COMPSTAT IN PRACTICE:
AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS
OF THREE CITIES

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POLICE FOUNDATION

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FOREWORD

Technology shapes human culture and is influenced in turn by human factors. This principle guides the history of invention and clearly bears on Compstat, the latest trend in crime fighting. Compstat shows promise of helping departments reduce crime through systematic data collection, crime analysis, and heightened accountability. Compstat's potential as a tool of police reform nonetheless depends on the extent to which it changes officers' routine activities, the effect it has on management practices, and its compatibility with a department's existing objectives. In other words, the impact of Compsat, like that of previous technology, is contingent on how it interacts with the existing technical capacities, work practices, management styles, and cultural values of police departments. Its future value also hinges on its compatibility with community policing, a deeply entrenched movement in law enforcement and one that stresses the human face of policing.

The influence of these various factors on Compstat's implementation in three different police departments is the subject of this study. As we shall see, the theory and practice of Compstat diverged as the departments tried to incorporate Compstat within their existing structures and practices. The experiences of Lowell, Massachusetts; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Newark, New Jersey, shed some light on the potential and limits of technology as a tool to enhance the effectiveness of police.

Compstat's many advocates assume the existence of several conditions that will allow Compstat to transform inertial and conservative police departments into efficient crime-fighting machines. There will be motivated employees who are stimulated by a rigorous system of accountability. There will be enough organizational flexibility for commanders to reallocate personnel and resources to areas that need them most. Decisions will reflect empirical knowledge of emerging problems and draw heavily on sophisticated, electronic data-analysis systems. Members of the department will engage in free exchange of ideas, and there will be an atmosphere that nurtures innovation. The implementation of Compstat presumes, in short, that the organizational culture will tolerate risk and encourage new approaches to persistent crime problems.

While departments naturally want to make communities safer by reducing crime, they cannot always provide a fertile ground for Compstat's demanding agenda. Compstat's sole mission is to fight crime, but police departments have complex missions that may require police to engage in many diverse activities. Scarcity of resources and political pressures may limit departments' freedom to allocate resources to specific crime problems. Police managers may lack the training to take full advantage of Compstat data when they are making decisions. Collaboration and free-flowing debate may be at odds with a traditional police culture that has long socialized officers to follow orders and defer to rank. Lastly, police may be reluctant to follow innovative approaches when the wrong decision may lead to waste of precious resources and loss of even more precious human lives.

This dissonance between the ideals of Compstat and the realities of police work suggests that Compstat's architects may have failed to envision the program's role in the context of a department's many duties. The discord is a pressing concern, however, for agencies that are trying to adapt their organizational structures and cultural assumptions to the demands of the new technology. When there is incompatibility, an uneasy tension may arise between the system's requirements and the way that officers define their jobs.

Much of this tension has played itself out over the issues of accountability and the patrol officer's role. Thus far, patrol officers have played little part in the Compstat process, and some of them have even seen it as an obstacle to effective policing. This is because Compstat places a heavy burden of accountability on supervisors, who have sometimes responded to the pressure by severely limiting the discretion of their officers. One result of this development is to widen the traditional divide between managers, who are privy to the wisdom of Compstat, and street cops, who are largely excluded. Another is to foster resentment of the program among many officers who believe their departments have sacrificed important aspects of police work, as well as valuable resources, on the altar of technology and crime fighting.

These issues have converged in the interaction between community policing and Compstat, as they set forth competing ideals of law enforcement. Compstat, as we have seen, gives command staff most of the responsibility for reducing crime, largely excludes patrol officers from the decision-making process, and has a relentless focus on crime reduction. Community policing, on the other hand, devolves decision making to the level of the street, envisions police and citizens as partners in problem solving, and makes officers responsible for responding to a broad spectrum of community concerns. At stake here are two vastly different conceptions of the officer's role in modern society. In one, they simply follow their superiors' orders, while the other grants them considerable discretion as the guardians of their individual beat. Given the gap between the two models of policing, Compstat naturally tends to encounter the greatest resistance in departments that are most committed to community policing.

Resolving the conflict between Compstat and community policing, based as they are on opposing cultural assumptions, is a significant challenge facing police leaders in the twenty-first century. It may require them to educate their officers in the basic principles of data analysis, include the rank and file in the Compstat process, and find better ways to use resources so they can meet the needs of the two competing programs. It is important, however, that police leaders rise to the challenge because their success may further the objectives of both Compstat and community policing. It is likely that officers who accept Compstat would perform better in the service of Compstat's crime-fighting mandate. It is also probable that officers with an analytical understanding of crime problems and a handle on crime data would collaborate more effectively with community stakeholders in solving problem. By reconciling these two valuable movements in law enforcement, police leaders would ultimately fulfill a broader mandate that transcends the individual goals of both Compstat and community policing. This fundamental mission is to serve the members of the public who are certainly concerned about safe streets but also want a positive and constructive relationship with the officers who patrol their neighborhoods.

Hubert Williams
President

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I.   INTRODUCTION

Police organization and practice have changed throughout the twentieth century in response to fundamental social and technological changes in U.S. society (Reiss 1992). Three such powerful forces coincided nearly a century ago: the movement for police professionalism, the introduction of the automobile, and the advent of modern communications technology (Walker and Katz 2002). As part of a much larger attempt to reduce corruption and inefficiency in municipal government, progressives and police leaders sought to transform the organization, administration, and delivery of police services (Fogelson 1977). Modern management principles called for centralization of command and control to improve police accountability, and technological innovations promised a more scientific and effective approach to crime reduction.

In an attempt to distance police from the corrupt influence of neighborhood politics and to increase executive oversight, supporters of police reform closed local precincts and shifted decision-making power to central headquarters. The "span of administrative control" widened further with the invention of the telephone and two-way radio (Reiss 1992, 52). Through a network of constant communication, police administrators became more involved in the daily activities of the rank and file. These technological innovations, along with the introduction of the patrol car and the collection of crime statistics, also increased the capacity of the police to identify and respond quickly to crime problems (Manning 1992). One of the most influential, early twentieth-century police reformers, August Vollmer, praised these innovations as "remarkable." The "modern, scientifically oriented organization," he wrote, reduced crime and protected the community "with principles of military science, including those of strategy, tactics, logistics, and communication" (Vollmer 1933, 161, 165).

Increasing crime and social disorder in the 1960s and early 1970s brought attention to the limitations and unintended consequences of these reforms (Kelling and Moore 1988). Centralized command and control had joined the emphasis on rapid response to crime to detach officers from the communities they were supposed to serve and distill their diverse responsibilities to the simple mandate of fighting crime. Community policing, the contemporary form of police progressivism, is an ongoing attempt to remedy these problems (Sparrow et al. 1990). Informed by private sector management literature, supporters of community policing advocate area decentralization of police services, devolution of decision making, and use of technology to enhance the delivery of police services (Moore and Stephens 1991). They argue that devolving power to district commanders and line officers makes police organizations more responsive to a wide range of community concerns. They also claim that adopting sophisticated computer technology increases organizations' capacity to diagnose a specific crime problem and then select the most appropriate response, whether it is problem solving, preventing crime, or reducing social disorder.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, a new engine of police progressivism may have arisen. Characterized as a new crime-control program, Compstat combines all of the major prescriptions offered by contemporary organizational development experts (Beer 1980) with the latest geographic information systems technology. It also re-engineers police management by holding command staff directly accountable for crime levels in their beats. Furthermore, it uses sophisticated computer maps and crime statistics to facilitate timely and targeted responses to

crime problems. In this report we provide an in-depth assessment of how Compstat worked in three police departments—Lowell, Massachusetts (LPD), Minneapolis, Minnesota (MPD), and Newark, New Jersey (NPD). We cannot be confident that our findings on Compstat would be the same for a different set of departments. By extending our research beyond a single site, however, we hope to capture a range of experiences that broaden and deepen discussion of this latest policing innovation.

More specifically, this report serves three purposes: (1) to describe how Compstat functioned as a specific program; (2) to examine how it changed police organization and practice; and (3) to provide some insights into the direction Compstat is leading policing in the United States.[1] Like past attempts at reform, Compstat presents police organizations with a set of specific challenges and opportunities. Some of the challenges arise from implementation problems that departments can correct, but others appear because Compstat calls for the pursuit of conflicting goals. In addition, some of the central tenets of this latest reform movement significantly affect the existing philosophies, programs, and structures of community policing. In highlighting some of Compstat's challenges, complexities, and positive contributions, we hope to illuminate its possibilities and limitations, as well as areas that police leaders might address to achieve departmental objectives.

We note at the outset that the purpose of this report is *not* to render judgment on Compstat's effectiveness at controlling crime. Many advocates have claimed great success for it (Bratton 1998; Silverman 1999; Kelling and Sousa 2001), while some critics have remained more skeptical (Bouza 1997; Eck and Maguire 2000). An assessment of Compstat's crime-control effectiveness is sorely needed, but we should learn what Compstat *is* before attempting to measure its effects. Hence, our focus is on providing a thorough, empirical evaluation of how Compstat is changing the structure, management, and practices of police organizations.

II.   BACKGROUND ON COMPSTAT AND ITS CORE ELEMENTS

Since 1994, when former NYPD police commissioner William Bratton first implemented Compstat, the program has received hortatory statements similar to those Vollmer reserved for police advances at the beginning of the last century. Winner of a 1996 "Innovations in American Government" award, sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Compstat has been described in grand terms. Recently, Professor William Walsh referred to Compstat as an "emerging police managerial paradigm" (Walsh 2001), and Professors George Kelling and William Sousa have described it as "perhaps the single most important organizational/administrative innovation in policing during the latter half of the twentieth century" (Kelling and Sousa 2001, 2). Nor has this praise been limited to scholars. Compstat has

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[1] There is some disagreement about what the acronym "Compstat" actually means. Former NYPD police commissioner William Bratton suggests that it stands for "computer-statistics meetings" (Bratton 1998, 233), but Silverman attributes the term to "Compare Stats"—a computer filename (Silverman 1999, 98). Some commentators have collapsed these meanings and argue that Compstat refers to "computer comparison statistics" (U.S. National Agricultural Library 1998, http://www.nalusda.gov/pavnet/iag/cecompst.htm). The Lowell Police Department adopted the nomenclature of the NYPD, but a different name was used at the other two sites we visited. Minneapolis' program was called "CODEFOR" (Computer Optimized Deployment - Focus on Results) and Newark's "Comstat" stood for "Command Status Report." For the sake of convenience, we use the generic term "Compstat" to refer to these programs at the three departments.

received an extraordinary amount of attention from the press, think tanks, police professional associations, and the leadership of some of the largest police departments in the nation. Its sweeping popularity has been fueled by much national publicity that attributes the recent plummet in New York's crime rate to Compstat (Silverman 1996). The "Comstat Craze," as one public interest journal described it, has contributed to the program's rapid diffusion across the United States (Swope 1999). Our 1999 national survey reported that in the brief period since its inception in 1994, a third of large departments—those with one hundred or more sworn officers—had implemented a "Compstat-like program," and 26 percent were planning to do so.[2] Should the rate of adoption continue at that extraordinary pace, 90 percent of large police departments will have adopted a Compstat program just a mere ten years after its implementation in the NYPD. This is five years *less* than the fifteen-year period Arnulf Grubler predicts it takes the most quickly diffused technologies to progress to a 90 percent saturation level (Weisburd et al. 2001; Grubler 1991).

In the late 1980s, some scholars cautioned that the "rhetoric" surrounding community policing, a program still in its formative stages, concealed "complex realities" that needed to be addressed (Mastrofski 1988, 48). Similarly, there is a need for a more comprehensive and fine-grained analysis of Compstat, a program that is also in its infancy: How does Compstat work? Is it difficult to implement? Is it a coherent program? Is it compatible with existing department programs and practices?

A review of the research literature suggests that the glowing accounts of Compstat's success are fueled mostly by studies that rely on anecdotal evidence or concentrate on the NYPD, the nation's largest and, by any measure, most exceptional police department.[3] To date, there has been little systematic analysis of Compstat in U.S. police departments of different size and organization. Very little is actually known about how Compstat operates. Perhaps many feel that the relationship between Compstat's crime-fighting mandate and the country's recent crime drop is so compelling that there is little need to justify Compstat. One of the dangers of such a glib approach is that it shrouds Compstat's complexities and potential problems. Failure to consider these problems carefully, as some scholars forewarned about community policing in the late 1980s, may relegate even the best-intentioned reform attempts to the long list of failed innovations that litter the history of U.S. policing (Greene and Mastrofski 1988).

This report, which assesses how Compstat works in three very different police departments, is the third stage of a project, entitled *Compstat and Organizational Change: A National Assessment*, funded by the National Institute of Justice and conducted by the Police Foundation (Weisburd et al. 2001). We examined the existing literature on Compstat from those

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[2] Forty-two percent had not implemented a Compstat-like program. For the first detailed analysis on Compstat's implementation and operation in police departments across the country see *Compstat and Organizational Change: Findings from a National Survey*, Weisburd et al., Police Foundation (2001).

[3] James L Heskett, "NYPD New," *Harvard Business School Report* no. N9-396-293 (April 1996); Eli Silverman, *NYPD Battles Crime*, Northeastern University Press (1999); Phyllis McDonald, Sheldon Greenberg, and William J. Bratton, *Managing Police Operations: Implementing the NYPD Crime Control Model Using COMPSTAT*, Wadsworth Publishing Co. (2001); Vincent E. Henry, *The COMPSTAT Paradigm: Management Accountability in Policing, Business, and the Public Sector*, foreword by William J. Bratton, Looseleaf Law Publications (2002).

who built it, who advocate it, and who claim to have made objective observations about it. By couching this information in a larger literature on the structure and processes of organizations, we derived the following six core elements:

- *Mission clarification*: Top management is responsible for clarifying and exalting the core features of the department's mission that serve as the overarching reason for the organization's existence. Mission clarification includes a demonstration of management's commitment and states its goals in specific terms for which the organization and its leaders can be held accountable—such as reducing crime by 10 percent in a year (Bratton 1998, 252).

- *Internal accountability*: Operational commanders are held accountable for knowing their commands, being well acquainted with the problems in the command, and accomplishing measurable results in reducing those problems—or at least demonstrating a diligent effort to learn from that experience.

- *Geographic organization of operational command*: Operational command is focused on the policing of territories, so central decision-making authority over police operations is delegated to commanders with territorial responsibility for districts. Functionally differentiated units and specialists—patrol, community-policing officers, detectives, narcotics, vice, juvenile, and traffic—are either placed under the command of the district commander, or arrangements are made to facilitate their responsiveness to the commander's needs.

- *Organizational flexibility*: The organization develops the capacity and habit of changing established routines as needed to mobilize resources when and where they are needed for strategic application.

- *Data-driven analysis of problems and assessment of department's problem-solving efforts*: Data are made available to identify and analyze problems and to track and assess the department's response. Data are made accessible to all relevant personnel on a timely basis and in a readily usable format.

- *Innovative problem-solving tactics*: Police responses are selected because they offer the best prospects of success, not because they are "what we have always done." Innovation and experimentation are encouraged and use of the best available knowledge about practices is expected.

Using these elements as a general framework, we analyzed how Compstat was being implemented across the United States.

The project's initial stage consisted of a national survey assessing how many local police departments were using Compstat and the extent to which they had implemented its six core elements. By capturing the resources used, the police units served, the geographic scope, and the temporal frequency of various structures and activities, we were able to assay the dosage and the character of the treatment for each element. For the second stage, we used the results from our

national survey to identify sixteen sites suitable for short, intensive site visits of two to three days. Some of these departments were actively engaged in Compstat, while others indicated that they used some of its core elements but had not implemented a Compstat program. Through observations and interviews, we were able to describe each department's broad range of experiences with Compstat, to identify patterns of organizational change and program content, and to distinguish departments' individual successes, failures, surprises, and disappointments with Compstat. Finally, we selected three police agencies, Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark, as sites suitable for extended site visits. Between October 2000 and June 2001, a full- or part-time researcher was sent to each of these departments for a period of two to eight months to gather detailed information on how Compstat worked at all levels of the police organization.[4] These three sites serve as the core of the analysis discussed in this report.

III.   RESEARCH SITES

We selected these three sites because they had implemented Compstat; they differed in size, organization, and crime environment; and they were receptive to having a field researcher on site for an extended period. According to population figures in the 2001 *Uniform Crime Reports*, or UCR, Lowell's contingent of 260 sworn officers served a population of 105,668. Minneapolis' 919 police officers served a population of 386,726; and the 1,445 police officers in Newark served a population of 275,823. In the 1980s and 1990s, all three police departments had undergone significant organizational change upon implementing community-oriented policing. In order to push decision making down the chain of command, to provide greater access to police services, and to improve organizational flexibility, they had decentralized into districts or precincts. Furthermore, they had fostered closer relationships with city residents and increased neighborhood input into crime problems through a variety of programs and tactics, such as assigning patrol officers to permanent beats, holding regular community meetings, increasing foot patrol, and implementing community outreach. In addition, all three departments had community response teams, or units whose primary responsibilities included responding to specific community concerns.

Levels and types of crime differed across sites, but each city had recently experienced a general decline in its crime rate. Between 1995 and 2001, index crimes reported in the UCR by the FBI showed that serious crime was lowest in Lowell and highest in Minneapolis (see Table 1). In addition to differences in crime level, types of crime varied across sites (see Table 1). The violent crime rate was highest in Newark while the property crime rate was highest in Minneapolis. In all three sites, Compstat coincided with a general crime decrease, as it had in New York. Following Compstat's implementation in Newark during 1997 and in Minneapolis during 1998, both cities experienced a general reduction in crime. Crime in Lowell, which also implemented Compstat in 1997, followed a similar downward trend, but in 2000 and 2001 it began to increase (see Table 1). Whether declines in the crime rate can be attributed to Compstat awaits a more rigorous evaluation. However, we would note that the UCR trends at all three sites are ambiguous at best. Crime was already in decline for at least a year before each city implemented Compstat, and the rate of decline in subsequent years was the same or less steep

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[4] Terminology varied among the sites. To minimize confusion, we refer to each department's chief executive officer as "chief," to mid-level managers as "middle managers" or "district commanders," and to all geographic areas of command as "districts," unless otherwise stated.

(see Figure 1). If Compstat had an impact, we would have expected the rate of decline to be steeper after its implementation. This raises the question of whether Compstat was the force bringing crime down, since the decline had already begun at all three sites and did not accelerate subsequently. A few years of crime data at three sites is simply insufficient to determine the nature and extent of Compstat's effects on crime. We have therefore avoided making any statements about it one way or the other.

