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BOOK REVIEW

Ordering the city: land use, policing, and the restoration of urban America, by Nicole Stelle Garnett, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010, 276 pp., $45.00 (paperback).

In this new history of land use and policing, law professor Nicole Stelle Garnett examines how cities in the USA are 'ordered' not just by law enforcement but also by less-often considered zoning laws. Garnett explores the intersections between policing and zoning by testing two key perspectives on 'ordering the city', namely Jane Jacobs' advocacy of mixed use, and James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling's 'broken windows' concept. As readers may already know, Jacobs contended that in mixed-use neighbourhoods like Greenwich Village in New York City, shopkeepers, parents, and others kept eyes on the street and hence kept it safe. Wilson and Kelling, meanwhile, posited that if a neighbourhood looked like no one cared about it – if the window stayed broken – it would increasingly attract criminals, because they would realize nobody cared. Garnett amply documents her central argument that both the mixed-use and broken-windows arguments contain kernels of truth but not the whole story, and she concludes with some demonstrably promising policy lessons for making our cities safer and more economically viable.

Garnett first addresses the historical evolution of zoning in the USA, a tool instituted in an era when 'progressives' wanted to separate noxious industrial (along with dubious commercial) uses entirely from residential ones. The underlying premise is that zoning – 'ordered' land use – suppresses disorder, which in turn is based on the idea that economic activity is inherently disorderly or fosters disorder. It is true that with large numbers of strangers coursing through some part of a city, there is more opportunity for crime, and since crime tends to be opportunistic, more of it happens.

Policing, meanwhile, began as a way to enforce laws against vagrancy, public drunkenness, and related misconduct. By the 1960s it had become abundantly clear that these laws, given the wide discretion they afforded police officers, were enforced with rather less than full respect of individuals' civil liberties. This led to a 'radical deregulation' of urban public spaces which coincided also with the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill. During the 1960s and 1970s crime rates shot up and set the stage for the 'broken windows' theory. Kelling had studied the Newark Foot Patrol Experiment and from this and later research concluded that such neighbourhood policing made residents feel more secure and at least believe that crime was going down. Whether or not crime rates actually declined still remains a point of contention, but we do know that neighbourhood policing gave officers vastly more information that could lead to arrests. Furthermore, such research revealed that one of the first requests made by poor residents in declining neighbourhoods was for the police to secure abandoned housing. Residents wanted 'broken windows' fixed, since such buildings were closely associated with crime. (Whether fixing those reduced crime or simply relocated it, we do not know yet.)

William Julius Wilson's *When Work Disappears* and other research showed that high rates of unemployment often deprived such neighbourhoods of a 'culture of work', thus leaving few working role models for youth living in such areas. In discussing these issues, Garnett delves into policy recommendations. Certainly we need to begin making sure that vulnerable neighbourhoods are safe, to fix those 'broken windows', but what can we do to make those

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neighbourhoods more efficacious for their denizens? And here, Garnett rightly contends, we have surely overdone our unilateral single-use zoning: Why should women in such neighbourhoods not be able to use their homes for childcare? Why should men not be able to offer 'shade-tree' auto repair in them, as long as the rest of the neighbourhood is all right with it? Such people working in their neighbourhoods would not only improve them economically, they would also enhance safety and build social capital. A study of such neighbourhoods in Houston, a city with no zoning, shows that this system works pretty effectively. (As a long-time former resident I sorely miss my Houstonian right to open a restaurant in my garage.)

As Garnett judiciously notes, it is all contextual. Every city is different, every neighbourhood is different. And, as she implies and as I would stress explicitly, we live in a world of diverse cultures and more attenuated and accommodating approaches to land-use policy need to be sensitive to them as well. There are other successful models that we can apply. Truly deregulated enterprise zones have been successful, for example, as have business improvement districts. These can be instituted, as appropriate, as we find ourselves today recreating what we destroyed in the Robert Moses meat-axe approach to urban renewal and the notorious Pruitt-Igoe warehousing of the poor. Covering all this in a richly interdisciplinary fashion, Garnett has done a terrific job of reminding us of what can work but also, unfortunately, how unwilling or unable we have often been to learn from it. It is time we did so and she has well equipped us for it.

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