

Criminal Courts And Social Control In An Age Of Broken Windows Policing

Welcome to a world defined by broken windows policing, where criminal courts play a crucial role in maintaining social control. In this ever-evolving age, understanding the relationship between criminal courts and social control is of utmost importance, as it shapes the dynamics of our justice system and impacts communities at large.

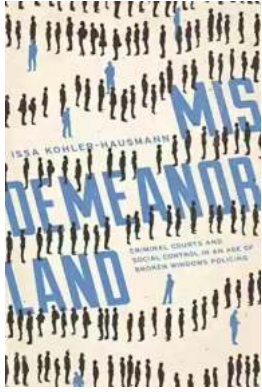
What is Broken Windows Policing?

Broken windows policing is a strategy that puts emphasis on maintaining social order by addressing minor offenses and signs of disorder that can lead to more serious crimes. The theory behind this approach suggests that signs of neglect and disorder (e.g., broken windows, graffiti, litter) send a message that a community does not care, ultimately leading to an increase in crime rates. By targeting these primary signs of disorder, the police aim to prevent larger crimes from occurring in the first place.

The Role of Criminal Courts

Criminal courts play a pivotal role in the enforcement of broken windows policing. Once individuals are arrested for minor offenses, they are usually brought to the criminal courts for prosecution. These courts act as gatekeepers, filtering cases and determining appropriate responses to maintain social control. The decisions made by the courts have the power to shape the lives of individuals accused of minor offenses, as well as the communities they belong to.

Misdemeanorland: Criminal Courts and Social Control in an Age of Broken Windows Policing



by Issa Kohler-Hausmann(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 8852 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 310 pages
Screen Reader : Supported



Impact on Communities

Critics argue that broken windows policing and its reliance on criminal courts to control minor offenses can have negative consequences for communities, especially for marginalized groups. The increased enforcement of low-level offenses can lead to over-policing and disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities. This may result in strained relationships between the police and the community, eroding trust, and hindering efforts towards effective crime prevention.

The social control exerted by criminal courts can also create a cycle of involvement in the justice system for individuals. Once they become entangled in the court system, it can be challenging to escape its grip. This perpetuates a cycle where individuals with minor offenses have limited opportunities for rehabilitation, leading to recidivism and continued reliance on social control mechanisms such as prisons and probation.

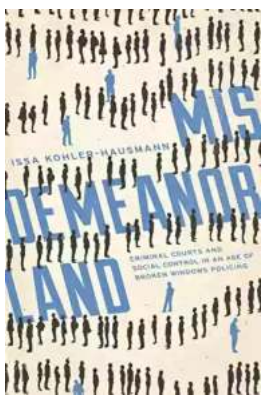
Challenges and Alternatives

The age of broken windows policing has sparked debates and discussions regarding its effectiveness and potential alternatives. Critics argue that focusing

solely on minor offenses neglects the underlying social issues that contribute to crime. They propose a shift towards community-oriented policing, which aims to build relationships between law enforcement and communities, addressing root causes of crime through collaboration rather than enforcement.

Restorative justice practices have also gained attention as an alternative to traditional court processes. These practices focus on repairing harm caused by the offense and reintegrating individuals back into the community. By involving all affected parties and emphasizing accountability, restorative justice offers a more holistic approach to social control, potentially breaking the cycle of involvement in the criminal justice system.

Criminal courts play a crucial role in maintaining social control in an age dominated by broken windows policing. However, critiques of this approach highlight its potential negative impacts on marginalized communities, perpetuating cycles of involvement in the justice system. Exploring alternative strategies such as community-oriented policing and restorative justice may offer more effective and inclusive solutions for ensuring social control while nurturing stronger and safer communities for all.



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An in-depth look at the consequences of New York City's dramatically expanded policing of low-level offenses

Felony conviction and mass incarceration attract considerable media attention these days, yet the most common criminal-justice encounters are for misdemeanors, not felonies, and the most common outcome is not prison. In the early 1990s, New York City launched an initiative under the banner of Broken Windows policing to dramatically expand enforcement against low-level offenses. *Misdemeanorland* is the first book to document the fates of the hundreds of thousands of people hauled into lower criminal courts as part of this policing experiment.

Drawing on three years of fieldwork inside and outside of the courtroom, in-depth interviews, and analysis of trends in arrests and dispositions of misdemeanors going back three decades, Issa Kohler-Hausmann argues that lower courts have largely abandoned the adjudicative model of criminal law administration in which questions of factual guilt and legal punishment drive case outcomes. Due to the sheer volume of arrests, lower courts have adopted a managerial model--and the implications are troubling. Kohler-Hausmann shows how significant volumes of people are marked, tested, and subjected to surveillance and control even though about half the cases result in some form of legal dismissal. She describes in harrowing detail how the reach of America's penal state extends well beyond the shocking numbers of people incarcerated in prisons or stigmatized by a felony conviction.

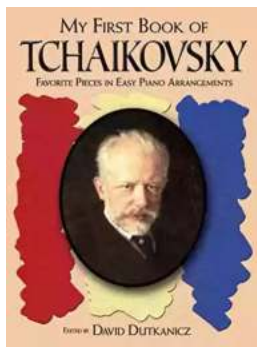
Revealing and innovative, *Misdemeanorland* shows how the lower reaches of our criminal justice system operate as a form of social control and surveillance, often

without adjudicating cases or imposing formal punishment.



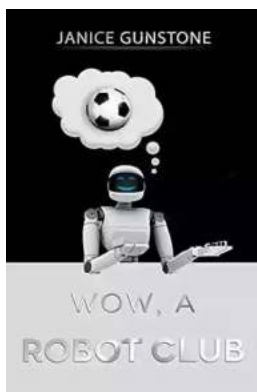
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