Table 1: Crime index in Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark (1996-2001)

Year	Violent, property, and total index crimes per 100,000 population with percentage change from previous year (+/-)					
	Lowell		Minneapolis		Newark	
	property crime	violent crime	property crime	violent crime	property crime	violent crime
1995	4906	1582	9567	1978	11527	3985
	6488		11545		15512	
1996	3826	1051	9408	1883	9803	3345
	4877 (-25%)		11291 (-2%)		13148 (-14%)	
1997	3409	1071	9589	1850	7993	2735
	4480 (-8%)		11439 (+1%)		10728 (-18%)	
1998	2911	1021	8035	1525	6466	2094
	3932 (-12%)		9560 (-16%)		8560 (-20%)	
1999	2480	777	7246	1389	6067	1814
	3257 (-21%)		8635 (-10%)		7881 (-8%)	
2000	3138	709	6341	1210	5728	1505
	3847 (+18%)		7551 (-12.5%)		7233 (-8%)	
2001	3464	804	5875	1060	5406	1391
	4268 (+11%)		6935 (-8%)		6797 (-6%)	

Figure 1: Crime Rates in the three cities
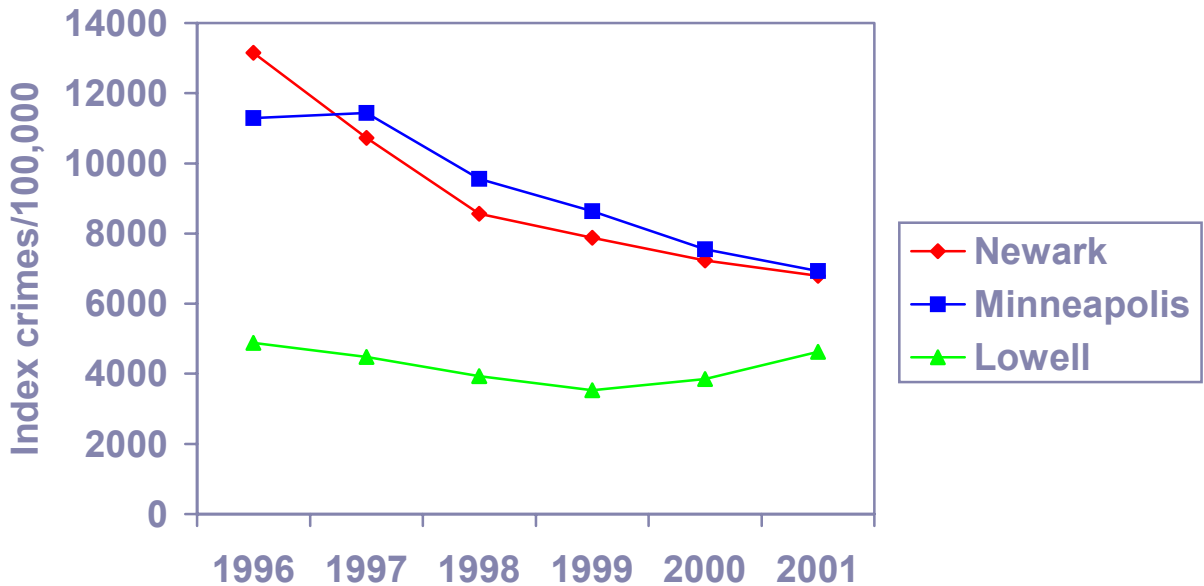
These departments were similar in ways relevant to Compstat's impact on organizational change; differences were matters of degree. All three departments had strong professional reputations, had received considerable publicity for being innovative, and had been running a Compstat program for at least two years. We felt that an examination of departments that had advanced furthest in scope and experience with their implementation of Compstat and were widely recognized for being on the cutting-edge of policing would provide useful models from which other police agencies might learn. Furthermore, information from our national survey and initial site visits revealed significant variations in Compstat programs at these departments. The latter reason was particularly compelling, since we felt an examination of the operation of different Compstat programs would provide valuable insights into the various ways that organizations adapt to new structures and technologies. Finally, a comparison of the three departments, we believed, would help capture a range of opportunities and challenges that police departments face when they attempt to change their routine tasks and activities to incorporate a program whose supporters describe it as a major change in the management and crime-fighting responsibilities of police.

IV. DATA AND METHODS

In conducting our intensive field research, we were especially interested in obtaining detailed information on the role of Compstat-generated data and in learning about the "scanning" part of the problem-identification process. How were problems analyzed, and how were tactics reviewed and selected? What was the scope of the treatment developed to deal with a Compstat-identified problem, in terms of the resources mobilized to deal with it? Was there a reorganization or mobilization of resources to address the problem, or was it handled merely by altering the routines of individuals or units already assigned to these duties? How were rank-and-file officers involved in this process, if at all? Were specific officers or patrol units made accountable for addressing problems? How much follow-through was there on these initiatives?

How were assessments of an intervention conducted? To what extent were district routines, such as responding to calls for service, disrupted by efforts to deal with problems identified by the Compstat process?

The main field research techniques we used were participation, observation, and formal interviews with city officials and police at various levels in the chain of command. At each site, researchers observed weekly or biweekly Compstat meetings and interviewed city and police department personnel. These included the mayor, city manager, chief, civilian staff, middle managers or district commanders, captains, lieutenants, detectives, first-line supervisors or sergeants, and patrol officers. We attended thirty-six department-level Compstat meetings of two to three hours in length and eight shorter district-level or pre-Compstat meetings, and we conducted a total of seventy interviews. By guaranteeing interviewees anonymity, whenever possible, and confidentiality—by refusing to act as a conduit for information within the department, even when tested—we tried to gain the trust of department members. Despite some initial suspicion, most of those interviewed felt sufficiently comfortable to engage in lengthy and candid discussions about Compstat. The interviews ranged in length from twenty minutes to two hours, with many exceeding the allotted time. We supplemented them with numerous informal conversations with personnel of all ranks. In addition, we attended department-level command staff, internal affairs, and criminal investigations meetings to help us situate Compstat within a larger context.

Immediately following the department-level Compstat meetings, we attempted to debrief the executive who ran the meeting; the presenting district commanders were also debriefed soon after, usually within the next couple of days. The aim of our short, fifteen-to twenty-minute, post-Compstat debriefings was to help us identify the main crime problems in each sector or district and to track responses to these problems over time.

Researchers were instructed to type up their field notes the same day that they were taken. These extensive narratives were then disseminated to another member of the research team who was responsible for providing feedback on the quality and quantity of the on-site observations and for identifying issues that warranted further exploration. We also collected any documents that could further our understanding of Compstat, including internal department memos, research grants, community handouts, newspaper and Web articles, and the Compstat maps, spreadsheets, and crime analyses that were provided to district commanders.

Finally, if Compstat has the profound effects on police officers suggested by its proponents, these changes should register with the rank and file. In order to assess the impact of Compstat on those at the bottom of the police organization, we distributed an anonymous, voluntary, and self-administered survey to patrol officers who regularly attended roll call on the day, early night, and late shifts. Due to constraints of time and personnel, the survey allowed us to obtain far more information from patrol officers than we could have gathered through interviews. The on-site researcher in each department distributed the ten- to fifteen-minute survey on separate days across all shifts to ensure a representative sample of patrol officers who attended roll call. When distributing the survey, he or she informed officers that the Police Foundation was conducting the study to learn how Compstat worked in their department and valued any feedback they were willing to provide. Officers were asked to describe the extent of

their involvement in Compstat-generated activities, their motivation to participate in them, and their views on these activities. The survey was distributed to a total of 450 patrol officers and we used both simple descriptive and bivariate approaches in our analysis of their responses. [5]

We promised all respondents that we would do our utmost to conceal their identity. Obviously, when it came to the chief, city manager, or mayor, it was impossible to guard against identification, and we made this clear. Protecting the confidentiality of those who occupied the few specialized and mid/upper-level management positions in each police organization, particularly the district commanders, was challenging. Consequently, we decided to omit any identifying characteristics, such as the number of years a respondent had been on the force or national origin, from this report. In addition, we occasionally changed a respondent's gender, and deleted text that could possibly breach his or her confidentiality.

V.   ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH COMPSTAT

Using the six key components we identified as Compstat's general framework, we compared the different Compstat programs in Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark with each other and with data from our national survey. The latter approach helped us assess how typical each program was of programs in other departments across the country. We also used our qualitative data to assess how each department had adapted to Compstat, how each element worked, and how Compstat operated in relation to some of the central tenets of the current reform movement in U.S. policing—community policing. Before examining each of Compstat's key elements in detail, here is a brief summary of our findings:

- Mission clarification: A mission statement establishing a specific crime-reduction goal, reinforced through other mechanisms, and linked to specific plans of action designed for its success, may fail to encourage widespread commitment to management's objectives. Additionally, the focus on crime fighting may conflict with other important goals central to community policing, thus causing disaffection among the rank and file.

- Internal accountability: Compstat meetings are a very effective mechanism for making district commanders feel responsible for their beats. However, in the absence of a similar structure, accountability is experienced far less intensely down the chain of command. Consequently, Compstat concentrates decision making at the top of the organizational hierarchy, while the primary responsibility of the rank and file is to follow orders. This contradicts a central tenet of community- and problem-oriented policing—decentralized decision making to the rank and file to initiate problem solving.

- Geographical organization of operational command: Decision-making authority is devolved down one or two levels in the organization to district commanders and/or sector lieutenants. Although this authority is extensive, it is not unlimited. Top management likes to be kept informed of district commanders' decisions and is willing to contravene them. Structural shifts toward geographic management vary among departments but are

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[5] Respondents were asked to complete the survey before leaving. Ninety-seven surveys were completed in Lowell, 136 in Minneapolis, and 217 in Newark.

generally modest; only a few specialized units are placed under the direct supervision of district commanders.

- Organizational flexibility: The capacity of the organization to shift resources in response to non-routine work demands can be achieved through a variety of means: ad hoc decision making, formation of taxi squads and task forces, and sharing of resources among districts. Compstat, however, presents organizations with two paradoxes: (1) Increasing the allocation of resources to each district commander, or within-district flexibility, simultaneously reduces the organization's capacity to shift resources among districts; and (2) The combination of two Compstat elements—internal accountability and geographic organization of operational command—fosters competition that hinders resource sharing among districts.

- Data-driven problem identification and assessment: Compstat has significantly enhanced management and analysis of data. District commanders previously relied heavily upon reading daily crime reports to identify problems and patterns, and they supplemented this information with personal experience and anecdotal evidence. Examining crime maps and reviewing summary statistics was not essential to this process. Crime data helped inform but did not drive decision making.

- Innovative problem-solving tactics: Despite improvements in the gathering and dissemination of information, departments continue to rely on traditional approaches, such as increased traffic enforcement, to solve problems. The pressure of internal accountability hinders careful sifting of, and deliberation about, patterns of crime; a consideration of those patterns; and a careful review and discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of various approaches—the very kind of analysis that Compstat claims to encourage. District commanders feel compelled to respond to crimes quickly rather than to pursue the most effective strategy possible.

Mission Clarification

The first element of Compstat is *mission clarification*. Compstat assumes that police agencies must have a clearly defined organizational objective in order to function effectively. Supporters of Compstat have argued that a mission statement makes an important contribution to the overall success of the program. When Bratton assumed command of the NYPD, one of top management's first tasks was to clarify a mission statement that embodied the organization's fundamental reason for existing. Establishing a clear objective could change the department's "mindset" about "what the police should and could accomplish," and it could instill a shared sense of "belief, desire, and commitment" to the organizational changes necessary to achieve this goal (Silverman 1996, 4). In order to convey a clear sense of the NYPD's commitment, top management reasoned that the mission statement must include specific terms for which the organization and its leaders could be held accountable, such as reducing crime by 10 percent in a year (Bratton 1998, 252). The establishment of a mission statement, therefore, helps the police agency to function more effectively by encouraging leaders and line officers to commit to a clearly defined goal, in this case crime reduction, that is highly valued by the department's leadership (Bratton 1995).

Our research suggested that the importance of mission statements in establishing a principal organizational objective might be overstated. Not only might there be more effective means to communicate the values of the organization, but mission statements might actually undermine widespread commitment to the organization's goals—the opposite of what is intended. Our data revealed: (1) Mission statements establishing explicit terms for crime reduction are not necessarily preferable; (2) Mechanisms designed to reinforce management's message may be less effective than intended; (3) Changing work routines to match organizational values can weaken commitment to these same ideals; and (4) Mission statements that conflict with other organizational goals may generate disaffection among those they are intended to inspire.

Although Compstat in the Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark police departments was closely associated with fighting crime, the departments differed markedly in how they incorporated this goal into a clearly defined mission statement. According to its supporters, the particular power of Compstat lies in its ability to get police leaders, managers, and line officers to commit to a *specific goal* to which they feel accountable. However, our observations indicated that line officers in departments with *no* Compstat mission statement might be equally, if not more, committed to reducing crime than those in departments that establish explicit terms for crime reduction or articulate crime control as a specific mandate. In other words, mission statements are merely one, and not necessarily the most effective, means of creating a culture that supports a particular set of values. For example, a clear and powerful crime-fighting vision can also be conveyed through the general strategies and routines of a department—that is by underscoring a particular set of means, such as rapid response time or deference to rank, rather than a specific end for policing.

Furthermore, our data showed that mechanisms designed to reinforce the values of the organization may not work as intended. One important approach to underline the importance of a certain goal would be to implement a department-wide training program. In order to ensure that training is not merely regarded as a symbolic expression of top management's priorities, this approach could be accompanied by several other organizational changes. These might include convincing first-line supervisors that promotion of these goals is an important part of their job and realigning the system of rank-and-file rewards, or assignments and promotions, so that it is consistent with these goals. The organization might also make it clear that these goals take precedence over other worthy objectives, such as protecting high performers who tend to neglect other department goals (Mastrofski and Ritti 1996).

Although clear mission statements supported by other mechanisms might not ensure widespread acceptance of an organization's goal, it is still possible for the organization to do other things that bring the *behaviour* of officers into conformance with top management's priorities. For example, top management might implement operational tactics targeted toward achievement of a desired goal, such as assigning officers to foot patrol to encourage closer police-community relations. Unfortunately, we did not have any direct measures of the extent to which officers actually changed their behavior to be consistent with Compstat-linked values. Consequently this discussion, using results from our officer survey, focuses on the relationship between mission statements and the degree to which officers shared the crime-fighting values of Compstat.

Although we did not measure changes in officers' behavior, we would expect that those organizations that attach their goals to specific operational tactics would be most successful in encouraging employee commitment, or a positive attitude, to a desired set of values. The decoupling of mission statements from the realities of the workplace makes it more likely that an organization's mission will merely be regarded as a slogan that lacks any real substance (Wasserman and Moore 1988). As a result, it runs a high risk of being widely ignored or regarded with cynicism. The absence of any specific mechanisms for reinforcing the mission and helping the organization achieve its goals may suggest that managers are not truly committed to the values they espouse, so why should others care about them?

Finally, the simplicity and directness of a mission statement specifically focused on reducing crime should help inspire commitment among the rank and file. But what happens when an organization is committed to several goals that embody different values? Police departments that have implemented community policing, for example, are supposed to accord as much importance to community decision making, standards of integrity, problem solving, reducing fear of crime, and improving social order as they do to fighting crime (Moore 1992). Our research suggested that in departments that take community policing seriously, management might be giving mixed messages about which values are really important. This gives rise to a potential paradox: *The more an organization responsible for a variety of important tasks focuses its limited resources on only one goal, the more likely it is that the goal will be met with disaffection among those whom it is intended to most inspire*. Our research challenges Wasserman and Moore's contention that a coherent and predictable relationship between values and administrative decisions "helps employees make proper decisions and use their discretion *with confidence* that they are contributing to rather than detracting from organizational performance" (Wasserman and Moore 1988, 3, emphasis added). Although individual values and administrative decisions may be internally consistent, several of the organization's core values may be incompatible with one another, such as a focus on both reducing crime through zero-tolerance policing *and* improving police-community relations through neighborhood programs. Top managers might try to reduce the frustration and confusion of patrol officers who feel caught between these conflicting goals by showing that they are in fact related. In trying to do so, however, they might have to sacrifice the sine qua non of the Compstat mission, its clarity of purpose.

In our comparison, the Minneapolis police department was the *only* department: (1) to declare a crime-reduction goal of a specific amount; (2) to accompany its Compstat program with department-wide training; and (3) to implement a specific set of operational tactics designed to help the department meets its goal. In fact, the department's top managers told us that a key to the success of Compstat within the organization was that, "The structure exists to support the mission." To help the department achieve widespread acceptance of its goal of a 10 percent reduction in Part I crimes, every officer attended a day of Compstat training prior to the program's implementation. In contrast, officers in Newark and Lowell received no Compstat training. Furthermore, the MPD's top management required district commanders to order the rank and file to use their uncommitted time for directed patrol and to focus on making arrests for even minor breaches of the law in order to reduce serious crime, or zero-tolerance policing. Despite these changes, the patrol officers we surveyed in Minneapolis appeared *less*

committed—or at best, the most ambivalent—to the Compstat mission of crime fighting than those in Lowell and Newark.

Their ambivalence expressed the conflict between organizational goals and reflected our survey finding that patrol officers in departments where management was more committed to community policing were less committed to the Compstat mission of reducing violent crime. In Newark, where community policing, although important, was less of a priority than in the other two sites, patrol officers were most committed to the goal of crime reduction. In Minneapolis, which had allocated the most resources to community policing, patrol officers were the least committed to the Compstat mission. The level of acceptance of the patrol officers we surveyed in Lowell fell between the two.

It is possible that this latter finding was an artifact of our survey since we asked officers how important Compstat was to the goal of reducing "violent crime" rather than all crime. Minneapolis' property crime rate in 2000, the year we administered the survey, was much higher at 6,341 offenses per 100,000 people than in Lowell at 3,138 offenses per 100,000 and Newark at 5,728 per 100,000. Officers' responses, therefore, might merely have reflected a more general attitude that reducing violent crime was not as important to the department's Compstat mission as reducing property crime. This explanation is not very convincing, however, when we consider that the goal of Minneapolis's Compstat program—clearly displayed at every Compstat meeting, embodied in the department's daily routines, and required weekly of district commanders—was to reduce *all* index crimes, both violent and property, by a specific percentage.

A more persuasive explanation is that management unintentionally weakened the power of its message by reducing officers' discretion and insisting that they spend more time on specific crime-reduction strategies than on other tasks, such as calls for service, that the department deemed important. In other words, a strong commitment to the department's Compstat goal was actually weakened by the very activities that were designed to help reinforce its message.

Our general survey showed that of those large departments that had reported they had implemented a Compstat program, 92 percent reported that they "set specific objectives in terms that could be precisely measured." In this sense, the three departments were typical of other Compstat departments across the country. The overall missions that were clearly promulgated in much of their literature incorporated several measurable goals—to reduce or minimize crime and the fear of crime—within the more visionary objectives of maintaining citizens trust or fostering positive change.

Compstat, however, demands that departments establish a clear and specific organizational mission rather than a more general commitment to a broad set of objectives. When we asked, "In the last 12 months has your agency publicly announced a goal of reducing crime or some other problem by a specific number?" less than half, or 49 percent, of the departments that claimed to have implemented a Compstat-like program had announced a goal of reducing crime or some other problem by a specific amount. Almost a third of these departments had focused on "many different goals" (Weisburd et al. 2001, 31).

Our fieldwork supported these mixed findings from our national survey. The level of importance placed on creating mission statements with specific goals for crime reduction varied widely among the three departments. Minneapolis was the only department to commit to reducing crime by a certain amount. In comparison, the mission statement of the Lowell Police Department—"To become the safest city of its size in the United States"—stressed powerful imagery over potentially confusing percentage reductions, and Newark's mission statement was distinguished by the complete absence of an explicit crime-reduction goal. In fact, the chief made a point of *not* defining a goal by an "X percentage reduction" in crime, as he noted:

> In some cases I set specific goals, in crime, no, never. I'm never going to say bring down crime by 10 percent. We don't set objectives of reducing crime by 10 percent. I mean, we have thought about that, that's kind of difficult to do. I don't know how I turn around and say we'll reduce burglary by about 5 percent ... I would love to say we can come up with a percentage but we can't.

Our findings suggest that the argument that a clear and specific mission statement is necessary for fostering commitment to an organizational objective is more tenuous than it may at first appear. It may well be that there is no need for a value-laden goal to mobilize patrol officers' efforts to control crime. Our research also indicates that should a department adopt a mission statement to foster commitment to reducing crime, it might be unnecessary to announce a specific percentage goal. *Any* kind of Compstat-related statement underscoring the importance of crime reduction, no matter how ambitious, vague, or implicit, will resonate equally well with members of the organization. In fact, we observed a paradox: The more an organization that is responsible for a variety of important tasks focuses all of its energies on only one goal, the more likely it is that the goal will be met with disaffection among those whom it is intended to inspire.

The mission statement of the Minneapolis Police Department was identical to that of the NYPD during Bratton's first year of command. When we visited in 2000, the MPD had established the explicit goal to reduce Part I crimes by 10 percent. One of the district commanders noted that the department's formerly wordy mission statement, posted on each district's wall, was now "down to two words—reduce crime."[6] We used our survey to measure how much the patrol officers at the bottom of the police organization had adopted the "mindset" of top management. This gave us some indication of how mission statements appealed to those who were the primary targets of the department's message. Did they accept their organization's "core value" (Simons 1995, 82-83)?

