some new or newer looking equipment and introduce laws that would restrict devious behavior such as a drinking ban. The next step could be to assign a team of volunteers to keep the park looking maintained and lastly assign police officer the park to their regular patrol.

With this information, there is hope that we can reduce at least a bit of crime virtually anywhere with the right funding and implication. If implemented across the country, we would most likely see a plethora of benefits. The benefits would start off as obviously a dramatic decrease in crime, but would even reduce the amount of tax payer money needed to combat crime and the cleaning up of public areas. One of the greater benefits would be that a sense of civic duty and pride would arise. Lastly it could even expand tourism to the city, which in turn adds more money to the city.

## **Works Cited**

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