We would expect the rank and file in the Minneapolis Police Department, which announced a highly visible and specific crime-reduction goal, to rank "reducing violent crime" as very important to the department's overall Compstat program. It is likely this message would resonate less powerfully with patrol officers at Lowell given our hypothesis that the audacity of the department's Compstat goal—"To be the safest city of its size in the United States"—would mitigate its impact in the department. It was just too ambitious for police officers to incorporate into their daily operations. Finally, since Newark's Compstat program did not establish a crime-reduction goal, we would predict that patrol officers would be least committed to the mission of crime reduction.

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[6] The Minneapolis Police Department met its goal in 2000; it reduced Part I crimes by 10.38 percent.

Despite the different levels of importance that individual departments accorded mission statements, our survey results revealed that patrol officers in all the departments generally considered Compstat integral to fighting crime. When we gave patrol officers a list of fifteen goals and asked them to rate them in terms of their importance to Compstat,[7] approximately 90 percent of the officers considered Compstat "very important" or "somewhat important" to the reduction of violent crime. Nevertheless, the difference in the number of those who thought it "very" and "somewhat" important was the opposite of what we had predicted (see Table 2). In Minneapolis, only 52 percent of patrol officers responded that reducing violent crime in the city was "very important" to the department's Compstat program. This contrasted sharply to Newark where a much higher proportion of the rank and file, or 82 percent, responded that this was a "very important" feature of Compstat. With 77 percent responding that reducing serious crime was "very important" to the department's Compstat mission, the response of Lowell's patrol officers lay between the two. Moreover, there was only a 5 to 6 percent difference across all three departments among patrol officers who responded that the importance of reducing violent crime to the department's Compstat strategy was "not at all important."

Table 2: The importance of reducing violent crime to the department's Compstat strategy

| | Importance of reducing violent crime in city* | | | |
	% Very important	% Somewhat important	% Not at all important	% Don't know
Lowell	77	15	6	2
Minneapolis	52	38	6	4
Newark	82	10	5	3

Chi Square	DF	Significance	N
48.626	6	*P<0.001	446

The large amount of publicity Compstat has received in the press and within police circles probably contributed to the broad consensus among patrol officers regarding Compstat's crime-control focus. For example, many highly visible public figures, including former commissioner William Bratton, have attributed the crime drop in New York City to Compstat, and their opinions have been widely publicized by the popular media and discussed at academic and professional meetings attended by police leaders. Moreover, the elegant simplicity of Compstat's goal helps explain its widespread recognition. In contrast to the confusion surrounding the many goals of community policing, Compstat and crime fighting are so closely associated with one another that they are almost synonymous. Finally, since Compstat validates the central professional role of the police—fighting crime—we would expect it to appeal to line officers (Brown 1981).

But what might explain the differences among the departments—a difference that is the opposite of what we would expect given the purported importance of mission statements? The paradox that a specific crime-control goal might fail to mobilize a very deep and widespread commitment to a department's objective could be explained by the relative unimportance of

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[7] For a list of the goals, see question one of the line officer survey (Appendix).

formal mission statements in promoting an organization's core values. Newark's Compstat program did not have a specific crime- reduction goal. Whereas Bratton used his mission statement to generate support among external constituents, Newark's chief rejected this approach to generating public interest in the department's efforts to make the city's streets safer. Nevertheless, the chief did manage to convey the importance of this goal, at least to those within the department, by exhorting his troops and using less direct means than articulating specific terms for crime reduction.

When he first assumed command of the department in 1996, Newark's chief marked his arrival with a town hall meeting attended by all department members. He made it clear that he wanted everyone in the organization to recognize "first and foremost" that they were to deal with "crime and service citizen's complaints," and Compstat was a means of refocusing their attention on this "core responsibility." This message was not encapsulated neatly in a goal to reduce crime by a certain percentage, but it was delivered effectively through the chief's emphasis on measurable results. His vision was further reinforced by the crime-fighting subculture embedded within the department's values, norms, structures, and daily activities.

The Newark Police Department was the most militaristic of the three we visited and paid particular deference to rank, especially that of the highest-ranking official in the organization. For example, when the chief entered the Compstat room his arrival was announced and all of his officers immediately stopped talking, stood at attention, and saluted. Furthermore, the tenor of the Compstat meetings was very serious, and the chief made it patently clear that district commanders were directly responsible for fighting crime. In contrast, the atmosphere at Compstat meetings in Lowell and Minneapolis, although tense, was more cooperative than combative. Lowell's chief argued that it was "counterproductive" to humiliate individuals during Compstat and advocated a more humanistic approach: "Police officers are competitive by nature and all you really need to do is give them the facts and ask them a question. They will go from there." Just asking district commanders a question in front of their peers, the chief said, would make them feel accountable. Similarly, the chief of the MPD described his department's Compstat process as "a more cooperative learning environment" in contrast to the more adversarial nature of the NYPD program.

In Newark, Compstat was a useful vehicle for the chief to send his command staff a crime-fighting message that was also conveyed clearly down the chain of command. It was sufficiently ingrained that officers knew not to bother their district commanders on the days preceding Compstat when they were busy preparing their presentations. To do so would be to risk a stern rebuke. Departments that are distinguished by their emphasis on formalized hierarchical authority, discipline, and technical efficiency—in Newark's case, an ardent commitment to minimizing response time—tend to stress the importance of crime control. James Q. Wilson referred to departments that adopt this style as "legalistic" (1968, 183-88). Crime control as a core value was embodied in the mechanics of Newark's Compstat meetings, but more importantly, it suffused the entire police organization. Consequently, this mitigated the need for an explicit mission statement announcing a measurable goal to inspire commitment. A crime- fighting ethos was conveyed by the words and actions of its leader and was incorporated within the department's subculture.

Unlike Newark, both Lowell and Minneapolis had highly visible mission statements that were widely recognized inside and outside of their departments. Both chiefs had made great efforts to publicize their missions in the local press in order to galvanize public support. In Minneapolis, the 10 percent crime-reduction goal was mentioned so often within the department that it was almost a mantra; and the "safest city" goal was widely recognized in Lowell. However, widespread recognition of a department's mission to reduce crime does not guarantee overwhelming commitment to management's core values. In Lowell, one respondent explained that the only time he heard the mission statement within the department was when an officer at a crime scene joked, "Uh-huh ... another murder in the safest city in America." Although, this sardonic remark might express some indifference toward such a lofty and improbable goal, it also supported our survey finding that Lowell's patrol officers, at the very least, recognized and accepted the relationship between Compstat and the department's orientation toward fighting serious crime.

In contrast to Lowell, our observations and interviews with rank-and-file officers in Minneapolis suggested that they were more ambivalent or hostile toward the department's mission statement. They bought into Compstat, not because they believed in the value of the mission, but because they were obliged to do so by the constant presence and pressure of a mission statement that clearly established Compstat's purpose. The specific crime-reduction goal was announced at every Compstat and embodied in the maps displayed at every district's roll call, but some questioned the department's commitment to this approach. It appeared that some patrol officers regarded the means that the department was using to attain this goal as disconnected from, and even counterproductive to, the message.

Not only might a mission statement fail to inspire a more general commitment to the organization's goals, it might actually undermine the message it is trying to deliver. The likelihood of this occurring will increase if the organization tries to achieve a number of goals that may conflict with one another. Disaffection among the rank and file was highest in Minneapolis where the department's leadership had placed a great deal of importance on community-oriented policing. Moreover, the MPD, in comparison to Lowell and Newark, had allocated the most resources to its community-policing program. The department had recently enhanced and developed its district-level partnerships with citizen groups by decentralizing its Community Services Bureau to provide each district with a Community Crime Prevention/SAFE (CCP/SAFE) team of community-policing specialists. In addition, just after our site visit ended in December 2000, the MPD initiated a community-outreach, or Community Engagement Project (CEP). While Compstat holds sector lieutenants directly accountable for crime levels in their beats, the CEP makes them responsible for their officers' relationships with local citizens. The LPD, under the leadership of its chief, was also strongly committed to community policing. Districts doubled as storefronts, and the department had invested in a motorized command center, "The Van," to provide a speedy and mobile response to neighborhood concerns. Despite the considerable success of community policing in Lowell, the department had not allocated additional resources, in the form of specialized community-policing teams, to its districts. The NPD committed the fewest resources to community policing, and our observations suggested that it was not as high a priority as in Minneapolis and Lowell. For example, many of the mini-stations the NPD had implemented in the 1980s were no longer used for neighborhood meetings; the community response team remained centralized in department headquarters; and community

policing was not a regular topic of discussion during either department meetings or our interviews.

The MPD's strategy of reducing officer autonomy by mandating directed patrol was a conscious management effort to keep officers from following reactive rather than preventive practices. The department's leadership felt that direction needed to come from top management until rank-and-file culture had fully accepted the preventive approach to crime control. Nevertheless, it appears that top management's message about the values of the organization unintentionally compromised rank-and-file commitment to the department's Compstat mission. By simultaneously emphasizing core values of both community policing and Compstat, top management made many of the rank and file feel caught between conflicting goals. For example, the importance of being responsive and attentive to citizens' needs appeared to conflict with an approach that de-emphasized calls for service. How could patrol officers provide an effective service to all members of the community while being asked to ignore some citizens' requests for assistance? Similarly, there was a contradiction in encouraging patrol officers to exercise decision-making autonomy while also limiting this autonomy by requiring that they police specific areas through directed patrol and employ the specific strategy of zero-tolerance policing.

When Bratton took over as commissioner of the NYPD, he reinforced the importance of the department's mission by constantly reminding, measuring, and rewarding officers for successfully reducing crime in their districts. This proved to be a powerful mechanism for connecting the mission statement to the realities of police work. A similar approach was tried in Minneapolis, but it seemed less successful. To help reduce crime, officers were issued verbal and written instructions to use their uncommitted time patrolling hot spots and engaging in aggressive order maintenance. District commanders underscored the importance of directed patrol by using a variety of approaches to hold their officers accountable. Some asked their patrol officers to mark their reports with an acronym DP, indicating that whatever action had been taken, whether it be an arrest or a citation, was a result of directed patrol. Other district commanders scanned their crime maps for evidence of increased patrol officer activity, such as an increase in arrests of suspicious persons, in areas they had identified as hot spots.

These strategies would appear to demonstrate top management's commitment to achieving its mission, but they also contributed to confusion and resentment among patrol officers. One officer commented that, "Answering 911 calls is not a priority. Response time to a person that needs help is not viewed as being a crucial part of squad work anymore." Other officers remarked that Compstat resulted in heavier patrol for high-crime areas and reduced patrol coverage in other neighborhoods. These responses demonstrate that Minneapolis' police managers matched the actions of their patrol officers with the value orientation of the organization, but they were not entirely successful in ensuring patrol officers' commitment to the department's crime-fighting goal. For some, the mission statement provoked cynicism, and for others it caused a stronger reaction. Some respondents resented the entire Compstat program because it devalued other important police tasks, such as fulfilling citizens' requests for help. In addition, it committed a significant amount of patrol resources to dealing with minor rather than more serious crimes, though this was the very purpose that it claimed to fulfill. As one officer put it succinctly, "You don't get to work on real crime [because of Compstat]," while another

commented, "[Compstat] focuses on the minor offenses hoping for them to turn into something bigger ... wasting time to stop people for loitering and not answering calls."

In sum, our data showed that officers in Lowell, Newark, and Minneapolis closely associated Compstat with crime fighting. Whether this could be attributed to a specific mission statement is less clear. Leadership in Minneapolis placed a premium on Compstat's crime-reduction goal through a highly visible mission statement that was reinforced by training and a policy of holding officers accountable for pursuing specific crime-fighting tactics. Minneapolis patrol officers, however, were less supportive of the department's overall goal than those in Newark, which had no Compstat-related mission statement, and Lowell, which had established a less tangible goal. In Newark, the goal of fighting and reducing crime was conveyed through the actions of a charismatic chief and resonated strongly with the department's strong authoritarian subculture. There was no need to formulate a crime-fighting mission statement because this core value was already embodied in the management and operation of the department. Compstat merely reinforced this technical orientation to reducing crime—a defining characteristic of the traditional model of policing (Weisburd et al. 2003).

Moreover, our findings suggested that when a department *does* implement a mission statement, it might be unnecessary to incorporate a specific crime-reduction goal to foster widespread commitment among all members of the department. Lowell's mission statement relied more heavily upon powerful rhetoric to mobilize its officers than on a more concrete crime-reduction goal, yet the rank and file seemed less resistant to the department's goal than it did in Minneapolis. Since a department's failure to meet a specific performance goal might lead to criticism within and outside the department, it might be in the department's interests to announce a more open-ended, visionary, or improbable goal that leaves some room for failure. By allowing for the possibility of failure, a department can shield itself from public criticism.

We might expect Compstat's narrow focus on crime fighting to conflict with an organization's commitment to the wider set of values associated with a community-policing program. In contrast to Compstat's exclusive focus on crime control, community policing gives equal importance to police-community partnerships, improving community relations, problem solving, and protection of citizens' rights. These critical areas, proponents of community policing argue, provide a more accurate representation of the complexity of the modern officer's role and the array of services that the public expects police to offer. Some research suggests that street officers are resistant to community policing because it is inconsistent with their crime-fighting subculture (Chan 1996; Greene 2000; Mastrofski et al. 2002). We have no evidence to suggest that Compstat's concentration on crime fighting reduces the organization's commitment to community policing, but our research does demonstrate that there may be some tension between the two. In Minneapolis, which exhibited the strongest commitment to community policing, at least in terms of resources, comments on our survey revealed that some felt very strongly that the department's focus on crime reduction in specific areas weakened its capacity to fulfill other important obligations, including its ability to deliver necessary services to all city residents. Some recognized that focusing on misdemeanor and quality-of-life crimes contributed to reductions in more serious crimes, but others disagreed. As one officer put it, "It seems that the 'good' citizens [who pay taxes and obey laws] are still pushed aside and do not get the service they deserve." Despite top management's best efforts to expand the department's goals

beyond crime control, line officers wanted to keep things simpler, since they saw a tension in trying to focus on both community policing and crime control.

Furthermore, despite the strong support of Minneapolis' mayor and the concerted attempts of the MPD to gain the community's acceptance, some city residents greeted Compstat with a great deal of suspicion. In response to an open-ended question on our survey, a patrol officer wrote that the, "Public was outraged at our aggressive police work; soon after [Compstat] started the media and community started 'police profiling.'" Members of the community, especially African Americans, associated Compstat with the kind of aggressive law enforcement that unfairly targets minorities. In order to lessen antipathy toward a specific mission statement within the department and to avoid harming police-community relations, it may be necessary for a department's leadership to make an even more concerted effort—over and beyond training sessions, meetings with community members, and public announcements—to convince line officers and community members that: (a) Compstat attempts to improve the overall quality of police service by emphasizing, not substituting, crime reduction for other worthy goals; and (b) Compstat is a program that specifically targets crime problems, not minorities. The MPD's Community Engagement Program represents an additional attempt by the department to foster closer police-community relations. Department leaders felt that strenuous community-outreach efforts through a variety of programs were necessary for the department to successfully foster widespread commitment to its crime-fighting mission among line officers and members of the community.

Internal Accountability

For a department's mission statement to be effective, officers need to be held responsible for meeting the goals it espouses. Perhaps the most vivid Compstat element is that of holding operational commanders accountable for knowing their command, being well acquainted with its problems, and accomplishing measurable results in reducing them—or at least demonstrating a diligent effort to learn from the experience. In short, Compstat makes *someone* responsible for tackling and reducing crime, and those who fail to do so will suffer adverse career consequences, such as removal from command.

Our fieldwork showed that regular Compstat meetings provided a very effective mechanism for making district commanders in all three departments feel directly accountable for their performance. District commanders expected the chief to ask many probing questions about crime, and they openly acknowledged that it was their responsibility to come to Compstat fully prepared with an array of responses. Some scholars have criticized police programs, such as community policing, for being rhetorical or symbolic (Klockars 1988), but Compstat meetings cannot be dismissed as scripted performances designed merely to impress visiting dignitaries, the press, and members of the public.

The recognition that Compstat makes command staff members feel accountable does not eliminate the possibility that this feeling is experienced infrequently, less intensely, or differently than the program's supporters allege. Compstat's capacity for developing a degree of accountability that is significantly higher than what has been achieved in the past ultimately rests upon its claim to provide significant and predictable consequences for performance. Therefore,

we need to examine these consequences carefully if we are to make a clearer assessment of whether Compstat is more bark than bite. How much can a chief punish those who fail to meet the goals of the organization, including removing them from their position? How much reward can a chief offer those who succeed?

Our observations suggested that incentives were largely limited to making public notice of good and bad performance. When Bratton took over the NYPD he had the power to transfer precinct commanders to less desirable posts or make their work life sufficiently unpleasant that some decided to retire early. Our observations suggested that top executives in our three sites shared similarly broad powers but were reluctant to use them in ways that could undermine their leadership. Furthermore, a chief's power is further constrained in smaller departments like Lowell. The small pool of qualified candidates for the position of district commander lowers the risk of losing one's position for marginal performance. Furthermore, the magnitude of the responsibility commensurate with the position, not to mention the administrative burdens, imposes additional constraints. In Lowell, it was unlikely that all who qualified would *choose* to serve as one of the three district commanders in the department. One interviewee pointed out that given the significant responsibilities of the position, "Maybe four out of eight captains [total] are willing to do this job." Finally, in small departments there may be very few positions above the rank of district commander, thus undercutting the incentive of promotion.

These limitations only had a small mitigating effect on the level of accountability experienced by district commanders across all three sites. At the same time, they did help foster a stronger impression, particularly among some of the lower ranks, that Compstat functions to ridicule command staff and operates primarily on a symbolic level as "just a show." The impression that Compstat is designed to expose district commanders to harsh criticism may weaken its appeal among the rank and file. In addition, since a defining characteristic of the Compstat accountability mechanism is the possibility of removal from command, a chief's reluctance to carry out this ultimate threat may undermine the legitimacy of the program.

Part of this cynicism surrounding Compstat's focus on accountability can be attributed to the very minor role street supervisors and line officers play in the overall Compstat process. Rank and file were not excluded from attending meetings, and Minneapolis, for example, patrol officers were required to attend one Compstat meeting per year and sergeants sometimes gave presentations. Approximately half of the patrol officers we surveyed, however, had not attended a Compstat meeting. Since the lower ranks rarely attended Compstat meetings, they tended to hear about how "so-and-so" was "balled out" rather than about positive features of Compstat, such as information sharing and problem solving, that contributed to crime reduction. This probably fed Compstat's powerful reputation among line officers as brutal and punitive rather than collaborative and creative. Our observations suggested that Compstat reinforced a more general impression among line officers that police organizations are punishment-centered bureaucracies. This is not the mindset chiefs want to foster when promoting a climate of innovative problem solving, since innovation increases the visibility and cost, if not also the likelihood, of failure.

More importantly, in the absence of other structures, our observations showed that line officers experienced accountability far less acutely than the district commanders. Furthermore,

how they experienced Compstat as an overall program was opposite to that of the department's middle managers. Since Compstat holds command staff directly accountable for resolving crime problems, middle managers were under a great deal of pressure to implement crime strategies. At the weekly or biweekly Compstat meetings, it was imperative that a district commander be able to demonstrate that he or she had identified any crime problem and had already implemented a response. In Newark, the stock response to the chief's question about whether a crime response had been implemented was "as we speak." In contrast, the primary responsibility of patrol officers was to follow the orders that flowed from district commanders and their executive officers down the chain of command. As a result of the pressure on district commanders, Compstat concentrates strategic decision making at the top of the organizational hierarchy rather than promoting initiative among the lower ranks. By limiting the decision-making autonomy of patrol officers, Compstat contradicts one of the central tenets of community- and problem-oriented policing—decentralized decision making resulting from a delegation of authority to initiate problem solving at the level of the rank and file (Goldstein 1990; Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1990).

Responses to our national survey and intensive site interviews showed that departments that have implemented a Compstat-like program consider internal accountability to be a very important feature. Certainly punishing middle managers for failing to meet the standards of Compstat accountability is a key element of this model. Nearly seven in ten of these departments told us that a district commander would be "somewhat" or "very likely" to be replaced if he or she "did not know about the crime patterns" in the district. A much smaller proportion of these departments reported that a district commander would be replaced simply because crime continued to rise in a district (Weisburd et al. 2001). This perhaps reflects Compstat's demand that commanders be familiar with problems and initiate solutions to them, though they are not held accountable for achieving outcomes that may be unresponsive to well-planned police interventions (Bratton 1998).

While the use of "punishment," in the form of a rebuke from the chief, to maintain accountability was very much apparent in Compstat meetings, we found that departments were much less likely to use tangible rewards to ensure internal accountability. If crime in a district declined, less than a quarter of Compstat departments reported that it was "very" or "somewhat likely" that the district commander would be rewarded with a promotion or desired job assignment (Weisburd et al. 2001, 32-34).

Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark fit very closely to the more general findings of our national survey. Like police departments nationwide, internal accountability was an integral component of their Compstat programs. Lowell's police chief explicitly recognized the importance of this feature when he defined Compstat as a means "to manage the police department in a timely manner with an eye toward accountability." Similarly, Newark's chief commented that in his twenty-eight years on the force middle mangers were not held accountable for crime levels, clearance rates, response time, and police corruption. "Compstat," he said, "turned that upside down. We now have developed a new culture, and what you see now in terms of Compstat today represents a total cultural change. And I think that's the biggest part of Compstat." A high-ranking official in the Minneapolis Police Department stated, "When I hear CODEFOR, I don't think of increases in street arrests, I think of accountability."

The district commanders we interviewed all recognized and accepted Compstat as a process that held them accountable for whatever occurred in their beats. For example, a district commander in Lowell commented that Compstat was a way of "keeping them honest," since "having things up there on a map can show you how bad things are, and you cannot say, 'Ooh, I missed those reports; I did not see them.'" This comment illustrates the central role that Compstat meetings played in the accountability process. Since all the command staff attended the weekly or biweekly meetings, Compstat provided top management with an ideal opportunity to display its authority and hold district commanders publicly responsible. For example, during a Compstat meeting in Newark, the chief ordered a sector lieutenant who failed to answer his questions adequately to "step down" and stand behind his sergeant. This act constituted a vivid and powerful act of shaming before the department's Compstat audience.

Since Compstat meetings hold district commanders directly responsible for their performance in front of their peers, they operate as a very effective accountability mechanism. The possibility of receiving praise did not motivate district commanders nearly as much as the possibility of public censure. This can be attributed to the very unpleasant and deeply visceral reactions that embarrassment provokes in most individuals (Miller 1995). Compstat's particular power is based on this assumption. The mere possibility of censure from the department's highest-ranking official in front of one's peers was motivation enough. The chance of a "roasting" from the chief and the district commander's reaction are the principal dramatic elements at Compstat meetings. Everything else—regular time and place of the meeting, recognizable presenters, similar order of events, familiar maps, and crime data—operates fairly predictably. The potency of this effect is further enhanced by the specific dramaturgical elements of Compstat meetings.[8] With the display of sophisticated maps, an audience of top-ranking police officials in full regalia, and a focus on crime-fighting strategies, Compstat successfully combines drama, imagery, and rhetoric. The result is a tension-filled atmosphere that conveys a powerful impression that crime control is the organization's most important goal, that the means of knowing the state of crime control are at management's fingertips, and that the levers of organizational action are at its disposal. At center stage in this dramaturgy are the district commanders, who bear the burden for the organization's success.

Our observations suggested that the impression of Compstat as a forum that punishes rather than rewards command staff for its performance is widespread among the lower ranks. Compstat provides a mechanism for making "people do the job they do," but some are clearly discouraged by the confrontational atmosphere that can characterize meetings. One officer in Lowell described Compstat as a forum where officers had "their balls ripped off" and surmised that this only served to make individuals "reluctant to speak up ... reluctant to do their job." A sergeant in the same department, who had attended a handful of Compstat meetings, described them as "nerve-racking" and remarked that they could be used "to humiliate or embarrass people."

The possibility of rebuke certainly appeared to make patrol officers aware that Compstat held district commanders to a high level of accountability. The general recognition among the

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[8] "Dramaturgy examines how symbols, both material and nonmaterial, are selectively presented in order to impress an audience" (Manning 2001, 317).

rank and file, however, of the unlikelihood that a district commander would be replaced for inadequate performance counteracted the potency of this mechanism.

During the first year of Compstat, 76 percent, or more than two-thirds, of all NYPD district commanders retired. Commissioner Bratton replaced them with middle-ranking officers who had reputations for being aggressive risk takers: "These were early and swift personnel replacements by a commissioner who prided himself on rapid and effective change" (Silverman 1999, 86). Resistance from mid-level managers has often caused top management's reform efforts to fail (Kelling and Bratton 1993). Following the major prescriptions of organizational development experts to accomplish organizational change (Beer 1980), Bratton was clearly committed to replacing the old guard. In an interview, he emphasized the importance of empowering a chief to replace underperforming managers:

> John Timoney [formerly on Bratton's team and the police chief of Philadelphia until 2002] has been given little power to move deadwood in Philly and there is a lot of it there. Similar problems exist in Los Angeles. They are still doing a lot of good things in both cities, but it slows the process down. You've got to move the deadwood and put in good managers to make any COMPSTAT style process work" (Dussault 1999).

Compstat's implementation corresponded with new leadership in all three departments, and the appointments of new chiefs in Lowell and Newark were accompanied by early retirements. One Lowell officer recalled that the incentive program to buy out officers was a "sign of the times," given the large number of older and more senior officers within the department. In Newark the district commanders who were in place when the chief first took over were encouraged to retire. Similarly, their replacements, or the "second Compstat generation," who were also members of the old guard, soon retired. This allowed the relatively new chief to place the "third generation," or those district commanders who were very supportive of Compstat—three of the four had been personal assistants to the top leadership—into these key command positions.

These examples illustrate how a chief can use his or her recent appointment as an opportunity to change personnel by encouraging the retirement of command officers who are less supportive of a new program. A chief can convey this message by reassigning the officers to specialized positions that have low status and little power. Alternatively, the chief can move members of the old guard into high status positions such as that of district commander, which they openly resist and for which they feel ill prepared. The chief can then contribute to this unpleasant work environment by exposing them to intense criticism. Of course, a chief can also assign officers to newly created positions as a reward for good performance.

When Compstat was up and running, none of the respondents in the three departments recalled a district commander being replaced for poor performance. In Lowell, some remembered a district commander being reassigned, but that was because he was uncomfortable with the public speaking and intense scrutiny involved in the Compstat process and asked to be reassigned. It is obviously different, however, for a district commander to ask for a transfer than to be removed by the chief for failing to fulfill the obligations of his or her position. Similarly,

praising a district commander during Compstat is different from offering a more tangible benefit such as promotion or pay increase.

Top executives have significantly more leeway in reassigning or promoting district commanders than members of the rank and file, who are protected by restrictive civil service and union regulations. Our observations suggested, however, that chiefs were very cautious about exercising this power. In order to maintain the support of department personnel, the selection, punishment, or reward of middle managers must appear to be based on fair, consistent, and objective criteria. The arbitrary exercise of authority opens the chief up to criticisms of favoritism or injustice and may undermine the legitimacy of the department's leadership. These concerns decrease the likelihood that a chief will replace his district commanders very often. Newark's chief appeared to acknowledge these limitations when he commented that retirement was the "easier way" of replacing those who resisted Compstat, presumably compared to reassigning them to another command. Furthermore, the restrictions on leadership are exacerbated in small police departments where there is only a small pool of qualified candidates, and a limited number of slots available for promotion. Top leadership's consequent reluctance to reassign underperforming district commanders to less desirable positions as a form of punishment weakens accountability under Compstat and helps create an impression among some that Compstat is more style than substance.

This impression is probably amplified when a chief fills key positions with officers who are widely acknowledged to be loyal to him and generally supportive of his reforms. At one of the sites, an officer questioned leadership's commitment to holding district commanders accountable when he stated, "No inspector has ever been demoted." Another respondent from this same department commented that one district commander's consistently poor performance in reducing crime had merely resulted in a transfer to a less visible and less crime-ridden district, where his performance still failed to improve. In relation to this incident, another officer commented: "[Compstat] does not hold [district commanders] accountable ... He fucked up [district X] so badly, and all they did was move him to [district Y]. They were okay when he was sent there, but look at them now, [district Y] is in the toilet. Is that [name of district commander] being held responsible for doing a shitty job? I don't think so." While there were undoubtedly many complex factors regarding this decision, the officer clearly associated the district commander's reassignment, rather than removal, with Compstat's failure to hold middle managers strictly accountable for their performance. A regular attendee at Lowell's Compstat meetings made a similar criticism of Compstat's apparent failure as an effective accountability mechanism. Having observed a district's steady increase in motor vehicle crime over successive Compstat periods, he exclaimed indignantly, "Can you tell me honestly that anything is getting done because of Compstat?"

The failure to replace district commanders helps explain the ambivalence patrol officers felt toward Compstat as an accountability mechanism. A higher proportion, or about a third, of patrol officers in Newark and Lowell responded that holding district commanders responsible for crimes in their beats was "not at all important" to Compstat compared to a quarter who considered it "very important" (see Table 3). The fact that patrol officers in Minneapolis were most likely to feel that holding district commanders accountable was "somewhat important" (51

percent) and the least likely to feel that this was "not at all important" (23 percent) explains the significant difference between the sites.

Table 3: The importance of holding district commanders accountable for crimes in their districts to the department's Compstat strategy

	Importance of holding district commanders accountable for crimes in their districts*			
	% Very important	% Somewhat important	% Not at all important	% Don't know
Lowell	26	35	34	5
Minneapolis	23	51	23	3
Newark	21	35	36	8

Chi Square	DF	Significance	N
14.560	6	*p<0.05	442

Whereas district commanders did not want to "look bad" in Compstat and felt accountable for having answers, the lower ranks experienced accountability far less intensely. A district commander might be rebuked for an inadequate response to the chief's inquiry, but line officers did not seem to feel that they were in the hot seat for crime increases. There was a general awareness among line officers that their district commanders were being held accountable and that "it was important to be in the right place at the right time," as a sergeant in Minneapolis stated. This suggests that some sense of accountability did trickle down to the lower ranks. A district commander from the same department echoed this perspective when he noted that district commanders were getting better at "pushing the responsibility downwards."

Our fieldwork, however, also revealed that line officers did not feel the same kind of pressure as district commanders for their own performance. Approximately half, or 40 to 50 percent, of the patrol officers we surveyed responded that holding *officers* accountable for crime in their beats was "not at all important" to the departments' Compstat program, although this feature was more important to patrol officers in Lowell (see Table 4).

Table 4: The importance of holding officers accountable for crimes in their beats to the department's Compstat strategy

	Importance of holding officers accountable for crimes in their beats*			
	% Very important	% Somewhat important	% Not at all important	% Don't know
Lowell	18	38	38	6
Minneapolis**	7	44	47	3
Newark	11	35	44	10

Chi Square	DF	Significance	N
15.354	6	*p<0.05	445

** Does not sum to 100 percent due to rounding

Since there was no structure comparable to Compstat meetings for transmitting accountability to line officers, they did not experience accountability as intensely as district commanders. When asked, "How often does your supervisor discuss what happened at Compstat meetings?," 61 percent of those officers we surveyed in Lowell responded "never" (43 percent) or "every few months" (18 percent); for Minneapolis thirty-four percent responded "never" (fourteen percent) or "every few months" (20 percent); and for Newark it was 42 percent (8 percent and 34 percent respectively). These findings challenge Silverman's assertion that the impression Compstat creates by grilling district commanders on their crime-reduction efforts "reinforces the patrol officers desire to combat crime" (1999, 194). Our research suggested that it was far more likely that the sense of accountability was diluted as one moved down the command structure. As one Lowell officer put it when asked about Compstat, "If you don't go, you don't know." Similarly, a patrol officer in Minneapolis who had not attended a Compstat meeting since receiving his initial training commented, "Compstat is a meeting for the brass. It doesn't have anything to do with the street."

Since accountability relies heavily upon a public setting with high-ranking officials in attendance, it follows that accountability is experienced less acutely outside of this setting. Minneapolis had made the greatest attempt to push accountability down the chain of command, since district commanders and their lieutenants would check officer reports or, less frequently, crime maps to see if their patrol officers had engaged in directed patrol. This mechanism, however, was limited. Unlike Compstat meetings, it did not lead commanders to track the success of these tactics over long periods of time or assign any kind of follow-up. The primary purpose was to ensure that patrol officers were following orders, not hold them accountable for the quality of their response. In contrast to Minneapolis, the responsiveness of patrol officers in Lowell and Newark depended heavily on the will and skill of district commanders to remember whom they had assigned to specific crime problems, what tactics they had recommended, and whether the problem had abated. Given the heavy administrative burden on district commanders, our observations suggested that this level of scrutiny was desultory and usually afforded only the most serious problems.

Of course, Compstat might have worked indirectly to convey a sense of accountability down the chain of command. In the MPD, top management expected middle managers to hold rank-and-file officers accountable; and, across sites, district commanders who had been rebuked in Compstat for inadequate strategies could always return to their districts and admonish their line officers. The force of the message was considerably weakened, however, for three reasons: (1) Compstat ultimately held middle managers, not line officers, accountable; (2) The message was not delivered by the highest-ranking official in the police department, and (3) It did not result in public censure on the same scale as embarrassing line officers in front of their peers.

It was clear that line officers experienced accountability less acutely than district commanders, but our research also suggested that the pressure Compstat put on district commanders to reduce crime had a significant impact on *how* line officers experienced Compstat. One of the important effects of internal accountability under Compstat is to centralize decision-making authority. Since district commanders are ultimately held responsible for implementing crime strategies, decision-making authority is shifted away from the rank and file toward middle management. Since one of the central tenets of problem-oriented and community-oriented policing is to *decentralize* decision-making authority, Compstat would appear to counterpoise this approach. Instituting district-level Compstats might help devolve decision-making authority further down the organization, as it did in New Orleans. Here the department held sector-level Compstat meetings the day before the precinct commander had to appear at the department Compstat meeting. These could last as long as two-and-a half hours and involved detectives, patrol supervisors, and some patrol officers (Gurwitt 1998). In Newark and Minneapolis, however, district-level meetings were limited to the district commander, executive officers, district detectives, and operations sergeants. Rank and file were, therefore, largely excluded from the Compstat process, as they were at Lowell, a much smaller department that did not hold any Compstat meetings at the level of the individual district.

Our research revealed that decision making was experienced by line officers under Compstat as primarily a series of commands directing them what to do. It also appeared that these commands were rarely justified or explained to line officers as part of the Compstat process, given the generally low level of officer awareness of the specifics of Compstat. This was especially true in Minneapolis, where rank-and-file officers were ordered to patrol problem areas identified by Compstat when they were not responding to a call. This contrasts sharply to community policing, which encourages the rank and file to take ownership of their beats, to exercise considerable discretion, and to solve problems. By holding district commanders disproportionately accountable for their areas and by not transmitting this message directly down the chain of command, the three departments gave patrol officers no sense that, "This is my beat, my problem, and *I* must find ways to solve it." The concentration of strategic decision making among middle managers reinforces one of the key features of the traditional policing model that has characterized police organizations for much of the twentieth century—centralized command and control (Weisburd et al. 2003; Willis et al. 2004a).

In this respect, Compstat works very much the way that Bratton intended. In Bratton's view the NYPD's community-policing approach under Lee Brown had lost focus on the ultimate goal of crime reduction (Kelling and Coles 1996). He believed that the young officers assigned to community-policing beats were "unprepared and ill equipped" to handle complex community

problems (Bratton 1998, 198-99; Greene 1999, 74). Since Bratton did not trust patrol officers to make good decisions, he decided to hold middle managers responsible for reducing crime. In response to a question on the practice of accountability under Compstat, Bratton stated:

> One of the significant drivers behind my career was working under a lot of incompetent bastards. I worked hard to get past the incompetents. Making COMPSTAT work meant doing our best to bring everybody to the table, giving them a chance to perform and, if they didn't, moving them out ... where COMPSTAT isn't having as dramatic a result you see the opposite (Dussault 1999).

Our findings from the three sites suggested that accountability operated in a more complex manner than Bratton's description revealed. It was established through the risk of public embarrassment, not removal from command. Furthermore, the severe limitations on a chief's capacity to punish sub-par performance in his department increased the likelihood that some would regard accountability merely as a symbolic device. Finally, since accountability was established through Compstat meetings that were largely restricted to members of the command and administrative staff, Compstat had only a very limited impact on the level of accountability that line officers felt for reducing crime in their beats. There were no similarly powerful mechanisms for extending accountability down the chain of command or reinforcing it outside that setting. The exclusion of first-line supervisors and patrol officers from Compstat meetings, the uneven impact of accountability, and the concentration of decision-making authority at the command level suggest that Compstat represents a shift toward the centralization of command under the traditional model of policing—one that has been heavily criticized by community-policing advocates.

Geographic Organization of Operational Command

Compstat holds middle managers to a high level of accountability, but it does not do so without providing them with the means to carry out the Compstat mission. Mid-level managers are empowered in this model through the concept of geographic organization of operational command, which focuses operational command on the policing of specific territories and delegates primary decision-making responsibility to commanders with responsibility for territories, such as districts. That is, the organization puts a higher priority on commanders who specialize in territory than on those who specialize in function and gives district commanders a larger share of the department's resources to control. Functionally specialized units—such as patrol, detectives, school resource officers, and traffic officers—are placed under the command of a district commander, or arrangements are made to facilitate their responsiveness to the commander's needs.

Results from our national survey suggested strong support for Compstat's emphasis on geographic organization of operational command. When we asked whether departments gave authority to middle managers to select problem-solving strategies for low-level problems, 90 percent of Compstat-like departments claimed to have given this authority to district commanders, line supervisors, or specialized unit commanders. This clearly demonstrated that empowering middle managers with decision-making autonomy is an important feature of Compstat departments (Weisburd et al. 2001, 34-35).

In this section, we compare the organization and operation of operational command in the three sites. We also assess to the extent to which district commanders had authority over department sections and units that had traditionally operated independently of them. Our findings demonstrate that decision-making authority had devolved furthest in Minneapolis—one level below district commander to sector lieutenant. Furthermore, despite the extensive autonomy of middle managers in the three sites, the nature of this decision-making autonomy was complex. In all three departments, the chief and his deputies were willing to limit the authority of their district commanders, but in Minneapolis the nature of decision-making authority was further complicated by the relationship between district commanders and sector lieutenants, who both had twenty-four-hour responsibility for geographic areas. Finally, the extent to which functional differentiation had been replaced with "geographically based management" also varied among departments (Silverman 1999,149). For example, none of the specialized units—those that focused on specific crimes or vices and had a great deal of autonomy—in the Lowell and Newark police departments were placed under the direct supervision of district commanders. In contrast, district commanders in each of Minneapolis' districts supervised a specialized community response unit (CRT), a property crimes investigative unit, and a community crime prevention or CCP/SAFE team.

Compared to the traditional model of policing, where command authority is centralized at the top of the police organization, Compstat in the three departments had helped shift decision making down the chain of command to middle managers. One way to quantify this change is to consider the level or levels in which the organization vests responsibility for a space, whether it is a beat, sector, or city. Before the advent of community policing, each of our departments was organized temporally. A captain or lieutenant operated as a shift or watch commander and was responsible for supervising officers on a single shift for the entire city; once the shift was over, his or her responsibilities ceased. Thus, under the old system, the lowest-ranking officer in the department with *twenty-four-hour responsibility* for a geographic area was located at the command level—the deputy chief of operations. As a result of Lowell's community-policing program, this power devolved down one level to the district commanders, who were all captains and had twenty-four-hour responsibility for their districts. The department's Compstat program, implemented two years after community policing in Lowell, increased the level of scrutiny and accountability borne by district commanders. In other words, Lowell's community-policing program and its Compstat program had increased the decision-making authority of the district commanders, but they had not shifted this authority any further down the organizational structure. In contrast, the implementation of Compstat in the MPD and NPD had decentralized decision-making power even further. During our time at Newark, one of the districts had been selected as part of the department's experimental Geographical Accountability Program (GAP) and had been decentralized into three sectors, each headed by a lieutenant who had twenty-four-hour responsibility for a sector. Since Newark's attempt at greater decentralization was experimental and limited to only one district, we do not focus on it here. The Minneapolis Police Department had attempted to decentralize decision-making authority furthest within the department. All, not just one, of its districts were subdivided into smaller geographic units or sectors, each headed by a sector lieutenant. By extending decision-making authority beyond its district commanders, Minneapolis had attempted to move decision-making power down an additional level within the organization.

Since Compstat encourages police departments to decentralize territorially and to delegate greater responsibilities to the commanders of territories, we briefly describe each department's organizational structure before examining the nature and extent of district commanders' decision-making authority.

Organizational structure

In some respects the structure of all three police departments under Compstat remained quite traditional. The police administration and most specialized units, such as criminal and special investigations divisions, were centralized in headquarters. Nevertheless, the level of geographic decentralization was still high since each department was partitioned into individual districts. Lowell's three (North, East, West), Minneapolis' five (Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Downtown Command), and Newark's four districts (North, East, South, West) operated relatively autonomously as command bases. For example, district commanders in all three departments implemented strategies and directed operations from district substations. Furthermore, district substations in Newark and Minneapolis held their own roll calls, though this was not the case in the much smaller department of Lowell.

Decision-making authority

Decision making, like organizational structure, was significantly more decentralized in all the departments than it had been under the traditional policing model. Before the widespread introduction of community policing in the 1980s, police chiefs were primarily responsible for making decisions about department policy and procedure without much input from middle managers. Since all three departments had decentralized geographically as part of their shift toward community policing, district commanders possessed significant decision-making autonomy. Under Compstat, the MPD's top management had taken this one step further by subdividing its districts into smaller geographic units headed by lieutenants.

Despite these attempts to decentralize the decision-making process, the authority to make decisions without supervisory approval had only moved down one or two levels in all three departments. All the district commanders clearly believed that they possessed significant autonomy in managing their own districts. They were ultimately responsible for choosing and implementing crime strategies and rarely had to justify their decisions, although they tended to report what they had implemented at Compstat. In Lowell, one district commander stated that he very much felt, "like the captain of his own ship," and our observations suggested that this sentiment was also commonplace in the MPD and NPD.

Despite the extensive autonomy enjoyed by district commanders in Lowell and Newark and, to a lesser extent, by sector lieutenants in Minneapolis, the exact nature of this autonomy under Compstat was complex. Our national survey reported that 90 percent of departments with Compstat-like programs gave district commanders, line supervisors, or specialized unit commanders the authority to select problem-solving strategies for low-level problems, but this percentage dropped to 70 percent when it came to authorizing middle managers to choose how to deal with *higher visibility problems* (Weisburd et al. 2001). These results suggested that middle managers under Compstat possessed a significant amount of decision-making autonomy, but the

chief and his deputies might sometimes curtail their authority. Responses to our national survey, which examined the extent to which departments were willing to give middle managers greater responsibility for determining beat boundaries or staffing levels, provided even less support for the ideal of geographic organization of operational command. Only four in ten departments that claimed to have implemented a Compstat-like program gave district commanders, line supervisors, or specialized unit commanders the authority to determine beat boundaries. Even fewer, only 18 percent, gave these commanders the authority to determine routine staffing levels (Weisburd et al. 2001).

Our fieldwork supported this finding from our survey. District commanders did possess significant autonomy, but headquarters still played an important role in how decisions were made at the district level. This was especially true when it came to critical issues, such as the distribution of departmental resources.

In Lowell, the district commanders were largely responsible for redrawing their beat boundaries during the department's bid process.[9] During our research period, the district commanders used their extensive familiarity with their sectors in redrawing cruiser and walking routes. This reconfiguration involved the deputy superintendent of operations and district commanders, with the chief rarely interfering with their decisions. This did not mean that he was unwilling to overrule any decision that he felt was inappropriate. Under pressure from both the community and city to increase the total number of walking routes, the chief overturned a district commander's decision to cut one officer's walking time in half to four hours. The problem of scarce resources in the face of increasing demand for beat officers contributed to the complexity of this issue, and good arguments were presented on both sides. Similarly, officers walking the beat were sufficiently important to Newark's top brass that they made it almost impossible for a district commander to cancel a walking post. Minneapolis' top management also limited the decision-making autonomy of the district commanders. Headquarters, not district commanders, established the criteria determining the allocation of resources, such as assignment of additional personnel to the districts. One district commander commented, "The department priorities are set by the front office, so they usually shift the resources to deal with what they deem important." For instance, only the chief or deputy chief had the authority to move a district's community response team across districts. One district commander appeared unhappy about this form of centralized decision making when he complained that Compstat issues of staffing and resources "hadn't kept up." He suggested that the department needed "allocation meetings" in addition to its regular pre-Compstat and Compstat meetings.

These scenarios illustrate that district commanders' autonomy might have been extensive but also operated within certain limits defined from above. Decisions about routine staffing levels also revealed the persistence of the traditional hierarchical command structure. Should district commanders require additional personnel, they did not have carte blanche to borrow from elsewhere. Instead, it was customary to approach either the chief or his deputies for permission, and they would try to be accommodating.

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[9] As part of their union contract, every eighteen months patrol officers were allowed to request reassignment to any beat in the city. Priority was then given to those officers with the greatest seniority, or most years on the force.

Like the district commanders, Minneapolis' sector lieutenants played a more significant role in the Compstat process than in Lowell and Newark. In the LPD and NPD, each district commander was assigned a lieutenant or executive officer who provided command support. At Lowell, the executive officer's primary responsibilities were to read crime reports and convey the district commander's orders down the chain of command rather than act as a key decision maker. In Newark, the executive officers played a similar role, but they also participated more regularly and extensively in Compstat meetings. They were not expected to present data for their districts unless the district commander was absent, but they were required to respond to the chief's questions. Furthermore, Newark's executive officers attended their district's pre-Compstat meetings, where they helped prepare their district commanders for Compstat by discussing individual cases, raising questions, and sharing ideas on crime problems and strategies, as well as going over the crimes and patterns that would be shown on the maps at Compstat. Unlike their counterparts in Newark, Lowell's executive officers did not stand beside their district commanders during formal Compstat presentations and were rarely called upon to answer questions or provide suggestions. Given its size, Lowell did not have pre-Compstat meetings, so the contribution of executive officers to Compstat was more informal and less systematic. Despite these differences, executive officers in Lowell and Newark performed very similar tasks in providing command and administrative assistance to their district commanders.

In contrast, Minneapolis' executive officers, or sector lieutenants, were held considerably more accountable than their counterparts in Lowell and Newark for whatever happened in their beats. They were distinguished by the exercise of twenty-four-hour responsibility for a geographic area. As a result of the variety of tasks and level of decision-making authority commensurate with this position, the union had negotiated a 31 percent pay increase for the sector lieutenants.

Despite this attempt to devolve decision making down the chain of command, the autonomy of Minneapolis' sector lieutenants was more restricted than the autonomy of its district commanders. For example, district commanders, not sector lieutenants, were ultimately responsible for overseeing operations and settling disputes within their districts. This is not to suggest that sector lieutenants merely followed orders from above. They collaborated closely with other lieutenants in the CRT and CCP/SAFE units. As a result, district commanders were not required to supervise the investigative operations of these specialized units.

It is difficult to generalize about the role of the sector lieutenant since it varied according to the particular personality of the officers who occupied the position and their relationship with the district commander. This complexity was captured in our interviews. While the chief referred to sector lieutenants as "the key rank" in the Compstat process, one district commander described them as "tasking sergeants." The difference would seem to rest upon differing interpretations of the level of autonomy associated with this position. The chief's characterization implied that sector lieutenants operated as primary decision makers, while the district commander's remark appeared to emphasize their importance in providing invaluable command support and conveying orders to the rank and file. The reality of the sector lieutenant's role probably lies somewhere between these positions. In some districts the sector lieutenants operated with minimal supervision from their district commanders, while in others, the district commander assumed a leadership role in advising and directing his or her sector lieutenants.

Still, no matter what subtle differences existed between the levels of decision-making authority exercised by sector lieutenants, district commanders remained ultimately responsible for whatever decisions were made in their district. In the final instance, which was Compstat, the buck stopped with them.

In addition to giving mid-level managers the authority to make decisions that once belonged to top management, Compstat requires that functional differentiation, a conventional feature of police organizations, be replaced with, or at least de-emphasized by, geographically based management. Functionally specialized units, that focus on specific crimes or vices and possess a great deal of autonomy, are supposed to be placed under the direct command of district commanders or made responsive to their needs. In Lowell and Newark, Compstat had made a very modest contribution to geographically based management. In these departments, some detectives were assigned to the districts, where they fell under a district commander's direct command; but nearly all the specialized units, including the central investigations or detective units, continued to operate physically out of headquarters and autonomously from the district commanders. Aside from the reassignment of some detectives to the districts, it was clear that the supervision of specialized units—such as gang, homicide, domestic violence, and community response—had not been transferred to district commanders as a result of Compstat.

In Minneapolis, however, a greater shift toward geographic management had been achieved. Each district commander was responsible for his or her own property crimes investigation unit, CRT, and CCP/SAFE unit. Each district's property crimes investigations unit handled property crimes, including robbery, in its geographic area; and each district possessed resources, such as fingerprinting equipment, that had tended only to be available at central headquarters. Furthermore, each district commander directed two community response teams— each composed of eight patrol officers supervised by one sergeant—that were assigned to either the day or night shift. Since they were not held responsible for answering 911 calls, they could concentrate all their efforts on tackling prostitution, narcotics offenses, and other quality-of-life crimes. Finally, the CCP/SAFE units assigned to each district were responsible for problem solving and community building. Formerly operating out of central headquarters, they were decentralized under Compstat to foster closer collaboration between the police and local community in addressing crime problems.

The nature of decision-making autonomy and the level of functional specialization may have varied among the departments, but geographic organization of operational command had contributed to two internal organizational challenges that were common to all three: (1) the complexity of coordinating tasks both between central units and districts and across districts and shifts, and (2) the disproportionate burden of responsibility placed on middle managers in an organization that is structured both geographically and temporally.

Coordination issues

We noted earlier that these organizations were considerably more decentralized in terms of both territory and decision making than more traditional departments. For example, investigations were no longer the sole responsibility of a centralized detective unit operating out of department headquarters. In all of the sites we visited, some central detectives had been

reassigned to the individual districts. These detectives were responsible for investigating all the property crimes— both burglary and theft—and quality-of-life crimes that occurred within their individual districts, and they operated under the direct supervision of their district commander. Investigations of the most serious crimes—homicide, organized crime, and sex crime—remained the responsibility, however, of each department's centralized Criminal Investigations Division (CID). Unlike the detectives operating out of the districts, central detectives answered to their own commanding officer, the officer in charge of the CID. Obviously, the members of any organization that is structured both geographically and functionally will need to find ways to share information and coordinate their crime responses. In our three sites, Compstat meetings facilitated information sharing and coordination among districts and also between districts and centralized units. Minneapolis' chief clearly felt that this was a useful function of the department's Compstat program. He surmised that the presentations of the department's centralized units at Compstat gave the impression "of [their] being available to precincts."

Compstat may go some way toward fostering an impression of availability, but it is clearly insufficient as a structure. To further facilitate information exchange, district commanders, district detectives, members of the CID, or the various heads of specialized units attended a variety of regular command-staff meetings. Nevertheless, given the sheer volume of information generated in modern police departments, these meetings still did not suffice. Consequently, each department supplemented these more formal mechanisms by relying heavily upon individuals to take the initiative to contact and communicate with one another largely via phone or email. It was customary, for example, for Newark's district commanders to have informal conversations to decide which district was responsible for dealing with a crime problem in the rare event that a crime occurred on the boundary of two districts. A possible resolution would be an informal agreement whereby each district commander committed the same amount of resources, a patrol car for example, to deal with the problem; the chief might also choose to intervene and assign responsibility.

In sum, despite the limitations of regular Compstat meetings as a coordinating mechanism, the level of accountability experienced by district commanders under Compstat did seem to have a cultural benefit. Our observations suggested that decision makers felt encouraged or compelled to undertake self-initiated and less public communications. Should a problem fall between the cracks, they risked censure from above.

Obviously under these circumstances the failure of an individual to take initiative could lead to organizational dissonance. We heard gripes in all three departments about the problems involved in sharing information between specialized units and the districts, especially that surrounding the investigation process. At Minneapolis' annual command meeting to evaluate Compstat's operation within the department, a district commander complained that the department's gang unit, which was located within the centralized Special Investigations Division, did not share information about what it was doing with the districts. He noted, "That sort of information would be helpful to me and other district commanders." At the same meeting, a member of the top brass remarked that, "They [the gang unit] are reluctant to share too much because they feel that they do secret stuff." Some respondents in Lowell similarly commented that tension between the central and district detectives could have hampered coordination and communication within the organization. Newark had sought to overcome some of these problems

by incorporating a more frequent and systematic communication structure into the organization. A single central detective was assigned to each district to transmit information to and from headquarters. This liaison was responsible for attending district-level Compstat meetings, in addition to the regular meetings that took place four times per week between the CID and district detectives. Despite this mechanism, however, concerns surrounding information sharing and effective communication between the CID and the districts were frequently raised at Newark's department-level Compstat meetings.

Geographic versus temporal organization

The feature that contributes most significantly to coordination problems is the uneasy relationship among members of an organization that must operate both geographically and temporally. District commanders were held directly accountable for whatever happened in their districts over a twenty-four-hour period, although they were only on duty for eight hours during the day shift. Therefore, each department had to make arrangements to ensure that a district commander's orders were carried out while he or she was off-duty. In Lowell and Newark, this might be the responsibility of a lieutenant or desk sergeant, but the district commander was still ultimately responsible for making sure his or her decisions were conveyed across shifts and actually implemented at the level of the street. In Minneapolis, the sector lieutenants shared this responsibility, since they exercised twenty-four-hour responsibility for everything that occurred in their areas of the city.

These coordination problems return us to the challenges associated with accountability. Some middle managers felt that being held responsible for everything that happened in their district or sector, even while off-duty, was demanding and somewhat unfair. In Lowell, the district commanders were almost entirely responsible for crime in the city and had to answer to the chief during Compstat. This, in effect, shifted a major part of the burden of managing the police organization onto the shoulders of only three people (Willis et al. 2004b). One of Lowell's district commanders noted that the current system let everyone else "off the hook," while another respondent noted that some did not worry about conveying command decisions to the lower ranks because "the heat falls on the district commanders." Similar reservations were expressed by some of Minneapolis' sector lieutenants. One expressed concern about the lack of supervision in a sector when its sector lieutenant was not on duty. He added, "People need direction, and when a sector lieutenant is not around during each shift sometimes there may be issues." In a separate interview at the same department, a district commander offered a similar opinion when he stated, "They [sector lieutenants] can't be here twenty-four hours a day."

To sum up, the geographic operation of operational command in all three departments under Compstat did provide middle managers with considerable authority. In general, just a few individuals had primary responsibility for controlling crime in the city, but this responsibility had devolved furthest down the organizational hierarchy in Minneapolis. To support them in their endeavors, middle managers possessed significant decision-making autonomy. In comparison, Compstat's impact upon the overall *structure* of these departments was more varied. In Lowell and Newark, specialized units were theoretically available to district commanders but did not fall under their direct supervision. District commanders continued to be responsible only for patrol officers. In contrast, the level or dosage of geographic organization of operational

command was considerably higher in Minneapolis. District commanders were given a significantly larger share of the department's resources, since they were assigned several specialized units in addition to the patrol officers in their districts.

Organizational Flexibility

Having the authority to respond to problems is a necessary but insufficient condition for middle managers to implement their decisions effectively. They must also have adequate *resources*. Compstat promises a rapid and effective response to incipient problems. Since these problems are unpredictable, the organization needs to be flexible in its allocation of resources. Police organizations, however, are usually designed in ways that restrict their capacity for flexibility. First, they are highly bureaucratic and operate according to detailed rules and regulations, many of which are imposed or embraced by police administrators themselves. This makes departments much more successful at performing routine tasks in response to highly predictable work demands than at developing the capacity for coping with the unexpected. Second, administrators' ability to make their organizations flexible is constrained by other forces inside the organization, especially those concerned with employees' rights and management's responsibility to negotiate for changes from organizational routines (Mastrofski 2002). For example, the ability of middle managers to change work shifts and job assignments tends to be constrained by inflexible regulations imposed by labor union contracts. Third, the department experiences pressure from forces outside the organization—politicians, businesses, the press, neighborhood associations, and a host of other interest groups—that want to determine just how and where officers will spend their time. Sometimes these pressures reinforce and support what management believes should be the department's priorities, but often they constrain what management may do in coping with unexpected problems and work demands.

One of the ways that police organizations have traditionally coped with unpredictable fluctuations in work demand is to overstaff their patrol units relative to the demand they expected on a given work shift (Reiss 1992). That is, they built in slack time during which officers engaged in preventive patrol, though their principal function was really to be available for work that might arise, especially that which might require an emergency response. Typically, police departments were encouraged to build in sufficient slack to cope with significant catastrophes that might come up. O. W. Wilson advocated systematic incorporation of this flexible capacity into the calculation of staffing needs (Wilson and McLaren 1972). For many years this approach was widely practiced among police departments and accepted by those who approved their budgets, but the ethos of a more efficient, results-oriented policing has changed all that. Community policing, problem-oriented policing, and Compstat all call for officers to engage in more directed activities that focus on preventing and solving problems, spending time with the community, and engaging in crime-reduction—all of which work to diminish the slack time available through preventive patrol.

In this even more constrained environment, how can police departments become more flexible? They can attempt to negotiate with collective bargaining units for greater flexibility in making job and shift assignments. They can budget for overtime, which allows managers to work around the constraints of set work shifts. They can create special units, or taxi squads, that are not bound to a particular geographic area or work shift and can be flexible about when and where

they work. They can require or reward cooperation and teamwork within and across organizational units. Ultimately, the flexibility of the police organization is displayed when managers are able and willing to alter allocation structures and routines in response to non-routine work demands.

In our national survey, organizational flexibility was measured by a department's response to two questions: (1) To what extent had a department reallocated resources, such as reassignment and overtime, to the crime/disorder problem that had required the most effort in the last twelve months?; and (2) To what extent did middle managers have general authority to approve requests for flexible hours or mobilize SWAT units to specific operations? Although these two items also reflected the commitment of the department to geographic organization of operational command, they did focus directly on the extent of flexibility in the allocation of departmental resources. In the national survey, departments that claimed to have implemented a Compstat-like program did appear to allow a great deal of organizational flexibility. Eighty-five percent of these departments had reassigned patrol officers to new units, areas, or work shifts to address this primary problem. Eighty-one percent of departments had used overtime to provide personnel to deal with the problem (Weisburd et al. 2001).

There was significant variation in the level of organizational flexibility among the departments we observed. In Lowell, the most common way of reallocating resources outside of normal patterns was for district commanders to do so on an ad hoc or informal basis, which minimized disruptions to department routine. The most likely occurrence was for a district commander to take a patrol officer or detective away from the more routine activities of their shift and ask them to pay particular attention to a specific area. The chief might also do this. For example, in response to the ongoing problem of motor vehicle crimes in one district of the city, Lowell's police chief requested that a central detective be assigned to work more closely with the CAU. In addition, the LPD, if necessary, would pay officers overtime as part of a crime-reduction strategy. For example, the chief responded to the brutal mugging of a woman in the highly visible downtown area by authorizing overtime funds for additional patrol over a two-week period.

This ad hoc reallocation of resources was also a common feature in Newark and Minneapolis, but these departments had taken greater strides to increase organizational flexibility by relying more on task forces and taxi squads. These departments' greater capacity for organizational flexibility probably reflects their size. Since they were larger than the LPD, they had more resources available for allocation to emerging crime problems. In Newark, the department was constantly forming and disbanding special task forces in response to major problems that emerged. These task forces were directed by the chief and his deputies, rather the district commanders, and operated out of an individual district or central headquarters. However, within-district flexibility was greatest in Minneapolis. Each district was permanently assigned a CRT that did not have a specific geographic assignment and was available to the district commander to use when and where she or he pleased in the district. Freed from responding to 911 calls, the CRT provided all district commanders with a valuable mechanism for directing resources quickly and efficiently to non-routine problems as they arose.

Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark might have differed significantly in the level of organizational flexibility within their separate districts, but organizational flexibility *among* the districts was underdeveloped in all three departments. Ironically, this could be attributed to two features of Compstat: (1) Compstat's commitment to increasing geographic organization of operational command by increasing the allocation of resources to each district commander, or within-district flexibility, simultaneously decreased the organization's capacity to shift resources *among* districts; and (2) Compstat's emphasis on internal accountability fostered competition that limited teamwork among districts.

Finally, organizational flexibility in all three departments was generally limited by traditional internal and external challenges that included lack of manpower, conventional approaches to resource allocation, and city politics. These challenges are very difficult to overcome, but we observed a variety of attempts to reduce the constraints imposed by tight budgets and insufficient manpower.

We noted above that a common way of reallocating resources within districts was to direct a patrol officer or detective to pay particular attention to a specific problem area. Compstat increased this capacity and put more resources at the disposal of district commanders by encouraging departments to assign a handful of detectives to each district. Another example of organizational flexibility was the temporary assignment of a specialist to a crime problem. In Lowell, for example, the decision was made at a command staff meeting to move an assistant crime analyst temporarily from the department's CAU to the Criminal Investigations Division (CID). In order to provide central detectives with greater access to gang information, the crime analyst was relocated and assigned specific gang-related cases. The crime analyst stated that there was a need for someone in the detective division to "go over patterns" relating to specific crimes. According to our national survey, nearly three-quarters of departments responded that they allowed district commanders, line supervisors, or specialized unit commanders to decide on flexible hour requests, and 65 percent allowed them to mobilize SWAT teams (Weisburd et al. 2001). In line with this trend, Lowell's district commanders were responsible for making these kinds of decisions with little or no review by superior officers.

Between-district flexibility can be enhanced by the creation of department-level task forces. These were the norm in Newark, where the chief formed task forces quickly and frequently in order to increase the organization's capacity to respond to problems as they arose. In contrast, task forces in the MPD were organized less frequently, perhaps a handful per year, and were usually the outcome of a lengthy planning process. Task forces were very rare in Lowell and were reserved for the most intractable problems. Newark's task forces were usually composed of the heads of different specialized units and officers who had reputations for being effective problem solvers. Often these officers would be poached from their districts to work on task forces. As a result, the department was in a constant state of flux, with personnel constantly being reassigned. At any given moment a host of task forces would be working on a variety of problems.

Department-level task forces implemented on an ad hoc basis were a rarity in Minneapolis since the department had built flexibility into its organizational structure. It tried to do this by assigning community response teams to the districts and by implementing district-

level directed patrol. Community response teams provided district commanders with "fluidity of resources," as one officer put it. Since these teams were not required to respond to 911 calls, unless specifically requested to do so, the district commander could assign them to tackle problems as soon as they had been identified. A similarly important feature of the department's Compstat program was directed patrol. District commanders responded to crime patterns by assigning their patrol officers to these problem areas and encouraging them "to vigorously enforce misdemeanor, or quality-of-life, crimes." Given the high priority accorded directed patrol within the department, district commanders were less constrained by the "tyranny of 911" (Sparrow, Moore, and Kennedy 1990). Consequently, they were able to allocate more patrol resources to proactive and preventive strategies than under more traditional policing models. Our observations suggested that many department members were pleased with this approach. One sector lieutenant offered the following salutary comment, "You need an effective group of flexible officers. We have our CRT and directed patrol units that focus on things other than calls for service. These officers are necessary and really add to the amount of work that can get done in our precinct."

Finally, top and middle management's commitment to community policing in Lowell helps explain the lack of support for task forces within the department. The chief and his command staff associated task forces with a more traditional style of policing and characterized them as heavy-handed. The chief remarked that task forces often "stormed" into a problem "like the Marines" and suggested that they often made the situation worse. He added that beat officers, who were much more familiar with community members and their problems, were much better equipped to solve any issues that arose. This perspective helps account for why we did not witness the formation of any task forces during our fieldwork at Lowell. Six months after we left, however, one was eventually formed to help tackle the ongoing problem of motor vehicle crimes in one district.

Rivalry among districts

Unfortunately, the allocation of additional resources to individual districts simultaneously reduces an organization's capacity to shift resources across districts. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of teamwork among districts fueled by Compstat's emphasis on the accountability of individual district commanders for their own districts. Since the Minneapolis Police Department had allocated the greatest share of its resources to the districts, we would expect it to have the fewest resources to share among them. Our observations supported this hypothesis; on balance, we estimated that we heard more complaints about this feature in Minneapolis than in Newark and Lowell. One officer complained that Compstat had led to, "the creation of a bunch of specialty units like CRT and SAFE." These units reduced the resources available for other activities, leading the same officer to remark, "It's hard to do anything extra when there are so few people to get the required work done." Our observations suggested his point had some merit. During our fieldwork, Minneapolis was the only department that was hampered by a lack of resources in its attempt to create a cross-district task force. Formed in an attempt to catch a smash-and-grab burglar who was active in different areas of the city, the task force was composed of officers from two districts. An important factor contributing to the task force's failure in apprehending the burglar was the lack of officers available for between-sector

collaborations. The lieutenant who arranged the special details commented, "[If] we would've had ten more cops we would've had him."

Obviously, limited within-district resources are likely to give rise to complaints similar to those above. Not only will district commanders be unable to loan officers to task forces, as in the burglar scenario, but they may also lack enough resources for an adequate response to problems *within* their own sectors. In Lowell, where within-district resources were limited due to department size, we heard frequent complaints about the need for more. For example, the lack of available manpower made it very difficult for a district commander to arrange for the regular deployment of a decoy car to catch perpetrators of motor vehicle crimes. He felt that the problem of scare resources was particularly acute in his district, since he was experiencing a disproportionate amount of motor vehicle and gang crime.

One method to improve organizational flexibility would be to facilitate teamwork and resource sharing among the districts. Unfortunately, Compstat's emphasis on accountability encouraged competition, not collaboration, among those officers best equipped to foster inter-district cooperation, district commanders.

One way competition was promoted was by the constant attention paid to each district's crime figures. Approximately 80 percent of the patrol officers we surveyed in each department "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that Compstat had made supervisors place too much emphasis on statistics (see Table 5). Moreover, none of those surveyed in Lowell and Minneapolis, and only 3 percent in Newark, "strongly disagreed" with this statement.

Table 5: In your view, Compstat has made supervisors place too much emphasis on statistics

	Compstat has made supervisors place too much emphasis on statistics*				
	% Strongly agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly disagree	No opinion
Lowell	51	31	9	0	9
Minneapolis	51	37	10	0	2
Newark	59	27	5	3	6

Chi Square	DF	Significance	N
19.047	8	*p<0.05	432

A similarly large proportion (approximately 70 percent) believed that Compstat had done very little to increase teamwork within the department and "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement, "Compstat has increased teamwork between my unit and specialized units in the department" (see Table 6). The frequent formation of task forces in Newark might explain why patrol officers from this department were significantly more likely (23 percent) to associate Compstat with an increase in collaboration. Although the statement did not specifically address inter-district cooperation, the many responses indicating lack of teamwork also suggested that Compstat was not particularly helpful at fostering resource sharing within the organization.

Table 6: In your view, Compstat has increased teamwork between your unit and specialized units in the department

	Compstat has increased teamwork between my unit and specialized units in the department*				
	% Strongly agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly disagree	No opinion
Lowell	2	13	38	33	14
Minneapolis**	0	15	46	25	13
Newark	4	19	33	32	12

Chi Square	DF	Significance	N
11.711	8	*p<0.05	432

** Does not sum to 100 percent due to rounding

Statements from the command staff we interviewed at the three sites supported these survey results. In Minneapolis, one mid-level manager commented that the high standard of accountability associated with Compstat might have caused district commanders to feel, "My district is more important than the department as a whole." He continued by providing a scenario in which his district had been provided with overtime money and managed to mobilize community support to tackle a homicide problem but still required additional manpower. Unfortunately, "There were no personnel [available] from the other districts." One of Minneapolis' district commanders stated: "In theory if [X, a district commander from another district] needed more resources, he could call me directly and work something out. But, in reality, district commanders are becoming a little greedy and don't want to give up people to help with another area's problems when they could be focusing on their assigned area's problems." Several sector lieutenants voiced similar concerns indicating that the district system under Compstat fostered competition and made them reluctant to share resources with other sectors. We note that some felt that this limitation was outweighed by other considerations. For example, Minneapolis' top leadership argued that competition resulting from Compstat was beneficial in helping to improve overall department performance.

Competition among Lowell's district commanders seemed less acute, and perhaps this could be attributed to the absence of a goal for a specific percentage reduction in crime. Nevertheless, since Compstat inevitably produced cross-sector comparisons of crime statistics, it still helped foster rivalries. Our observations suggested that competition among the district commanders over crime numbers was relatively subdued. Most often they expressed solidarity and sympathy when a crime spike occurred in another person's sector. A sensitivity to competition was not, however, entirely absent. On one occasion a respondent said that he was slightly uncomfortable that detective follow-ups and arrests had been displayed at a Compstat meeting; this was not the norm. The respondent felt that this might have reflected negatively and unjustly on the hard work that was being carried out in sectors that were understaffed at the time due to injuries. Any measure that might reduce a district commander's ability to curb crime would be met with some resistance, and this perception was also present further down the ranks. One of Lowell's sergeants commented that the unwillingness to share "route men" between districts was, "a turf thing." "They [the district commanders] don't go into each other's turf.

They want their own officers to ride around in their own district." In response to a question regarding the problem of understaffing and the possibility of borrowing officers from another sector to deal with a pressing crime problem, a sergeant said, "It could happen ... but everyone in their district has their own problems they are dealing with." He noted that it used to be easy to get the people you needed [when the department was centralized], but not under the district system. "With district commanders, people think of them as their own little fiefdoms and they don't want to let people go." This sense of territoriality was also present in Minneapolis, where a patrol officer told us that Compstat made officers "stay in their area more."

Competition reduces the organization's capacity to shift resources to where they are needed most urgently. Three other external and internal organizational factors impose additional limitations on organizational flexibility: lack of manpower, traditional approaches to resource allocation, and city politics. We address these factors below before discussing some of the strategies that were used to reduce their constraining effects.

Manpower

The paradox of resource flexibility is that the fewer resources the organization has to devote to flexible assignments, the more it needs that flexibility. A common complaint across departments was the need for additional patrol officers, or "more troops on the street," as one Lowell district commander phrased it. This sentiment appeared to be widely shared in Lowell and Minneapolis, especially among the district commanders. Silverman writes, "To its credit, Compstat is not tolerant when precinct commanders automatically respond 'we need more people' to questions about below-par crime fighting"(1999, 202). That said, several respondents *did* seem to feel that such a response was justified when discussing how to tackle crime increases. One sergeant in Lowell believed that the department could use more patrol officers. He queried the logic of keeping patrol officers in administrative or specialty positions, such as computing or training, when they could be used more effectively on the street. Another line supervisor in the same department opined that his officers felt they were understaffed but added, "The administration doesn't want to hear this." Similarly, a sector lieutenant in Minneapolis commented, "... The bottom line is that there is a limitation on resources."

Compstat may not be particularly sympathetic to claims for more officers on the street. By constantly bringing attention to crime problems and the need for rapid and effective solutions, however, it also brings a sharper focus to the old bugbear of the police organization, the lack of manpower. Since middle managers are held most accountable for crime problems in their sectors, they are the main proponents of increasing personnel as one of the most effective strategies for reducing crime.

Traditional approaches to resource allocation

One way to allay some of the problems associated with limited resources would be to use Compstat as a mechanism for more effective allocation of personnel, overtime funds, and equipment among districts. In this way, crime problems could be used to drive decision making at the level of the department, just as district commanders use data to allocate resources within their own districts. Two things would be necessary for this to work effectively: (1) Resource

allocation would need to depend upon crime data rather than more conventional considerations about overall equity of work load; and (2) District commanders would need to play an important role in deciding how resources should be shared among districts. We did not witness either of these more innovative approaches to resource allocation in Lowell, Minneapolis, or Newark, but the chiefs of Lowell and Newark had tried to increase resources through means that were less disruptive to department routines. In Lowell, the chief hoped that identifying and preventing officer absenteeism would help relieve manpower constraints, and in Newark the chief tried to achieve a similar effect by ordering all officers who were normally assigned to administrative duties to spend one day per week on patrol.

In Lowell and Newark, department resources were roughly divided among districts in proportion to their population and/or the area they covered; while in Minneapolis multiple measures—such as calls for service, reported crime, and 911 calls—were used in allocating staff. Though Compstat is composed of crime data, Minneapolis was the only department to make some use of Compstat data to draw beat boundaries. None of the departments, moreover, relied upon the range of Compstat data—maps, spreadsheets, and breakdowns according to crime categories—to habitually assess and drive the resource allocation process across districts. At least one respondent was frustrated with the reliance upon more traditional approaches, complaining that resource decisions should be based on Compstat crime data not population size. For example, during a bid/reassignment meeting attended by a deputy superintendent and the district commanders, one Lowell district commander queried why he was not being afforded an increase in the department resources. After all, he stated, his district, which was one of the poorest in the city, was experiencing a disproportionate amount of crime, and this was clearly on display during the department's biweekly Compstat meetings. When he suggested that Compstat be used more "scientifically" as a means of allocating manpower to high-crime areas, he provoked little response. The other district commanders in the room were largely unsupportive, as we would expect, given that they were under-resourced and accountable for crime in their own areas of the city. Any increase in the resources available to one district commander would necessarily result in a decrease for the others. One district commander noted another flaw in the concept of basing manpower on Compstat: "politics." Given the limited supply of manpower and overtime pay, the need to appease powerful interests by deploying police officers to certain areas of the city competed against the flexible redeployment of officers to problem areas, as we discuss later under "City politics." Another explanation for these reservations was that district commanders believed that long-term crime rates were roughly comparable across districts, despite the upsurge in this one district's crime rate, and they consequently felt that resource allocations should not be changed. This is not a particularly convincing argument, however, since the sine qua non of Compstat is the rapid allocation of resources in response to specific short-term or emerging problems. Even if annual motor vehicle thefts were distributed evenly among districts, a short-term crime spike in one district would warrant a shifting of resources. After all, Compstat is intended to specifically replace annual crime statistics and other more traditional methods as the most important means of reallocating resources for a targeted police response.

We can attribute this reluctance to reallocate resources to districts with the most urgent crime problems to traditional constraints and an additional factor that was both strongly entrenched and closely related to how Compstat operated: conceptions of fairness. By holding

district commanders directly accountable for crime in their beats, Compstat may work to undermine the rational, yet discriminatory, allocation of resources.

Bureaucratic rules and regulations

The police have long relied on crime statistics, especially those dealing with calls for service, to help organize and allocate patrol to when and where it is needed most, but the flexibility that this implies has been offset by departmental rules and regulations that establish department routines. Union regulations, for example, often restrict organizational flexibility by limiting changes to officers' shift assignments. The limitations of this system are exposed under Compstat when crime data are updated on a daily or weekly basis. Changing shift assignments according to annual, or even semiannual, crime statistics is obviously less disruptive to department routines than reallocation of resources across districts on the basis of more timely data. The latter would demand a major change in how departments currently operate.

Conceptions of fairness

In addition to the restrictions commensurate with bureaucratic rules and regulations, notions of fairness further limited organizational flexibility. Two Compstat features—geographic organization of operational command and internal accountability—encouraged equitable rather than scientific distribution of resources across districts. We observed that at least one district commander would have preferred the reallocation of resources based upon Compstat. This system did not have unanimous support, however, although it might appear to be fairer than allocating resources according to population size. By failing to advocate change, some showed their feeling that use of crime data was inappropriate. Of course, most of the police workload—at least that experienced by patrol officers—is characteristically not conceived as crime work (Greene and Klockars 1981), even in departments that make crime reduction the top priority. Organizational efficiency, as well as fairness in the distribution of the workload among workers, calls for an effort to make the allocation of resources proportionate to that workload. Where the distribution of crime and the larger workload are not highly correlated, inequities and inefficiencies in the distribution of resources are inevitable. Police officers are highly sensitive to workload inequities (Rubinstein 1973; Van Maanen 1974), creating a strong pressure up the chain of command to allocate resources in ways likely to sustain long-run equality, not short-run flexibility.

This tendency to inertia in how the police organization allocates its resources was reinforced by district commanders' perceptions of the status of their commands. Since all district commanders were under-resourced, they did not see why they should relinquish their resources to others while still being held to the same high standard of accountability. Irrational as this consideration might seem, geographic organization of operational command combined with internal accountability to produce a notion of fairness based upon the equitable allocation of resources among districts. This superseded concerns about changes in the crime rate. We conjecture that an important component of this sense of fairness might be a more general impression among district commanders that any district that relinquished any of its patrol resources would inevitably experience a crime upswing. It might have been that this belief— reinforced by a more general set of shared values about occupational solidarity and the necessity

of maximizing patrol resources—worked to undermine resource sharing. Our sense was that district commanders felt it would be unfair to ask or expect one of their peers to share his or her resources lest they suffer adverse consequences. Of course, a more fundamental and simpler bureaucratic imperative might have been at work here. Since a district commander's worth, status, and power was directly linked to the resources he or she controlled, giving up resources was akin to giving up these privileges.

City politics

Organizational flexibility is not only limited by internal constraints, forces outside the department may also limit the flexible reallocation of resources. City politics can reduce organizational flexibility by influencing officer deployment.

In Lowell, for example, a city councilor expressed concern about a spate of drug-related crimes in one particular area of the city. He argued that there was a need for increased police visibility in this neighborhood and he told the chief and other city councilors that he wanted to see "more cops walking." Lowell's police chief was a staunch advocate of community policing and foot patrol, but he responded that placing an even higher priority on walking routes would reduce the number of available cruisers. Consequently, some areas of the city would receive less patrol. The only way to avoid this problem would be to increase the city's expenditures by hiring more officers or increasing overtime. Since the city council was unable or unwilling to support either one of these measures, the department's only alternative was to come up with a plan entitled "Advancing Community Policing" that gave priority to assigning patrol officers to all the city's walking routes before filling cruiser route assignments. In addition to the city council's position on foot patrol, influences on the police department also included local business owners and the editor of the local newspaper, who was a powerful political figure in Lowell. They were also keenly in favor of the department maintaining a high level of police visibility in the downtown area where their businesses were located. In response to this political pressure, the chief required his district commanders to maintain foot patrols in the downtown area on the day and early night shifts. In addition, according to an agreement with the city, the chief was committed to assigning several officers to the city Housing Authority. Similarly in Minneapolis, the district that served the downtown business area was allocated a level of resources comparable to that of more crime-ridden districts. We can speculate that this was on account of pressures on the department from businesses, politicians, and other special interests. Although we did not observe this directly, one district commander was clearly disappointed that the reallocation of resources was so dependent upon these concerns. He told us he could not understand why these types of decision relied more on "taxpayers as opposed to victims or people who live on a block with drug dealers."

The prioritization of patrol in certain areas placed considerable restrictions on the ability of district commanders to allocate resources and select tactics. A Lowell sergeant whose territory covered the downtown area noted how difficult it was at times for him to fill his routes. That weekend, he had been unable to fill his cruisers because four officers had called in sick and he had to keep "two walkers" in areas designated as a high priority by the chief and city.

Strategies to increase flexibility

City politics exert a powerful influence on resource allocation in police departments, but there are some plausible ways to free up additional patrol resources with minimal disruption to department routines. Lowell's chief was in the process of creating a database to record excused and unexcused officer absences, as well as catalog citizen complaints. He hoped that this would serve two useful purposes: (1) It would act as an early warning system for the identification of problem officers; and (2) It would help district commanders identify officers who were chronically absent. The increased likelihood that this system would recognize or flag officers who were abusing their sick leave or feigning injury, the chief surmised, would help deter such instances from occurring in the first place. He obviously intended this as a way to increase the number of available officers.

Lowell's chief was not keen on pulling specialists from their key positions because he felt they fulfilled a necessary purpose where they were, according to one respondent. Newark's chief, however, was less opposed to this approach, and we witnessed a variant on this theme. He did not remove specialists from their positions, but he insisted that every officer assigned to administrative or desk duty spend one day per week on patrol. In this way, he was able to make additional resources available where they were needed most in geographic terms, since patrol is organized geographically.

Finally, a department can encourage teamwork in order to try to overcome the competition fostered by Compstat. Top leadership in Lowell and Minneapolis emphasized the importance of collaboration within their departments, but teamwork rarely occurred. When it did take place, it usually reflected the involvement of headquarters. Task forces were emblematic of top management's recognition that teamwork was unlikely to occur on a voluntary basis. When a crime problem was diffused across separate districts, headquarters often felt compelled to order the formation of a task force to resolve the issue.

Why did these departments pay lip service to teamwork but were unable to provide tangible rewards? Part of the explanation lies in how Compstat operates as a system. Compstat explicitly rewards district commanders for handling their own beat problems effectively, but it does not contain a similar mechanism for rewarding more efficient sharing of resources—even if this could contribute to an overall reduction in crime. Without a structure that specifically recognizes and rewards district commanders for voluntarily sharing valuable resources and collaborating with other precincts, it is unlikely that a small police department can maximize its organizational flexibility.

In sum, traditional internal and external constraints limited the capacity of the three departments to reallocate resources to where they were needed most. Furthermore, two Compstat elements—geographic organization of operational command and internal accountability—combined to constrain organizational flexibility by fostering competition not teamwork among districts. Top management sought to increase flexibility by: (1) maintaining its authority to allocate resources across districts; and (2) ordering the formation of task forces. Ironically, in concentrating decision-making power at the top of the organizational hierarchy, both these measures undercut the ideal of delegating operational command to district commanders.

Furthermore, it is likely that the allocation of resources to task forces would require reductions in the resources available to district commanders, thereby further reducing the organization's commitment to geographic organization of operational command.

Data-Driven Problem Identification and Assessment

Crime statistics are crucial to Compstat as a new way to structure information for managerial decision making, inasmuch as they shift the focus from highly selective, anecdotal accounts of individual cases to the search for larger patterns and trends. Results from our national survey indicated that Compstat departments have the capacity to manage and analyze data in more sophisticated ways than non-Compstat departments. Over 90 percent of Compstat departments claimed to conduct "crime-trend identification and analysis," and almost 90 percent claimed to use "database or statistical analysis software for crime analysis" (Weisburd et al. 2001, 44). Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark were typical in this regard. Each department's Compstat program was designed to provide useful information for decision making in handling crime/safety priorities. As one officer put it at Lowell, "Information is always the name of the game."

In this section we examine how crime data were routinely collected, analyzed, and presented. Our discussion highlights the specific challenges associated with checking data for accuracy and deciding which to select for Compstat. We also compare how each department used crime data to learn about and tackle problems. Our findings suggest that decision making was concentrated at the command level and was informed, but not driven, by data analysis. Timely maps and reports helped middle managers identify crime problems as they arose, but district commanders continued to rely upon their personal experience and anecdotal evidence to assess and respond to problems. Under pressure to respond swiftly and decisively to any crime increase, district commanders did not monitor hot spots continuously. Nor did they examine crime data systematically, in order to discern the underlying causes of crime patterns or the reasons for the success or failure of a particular strategy. The Compstat process, therefore, precipitated a form of reactive policing denounced by advocates of strategic problem solving.

Data collection

All three departments depended upon police incident and arrest reports for their crime data, but they also used computer-aided dispatch (CAD) data to help identify geographic hot spots. In Minneapolis, officer debriefings of suspects were an additional feature of the information/data-gathering process. The Compstat process began when an officer filled out an incident/arrest report that he or she then gave to a sergeant or commanding officer for approval. Once approved, a data clerk, who was located in the district, at the MPD and NPD, or in headquarters, at the LPD, entered crime information from the reports into a records management system, or RMS.[10] Analysts in the Crime Analysis Unit (CAU) selected the data on the crimes that were regularly presented at Compstat meetings and entered them into a computer database using a data management program, either MS Excel or MS Access. The crimes presented at Compstat varied among the sites depending on the priorities of the individual department, but

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[10] The LPD did not have an RMS due to Lucent Technology's inability to fulfill its contract. Consequently, the CAU was responsible for inputting data from officer reports in preparation for Compstat.

they generally included a range of Part I violent and property offenses: homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, and larceny/theft, which contained a separate category for motor vehicle theft. In all three departments, the brass identified the crimes that demanded a targeted response because they were considered most serious or the likeliest source of concern to the community. Additionally, Compstat sometimes included non-crime information that could serve as a useful gauge of department performance. Data collected in Newark included records of officer response and on-scene time, and in Newark and Minneapolis data on individual officer complaints was gathered and presented at regular, internal affairs Compstat meetings.

In all three departments, the gathering and inputting of Compstat data into a database was centralized in a CAU staffed by both civilians and sworn officers. Unlike Lowell and Minneapolis, Newark's district commanders were each assigned a crime analyst, or crime control officer, to help with data processing. The crime control officers were supposed to conduct crime analysis, but they spent most of their time inputting crime statistics into their district's database and then using it to construct reports and daily crime bulletins. Since the crime bulletins merely listed incidents that occurred in the districts, one experienced member of the CAU dismissed them as "useless." He added that they did not attempt to identify crime patterns. The type of data inputted by each department's CAU included: field report number, shift, district, the date of the crime, day of the week, and location. Additional information that could also prove useful in the identification of crime patterns—the point of entry for a burglary or the make and model of a stolen vehicle—was also entered.

Across sites, basic crime data were entered and generally available the next day, but the degree to which the data were processed—organized, aggregated, and analyzed—by the CAU varied among departments. Every morning in Lowell, data-entry clerks scanned the previous day's police reports onto the department's mainframe where they could be accessed directly by the district commanders and their executive officer. On a biweekly basis, during the week before Compstat, the CAU produced additional printouts that they made available to each district. These included MS Excel spreadsheets that were divided by city district and provided details on individual crimes, such as the suspects involved in an assault and battery case, the case's disposition, and summary sheets reporting aggregates, like the total number of assaults during a shift. The CAU did produce a quotidian newsletter that was made available at roll call and placed in officers' mailboxes, but it was generally a summary of the previous day's crimes. As such it functioned as a general information tool rather than a systematic and routine way to drive decision making on crime problems.

In Newark descriptive information from police reports was similarly available each day. In addition, the CAU also manufactured printouts that detailed the date, time, location, and district where individual crimes occurred and then organized this information by the crime categories of auto theft, burglary, theft, or violent crime. This data formed the basis for the regular morning meetings attended by the CAU, CID, and district detectives. Every day, except weekends and the day of the Compstat meeting, attendees at Compstat looked over events and discussed patterns. The CAU provided printouts for the district commanders, and the district detectives were then responsible for conveying this information back to their districts. One captain captured the sense of importance surrounding these meetings when he compared them to "soap operas." If you missed a day, he said, "You did not know who married whom, who got

sick, the new characters...." All this specific crime data was then compiled in the department's "Compstat book," along with a brief description of the discussions that had taken place at the morning meetings. This book was then used as a reference for discussion during the weekly Compstat meetings. Furthermore, in preparation for Compstat, Newark's CAU generated maps and summary sheets reporting crime aggregates that were then added to the Compstat book. This occurred a day or two prior to the meeting. Since Newark's CAU manufactured a printout of individual crime cases to help detectives look for patterns, the department engaged in a higher level of data processing than the daily scanning and retrieval of reports that took place in Lowell.

Minneapolis differed from Lowell and Newark. Immediately after a data clerk had inputted information from a police report, the location of the incident was *mapped* into MapInfo on the department's mainframe, and incident case numbers became automatically available on the map. This usually took place within twenty-four hours after the incident occurred. As a result, district commanders could access these maps and try to discern the geographic location of simple crime patterns as they began to emerge. Minneapolis' CAU, unlike Newark's, did not produce daily printouts containing detailed information on individual crimes. Its crime analysts, however, did prepare handouts containing updated crime numbers—crime percentages for the week, as well as year-to-date percentages—and disseminated crime maps to the districts a day prior to Compstat.

Data analysis and presentation

All the data displayed at each department's regular Compstat meetings were generated within the department's CAU. Although their numbers varied, these units tended to include a handful of analysts—Lowell's CAU, for example, was composed of five full-time members and several interns—and they all performed the same function. The CAUs were primarily responsible for processing, organizing, aggregating, and mapping data in an attempt to identify, and help the district commanders identify, any crime patterns or trends. Not only were these data disseminated to the districts, they were also on display at the weekly or biweekly department Compstat meetings. In Lowell and Newark, one district commander was responsible for reporting on his or her district's crime incidents, trends, and tactical responses. In addition, the district commander, along with his executive officer, faced questions, suggestions, and comments from audience members. Although only one district presented at each Compstat, we noted that *any* district commander could be called upon to account for crime incidents in his or her district. Although the pressure on these district commanders was not as intense as on the presenting commander, the possibility of being called upon helped ensure that they did not slack off. In fact, crime data on the non-presenting districts were often presented simultaneously, not only to ensure continued accountability, but also to facilitate cross-district comparisons. In Minneapolis, data were presented on every district during the department's Compstat meeting, leaving less time for in-depth discussions than in the other two sites.

The CAUs at all sites were responsible for preparing and projecting the Compstat data onto a large screen in front of the audience. Each slide represented a separate crime category and the type of data analysis—more specifically, the mapping of crime data and the comparison of current with prior Compstat periods—was very similar across sites. Where they varied most was in the time frame of their comparisons. Since the LPD did not have an RMS, it was difficult for

the CAU to compare Compstat statistics with anything other than data from the prior Compstat meeting. In contrast, Newark and Minneapolis were able to examine crime trends over a period of several weeks, months, or years. In Minneapolis, for example, weekly year-to-date comparisons—for example, 11/21/2000-11/27/2000 compared to the same period in 1999 and 1998—for specific crimes and all Part I crimes were commonplace.

The CAUs in all three departments used MapInfo in their preparations for Compstat, and the crime map was an important fixture at weekly Compstat meetings. For example, Lowell's Compstat meetings were oriented around district crime maps depicting individual crime incidents for the six-week Compstat period. Interspersed with these maps were slides containing aggregate crime statistics and useful summary data, such as the total sum of burglaries and the total number involving the theft of jewelry. Newark's and Minneapolis's Compstat meetings followed a similar format.

In contrast to the period before Compstat's implementation, timely crime data now featured in the organization and operation of the three police departments. Previously, the departments had merely conducted an annual review of local Part I crime rates collected in the UCR. The purpose of this brief examination was to provide departments with a general indication of their overall crime-control performance for the preceding year. In contrast to the sluggish availability of these data and their relatively narrow focus, each department's Compstat program played a continuous and critical role in the department-wide process of identifying specific crimes as soon as they emerged, driving decision making, and facilitating problem-solving strategies. As Lowell's chief stated succinctly, if one believes in the "utility of timely data ... Compstat seems like a smart approach." The three departments now have daily access to police reports, as well as weekly or biweekly crime statistics. In Minneapolis, moreover, maps were also available daily. In addition to being timely, data are routinely processed and geo-coded to help district commanders discover underlying factors explaining or linking the occurrence of a number of crime events. Thus, crime analysis is significantly more sophisticated than it was in the past.

Before moving onto a more detailed discussion of how these data were used, we will briefly explore two specific challenges associated with the data process: how data were checked for accuracy and what data were selected, or overlooked, for Compstat. Respondents in all three departments told us that data reliability was an important component of their Compstat programs, but we discovered that there were few systematic checks for data accuracy, such as drawing a random sample of records and double-checking them to see what percentage were reported accurately. Anomalous crime spikes or downturns, which suggested errors in reporting or time frame, might be caught during Compstat meetings, and top management in Minneapolis was especially attentive to this. Reliability, however, was largely dependent upon the vigilance of a handful of crime analysts who used their experience and familiarity with the data to spot errors. Furthermore, some officers expressed concerns that Compstat privileged certain crimes over others, increasing the likelihood that some would be invisible to the police and not be the object of an adequate police response.

Effective decision making under Compstat demands data that are not only timely but also accurate. The accuracy of Compstat data is primarily affected by two factors: (1) officer reporting errors, and (2) inputting errors by the CAU.

<u>Data accuracy</u>

Since the majority of information generated at Compstat depended upon officers' reports, it was crucial that this information be recorded accurately. In all three departments, the shift supervisor was generally responsible for ensuring that careful attention was paid to writing accurate reports, but sometimes a district commander or district/sector lieutenant would discover and correct an error while reading a report in preparation for Compstat. During Lowell's Compstat meetings, the CAU sometimes highlighted reporting errors, and the chief frequently conveyed his concern over accurate reporting by telling his command staff that they should exhort their patrol officers to focus more intently on report writing. We heard similar concerns expressed in the other two departments, but it was unclear how much the voicing of these concerns had actually helped improve accurate reporting. It was impossible for either the departments or us to confirm respondent's more speculative remarks in the absence of a formal procedure for systematically checking the accuracy of officer reports. It remained unclear whether officer reports had improved because Compstat had brought attention to the importance of crime data in decision making, as it did in Minneapolis, or whether they had barely improved at all, as a respondent in Lowell suggested. Our survey data, however, can tell us something about the level of praise patrol officers expected to receive for writing accurate reports. When asked to rank ten activities according to the level of praise they might receive from their superiors, with one signifying the least praise, as many patrol officers, approximately half, seemed to feel that writing accurate reports was somewhat important, ranking it six through ten, as felt it was fairly unimportant, ranking it one through five. This ambivalence would suggest that the utility of accurate report writing, as indicated by perceptions of praise from superiors, was unclear to many patrol officers despite the efforts and pleas of their commanding officers and the crime analysts.

Although many members of the command staff in each department made it clear to us that they placed a premium on reliable data, a few patrol officers commented that some incidents were reclassified or invented in order to improve the department's crime statistics. For example, a sergeant in one department stated, "Numbers are changed all of the time." He added that burglaries were "often ... coded down to thefts." Another sergeant from the same department expressed a similar concern and provided the following example:

> We were getting killed with burglary dwellings. All of a sudden they went down drastically. What happened? They created a new code for garage burglary. For all those years garage burglaries were reported as burglary dwelling and now they have their own code. It isn't crimes going down, it is coming up with different ways to record them. Also, we were getting killed with gas-and-go thefts. The price of gas was through the roof. Someone decided that it wasn't really a theft; rather it was the breaking of a verbal contract and voila our thefts went down.

We can surmise that pressure on a department to reduce crime, particularly by a specific percentage, may cause some cooking of the books, but without any supporting evidence this allegation remains speculative.[11]

None of the departments we observed performed systematic checks for the kinds of data errors associated with manually inputting large quantities of data and transferring them from one system to another. This did not mean, however, that they were unconcerned about minimizing any possible errors that might occur. In Lowell and Minneapolis, three major factors contributed to the reliability of the data: (1) Crime analysts were responsible for inputting the data and felt personally responsible for their accuracy; (2) Data errors could be discovered as a result of the close collaboration among members of the CAU, who were familiar with the geography and nature of crime in their cities; and (3) District commanders would report discrepancies between what they had read in their officers' reports and the materials the CAU had prepared for Compstat. These features were also common to Newark, but the department had an additional safeguard. Since each district had its own separate database maintained by a crime analyst, crime information could be crosschecked with the department's CAU. When discrepancies, such as the misclassification of a case, were noticed, they could be corrected.

<u>Visible and invisible data</u>

Given the high visibility within the department of the crimes displayed at regular Compstat meetings, it is unsurprising that some respondents expressed concerns that crimes not presented at Compstat might be ignored. For example one respondent in Lowell recalled a period when domestic violence incidents were no longer mapped separately. Instead, they were included at Compstat within the category of "assaults," which mainly distinguished between simple and aggravated assaults. This did not mean that domestic incidents were ignored, but it did make them harder to identify. One officer described Compstat as very similar to police radar: "If something is not on the radar, it is invisible." It was also unlikely that a district commander would be held to the same high level of accountability for a crime that was not on the Compstat screen. Another officer from the same department commented, "If something is not shown at Compstat, no one cares about it ... it means that you are not paying attention to it ... you are not accountable for it." In Minneapolis, a respondent expressed the same concern: "We only look at the Part I numbers. We are missing part of the big picture. We do not look at simple assaults or livability issues, and we need to move toward this."

A similar logic could be applied to any crime-related information, and not just individual crime incidents, that was excluded from Compstat. For example, a Minneapolis police officer criticized Compstat for focusing on locations and not on people. He too used the example of domestic violence: "I started in domestic assault and feel that women and kid crimes do not get the attention they deserve. This is a sore spot for me. Units such as domestic assault need to have mechanisms to track people. There don't seem to be any clear-cut ways to look at things like this on maps or through stats."

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[11] For a discussion of Compstat and evidentiary questions surrounding the crime drop in New York, see Manning 2001.

It may be an overstatement to argue that non-Compstat crimes are invisible to a department, since those that are reported are usually documented and often receive some police response. These observations, however, do raise an important issue: Constantly holding district commanders accountable for the same crimes at Compstat may lead to potentially useful crime-related information being overlooked. For example, proponents of "broken windows" policing might argue that a department's failure to use Compstat to identify and respond to physical and social incivilities might lead it to miss opportunities to prevent more serious crimes from occurring in the future (Wilson and Kelling 1982).

Use of data

The impressive presentation of crime data at weekly or biweekly Compstat meetings tells us very little about how data were actually used to structure daily decision making: At what levels in the organization were the data used and for what purposes? Results from our fieldwork indicated that top and middle managers used crime data to make decisions, but this was not true for first-line supervisors and rank-and-file officers, who were largely excluded from the Compstat process. Furthermore, district commanders relied most heavily upon the information contained in officer reports to identify and respond to emerging problems. Maps were less important to this endeavor, and we did not observe middle managers in any of the departments conducting an in-depth analysis of crime data to determine the underlying causes of crime problems or to decide exactly *how* to mobilize for action.

<u>District commanders</u>

Every day Lowell's district commanders, along with their executive officers, read all their officers' reports to familiarize themselves with crime in their districts. In consultation with their executive officers, the district commanders assigned detective follow-ups. Additionally, the executive officers were primarily responsible for notifying sergeants of their decisions; priorities were then relayed to patrol officers. The district commanders' diligence in reading incident reports can be partially attributed to the absence of pre-Compstat meetings within the department. Since district commanders did not have this opportunity to share and discuss detailed crime information with others in their district, they were expected to take the initiative and familiarize themselves with crime problems in their beats. Lacking the benefit of a preparatory meeting, they felt compelled to stay on top of things: Failure to recall an incident during Compstat would be embarrassing and could lead to censure from the chief.

This pressure was experienced less acutely in Newark, since the responsibility was divided, albeit inequitably, between the lieutenants and first-line supervisors who attended their district's pre-Compstat meeting. It would appear that Minneapolis' district commanders felt the least pressure to read officers' reports, since their sector lieutenants also exercised twenty-four-hour responsibility. This does not mean, of course, that district commanders slacked off, only that they could afford to do so, since their sector lieutenants were expected to be on top of things. Each district's weekly pre-Compstat meetings provided an additional opportunity for district commanders to catch up and familiarize themselves with what had been happening in their beats.

The originators of New York's Compstat program were well aware of the importance of crime mapping. According to Silverman, Jack Maple once commented, "No general went to war without a map" (1999, 87). The visual presentation of crime maps was an important component of each department's Compstat meetings, but it played a far less important role in driving crime strategies in the districts. In fact, in Lowell and Newark, computerized crime maps were only made available a few days prior to Compstat to assist preparations for the upcoming meeting. Old-fashioned pin maps, located in each district's headquarters, were still in use in Newark, but they were not a vital component in the development of crime strategies. When we queried district commanders about their lack of interest in the use of daily maps to strategize, most replied that they were sufficiently knowledgeable about the geography of their districts that they could map crimes in their heads as they were occurring. For example, one of Newark's district commanders explained that he had grown up in his district, so he knew all the streets by heart and could identify hot spots.[12] We noted earlier that in Minneapolis a crime was generally mapped and made available to the districts via the department's mainframe within twenty-four hours of its occurrence. This did not necessarily mean, however, that district commanders or sector lieutenants would rely upon maps to make decisions. Certainly some might have occasionally found the maps helpful, but we observed only one district commander who used them frequently every day. On the whole, sector lieutenants were more likely than their district commanders to use crime maps on a regular basis, but this was limited to a weekly, not a daily, examination.

The minimal use of maps in the districts draws attention to how data were used more generally at the district level. Our fieldwork revealed that the level of analysis performed by each department's CAU in preparation for Compstat was much more sophisticated than the daily analysis conducted in the districts. District commanders and their executive officers serially reviewed reports to identify problems and geographic patterns, but they did not rely upon statistics or maps. That is, they did not use the more sophisticated tools available to search for and characterize patterns in crime; they relied instead on their ability to read a large number of individual case files and discern larger patterns directly from the raw data. In short, district commanders used data to react quickly to crime spikes in hot spots rather than to examine underlying conditions and respond proactively. Even in Minneapolis, where more sophisticated crime data in the form of maps featured more prominently in department operations than in Lowell and Newark, district commanders limited their analysis to the time and location of individual crime incidents. Based upon an examination of these clusters, they implemented their response.

The reactive nature of the Compstat process, in which strategies were employed in response to crime spikes at specific locales within each city, can probably be attributed to two interrelated factors: (1) Middle managers received no formal training in crime analysis; and (2) More importance was attributed to the rapid availability of data and middle managers' knowledge of individual cases than to the quality of crime analysis.

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[12] For an in-depth discussion on the emergence of hot spots policing and its effectiveness, see David Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga "Hot Spots Policing," in *Crime Prevention: New Approaches*, ed. Helmut Kury and Joachim Obergfell-Fuchs, 337-355 (Mainz, Germany: Weisser-Ring, 2003).

<u>Lack of training</u>

The implementation of Compstat in the three departments was not accompanied by any specialized training in crime analysis. In comparison to the LPD and NPD, the Minneapolis Police Department made the most concerted effort to convince officers at all levels in the organization of Compstat's utility. Nevertheless, the focus was on selling the idea and encouraging department-wide acceptance of the program. The workgroup and brainstorming sessions were not designed to train personnel in data processing and statistical analysis. It was top management's belief that district commanders would learn crime analysis through self-training on the job, facilitated by the type of analysis on display at the department's weekly Compstat meetings. Similarly, none of Lowell's district commanders were provided any specialized training and were left to develop crime-analysis skills on their own. The lack of training middle managers received helps explain why they continued to rely upon incident reports to identify crime problems and patterns. It also helps explain why they did not use crime data to determine the causes of those problems and the specific crime strategies to pursue. This would have required the kind of skills and knowledge that cannot be merely picked up while working on the job. For example, a familiarity with tabulating bivariate relationships—such as tabulating the frequency of drug crimes with homicides in a sector to see whether an increase in homicides is possibly drug related—would be a more powerful method for detecting plausible patterns than just relying upon information in officer reports, skimming crime maps, and supplementing this data with personal experience and anecdotal evidence.

<u>Rapid data availability and familiarity versus quality of analysis</u>

The lack of intensive formal training in crime analysis also helps explain why respondents in all three departments concentrated on the speed with which data were available rather then the degree to which they were processed. One respondent in Minneapolis expressed excitement about a plan to install laptop computers in officers' patrol cars. This, he reasoned, would provide patrol officers with instant access to incident reports. This emphasis on the speed with which crime information was available rather than the depth and quality of analysis was common to all sites. For instance, none of the respondents commented that they would benefit from a more sophisticated statistical examination of crime data, such as bivariate or multivariate analyses.

A higher level of data analysis took place in each department's CAU where many of the crime analysts had a master's degree in criminal justice or a related field. However, this analysis was still relatively limited. Our fieldwork indicated that it focused on descriptive statistics, such as percentages, frequencies, and means. It was not the kind of in-depth research approach advocated by Herman Goldstein (1990), and it was very far from the rigorous, analytic, "evidence-based" research ideal advocated by Lawrence Sherman (1998). Furthermore, this analysis was not disseminated to the districts on a daily basis. Newark's CAU had progressed furthest in providing district commanders with timely CAU-processed data, but this information consisted of spreadsheets grouping incidents into crime categories rather than aggregated data. Since the data analysis performed by the CAU was only available a short time before Compstat, and after crime strategies had been implemented in the districts, it was used by middle managers

to corroborate their existing impressions rather than to make decisions. Similarly, pre-Compstat meetings, attended by middle managers and some first-line supervisors, were used to review the events of the previous week or weeks to ensure that nothing had been missed. In some respects they resembled the cramming sessions that some students put in before the day of a mid-term exam. One respondent specifically used this analogy when describing his preparations for Compstat meetings: "Compstat is in some ways like being a student. As a student you study just so that you can pass a test; just like with Compstat you just prepare in order to pass it." Passing did not entail analyzing data to provide penetrating insights into crime problems. Being familiar with individual crime incidents, being able to identify obvious patterns, and having implemented some kind of response was sufficient. Incentives and discipline associated with Compstat in these departments endorsed this narrow focus, since middle managers were more likely to be held accountable for not knowing something about an individual case than failing to discern some underlying cause for a crime pattern.

Patrol officers

If middle managers used crime data to drive problem identification, how were patrol officers involved in this process? Our fieldwork revealed that first-line supervisors and patrol officers experienced Compstat as a series of directives instructing them what to do rather than as a strategic and collaborative decision-making process. In Newark, patrol officers rarely attended the department's Compstat meetings. Minneapolis and Lowell had taken greater strides to include officers by requiring that they attend Compstat on a regular, albeit infrequent, schedule. But this did little to weaken the perception that Compstat belonged to the "brass." In Lowell, 56 percent of the patrol officers we surveyed had not attended a Compstat meeting, and in Newark the figure was even higher at 63 percent.[13]

In addition, officers rarely made decisions on the basis of the information that was gathered for Compstat and presented at meetings. This could be attributed to a range of factors that included: lack of access to Compstat via a computer terminal and dearth of interest. Access to Compstat information was most restricted in Newark. The CAU maintained its own database, and access was only granted following a specific request to the principal crime analyst. Accessibility was also very limited in Lowell and Minneapolis. In Lowell, most of the department's computer terminals were not equipped with the software programs that would enabled line officers to read the Compstat files on the department's server. In Minneapolis, the impediment was the small number of computer terminals in the districts. In all three departments, line officers' inadequate computer skills also helps explain their marginal role in the Compstat process. In Minneapolis, one sergeant commented that patrol officers did not have the time to sit down and work at the computer. He added, "The technology and mapping is over some people's heads." Similarly, respondents in both Lowell and Minneapolis acknowledged that the data component of Compstat had not "filtered" or "trickled" down to the street level.

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[13] A much higher percentage (67 percent) in Minneapolis responded that they had attended a Compstat meeting. However, our survey did not distinguish between regular Compstat meetings and the initial one-day training meetings held during Compstat's implementation. Based upon our observations, it is likely that a much lower percentage of line officers had actually attended a regular Compstat meeting.

The most systematic means of learning about Compstat and crime-related issues was provided through information disseminated at roll call. In Lowell, this was supplemented by the CAU's *Daily Bulletin* newsletter, which published some information about the previous day's events. Written directives and memos were read aloud, and district commanders in Minneapolis provided patrol officers with specific instructions identifying directed-patrol areas. The rank and file also learned about what happened at Compstat meetings from their fellow officers and supervisors. The latter avenue tended to be fairly haphazard since there was no mechanism for systematically relaying this information (see page 42). Comments from respondents suggested that information was usually exchanged during informal conversations that patrol officers had with captains, lieutenants, detectives, or sergeants. Following the chain of command, a district commander or executive officer might ask a sergeant to tell his or her patrol officers to keep an eye on a problem, or increase visibility in a problem area identified at Compstat. The limited participation of officers at Compstat meetings and the somewhat desultory flow of information did not imply that officers were unfamiliar with the major crime problems in their district. It only indicates that they were not included in the Compstat process of analyzing and discussing crime data. This contrasts sharply with community policing, which encourages patrol officers to participate fully in identifying and assessing crime problems in their beats. Our visits to other Compstat departments suggested that a few police departments have made more of an effort to engage lower-ranking personnel at the district level in Compstat. In New Orleans, for example, patrol supervisors and patrol officers regularly attended pre-Compstat meetings (Gurwitt 1998).

In sum, Compstat has increased the use of data by middle managers in identifying crime patterns and making decisions. The importance of data was also reflected in a more general concern that it be timely and processed accurately, although reliability was more dependent upon individual initiative and de facto crosschecking than on a routine auditing process. In spite of this improvement over the very limited utility of the UCR, district commanders continued to rely upon officer reports and their own impressions of crime. Like the traditional model of policing, the use of data to identify and assess problems was centralized among the command staff and in department headquarters—patrol officers played a marginal role in this process.

Innovative, Problem-Solving Tactics

Police have long collected data and compiled statistics, but those data were rarely used to make important decisions about how to solve problems (Mastrofski and Wadman 1991). Despite its central purpose of crime reduction, Compstat's relationship to innovative, problem-solving tactics is probably the least developed element in the existing Compstat literature. Middle managers are expected to select responses to crime problems that offer the best prospects of success, not because they are "what we have always done," but because a careful consideration of a number of alternatives showed them to be the most effective (Sherman 1998). Innovation and experimentation are encouraged; use of the best knowledge about practices is expected. In this context, police are expected to look beyond their own experiences by drawing upon knowledge gained in other departments and on innovations in theory and research about crime control and prevention. Silverman argues, "This innovative process [Compstat] radiates throughout the NYPD as the energizer of strikingly creative decision making at headquarters and in the field" (1999,123-4).

In our national survey, this did not seem to be the case very often in Compstat programs across the country. When departments were asked how they decided upon a problem-solving strategy to address "the one crime/disorder problem that used more of the department's efforts than any other problem in the last twelve months," they were most likely to respond that they relied on the department's previous successes with an approach. Sixty-seven percent of departments stated that this was "very important" followed by 39 percent who stated, "research evidence suggested that this was the best approach" (Weisburd et al. 2001, 41). In other words, departments with Compstat still tended to rely upon their own experience with traditional law enforcement approaches, such as saturating an area with police and making arrests.

In many respects, Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark mirrored this national trend by mainly relying upon traditional law enforcement tactics that have long been a staple in police agencies. It is important to recognize, however, that the Compstat approach did lead to innovation in the way police directed their resources. Compstat facilitated the gathering and dissemination of information that was used to identify problems and focus police efforts. Directed patrol at hot spots, for example, represents an important innovation in policing that has been supported by strong research evidence (Braga 2001; Sherman and Weisburd 1995; Weisburd and Braga 2003). The departments we observed did utilize Compstat to harness information to facilitate such concentration of police resources. Nevertheless, we observed little innovation in the approaches used once hot spots were identified. In this sense, there was innovation in how police focused resources but relatively little innovation in what police did once they had identified problems.

A major factor contributing to this lack of innovation was Compstat's heavy emphasis on the accountability of middle managers for carefully sifting, considering, and deliberating about crime patterns and then conducting a careful review and discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of various approaches—the very kind of analysis that Compstat claims to encourage. Follow-ups, when they did occur, were testimony to the powerful influence of internal accountability, and they were limited to a determination of whether or not a district commander had identified a crime problem and implemented a response. We did not observe any in-depth discussions on how or why a crime strategy worked or failed to work; nor did we hear any suggestions for its improvement. Although directed patrol was not the only recourse in the MPD's toolkit for responding to a crime spike, the range of alternative crime responses did appear to be limited by the department's focus on directed patrol as *the* strategy of choice, thus inhibiting experimentation and innovation. Under Compstat, district commanders and sector lieutenants were expected to instruct their officers to use their uncommitted time to enforce the law aggressively in areas that showed an increase in criminal activity. Thus, the problem solving stimulated by all three departments' Compstat programs replicated the classic street cop's ethos that it is more important to act decisively—even with an incorrect diagnosis and hastily-considered or preconceived solution—than it is to ponder the evidence and weigh options before carefully proceeding.

Problem solving and brainstorming during Compstat meetings

In addition to brainstorming, Compstat encourages innovative thinking, according to its supporters, by "constantly challenge [ing] precinct commanders to develop new responses to

crime problems" (Kelling and Sousa 2001, 12). Many who attended Compstat felt that there was a great deal of brainstorming and reporting, but our observations suggested that this overstated the case. The presentation of crime data did facilitate some sharing of information and insights on how a problem might be tackled in a district. In other words, audience members did exchange factual knowledge and provide suggestions based upon personal experience, but they were far less likely to engage in in-depth discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of a broad range of problem-solving alternatives.

The utility of the suggestions made at Compstat was severely limited by the pressures that internal accountability placed upon district commanders. In response to this pressure district commanders felt compelled to have a crime strategy already in place *before* Compstat meetings. In addition, the onus on middle managers to come up with quick and effective solutions—ones whose successful implementation was likely to involve the investment of precious resources— increased the likelihood that potentially helpful criticism made during Compstat would be regarded as threatening or unhelpful. In Minneapolis, one top manager noted that Compstat meetings tended to be "show and tell" sessions with little collaboration among the command staff on crime issues. She stated that it would be seen as "hostile" if other people added their thoughts to the district commander's presentation. At this point, the district commander had already invested his or her reputation, as well as the district's resources, in the chosen solution. The likelihood that a district commander would feel maligned increased when the source was perceived as poorly informed or inexperienced. A respondent in Lowell commented that he sometimes regarded comments made during Compstat as "slings and arrows." Radical changes would either be unnecessary, since the strategy had already solved the crime problem, or unwelcome, given the investment of resources and reputation.

In addition to the limitations imposed by internal accountability, the scheduling and organization of pre-Compstat and Compstat meetings lends itself to little more than a review of a district commander's tactics. Even without the pressure of accountability, middle managers have always had to respond quickly to crime. By the time district commanders presented at weekly or biweekly Compstat meetings, they were trying to recall crimes committed several days, if not weeks, earlier. One respondent in Lowell remarked trenchantly that Compstat, despite all the hype, still promoted a traditional "reactive" response to crime. He supported his statement by noting, "People have never comprehended technology to be proactive." Since the information displayed at Lowell's Compstat was as much as six-weeks old, Compstat participants were clearly reacting to incidents rather than implementing preventive measures. A district commander in Minneapolis, where the data presented at Compstat was only from the prior week, voiced a similar concern:

> We are looking at old information. Part of the presentation should be focused on what is going on right now rather than what ended last Monday. By the meeting we have three or more days of data and I am in a different mindset already. For example, if we had a homicide after midnight on Tuesday morning, I would be dealing with that all day Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, but come Compstat

on Thursday afternoon, the homicide is not even dealt with until the following week.[14]

Follow-up

According to Silverman, one of the key features of New York's Compstat is the "particular emphasis on follow-up and constant monitoring" (1999, 193). This is essential for ensuring that tactical responses are implemented and desired results are actually achieved (Walsh 2001, 355). Follow-up in our three sites was not as intensive or "relentless" as in the NYPD model. While the level of attention paid to follow-up differed considerably among the departments, all three generally relied upon the use of maps or crime statistics to determine whether crime activity had stopped or diminished. If a crime pattern disappeared, it was considered resolved. However, identifying the disappearance of a crime pattern does not provide a careful assessment of why a particular strategy worked. A "relentless" assessment would seem to demand an evaluation and thorough description of *why* it succeeded.

In contrast, those who directed New York's Compstat program argued that follow-up must be more intensive. This is how former police commissioner Bratton described it:

> As in any problem-solving endeavor, an ongoing process of rigorous follow-up and assessment is absolutely necessary to ensure that the desired results are being achieved. This evaluation component also permits us to assess the viability of particular tactical responses and to incorporate the knowledge we gain in our subsequent tactics development efforts. By knowing how well a particular tactic worked on a particular crime or quality-of-life problem, and by knowing which specific elements of the tactical response worked most effectively, we are better able to construct and implement effective responses for similar problems in the future. The follow-up and assessment process also permits us to redeploy resources to newly identified strategies once a problem has abated (McDonald 2001).

In the NYPD, top-level officials met after Compstat, reviewed the detailed summary minutes of the meeting, and assigned responsibility for solutions and their implementation. In other words, they distributed a detailed written record of whatever transpired at Compstat to top officials in order to ensure that nothing was missed in subsequent reviews. This record frequently recorded requests for updates at subsequent Compstat meetings and recommended strategies of action. As Silverman writes, "Post-Compstat meetings provide an official record and ensure that everyone is on the same page" (1999, 110). In short, the NYPD did not just rely on Compstat maps and the presentation of crime data in the follow-up process.

Our three sites not only differed from the NYPD. They also varied considerably among themselves in the level of attention they paid to follow-up, a difference that depended on the

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[14] We note that the MPD's top leadership made concerted efforts to ensure timely crime data through discussion of some of the most recent crime incidents at regular command staff or intelligence meetings held on the Tuesday prior to CODEFOR. Nevertheless, as this quote demonstrates, there was concern that some crime data were not available on a timely basis.

kinds of mechanisms they had implemented to supplement their regular Compstat meetings. Our observations suggested that follow-up was most comprehensive and systematic in Minneapolis, where district commanders regularly monitored whether patrol officers were following orders and engaging in directed patrol. This mechanism helped ensure that strategies were actually being implemented, but its utility was limited by its failure to monitor the *effectiveness* of directed patrol. Newark trailed closely behind Minneapolis, with the department using its Compstat book as a general reference guide to the implementation of crime responses. Follow-up was least systematic in Lowell, where the chief and his command staff relied upon the standard crime maps presented at Compstat to track results.

In Minneapolis, the origins of directed patrol lay in a department study estimating that only three hours of a patrol officer's time, on average, was committed to answering calls for service during a regular ten-hour shift. When a district commander had identified an emerging pattern, he or she could then create a directed patrol sheet instructing officers to pay attention to a specific area. The instructions were announced and posted at roll call. The district commander could then monitor the effectiveness of this response by keeping an eye on proactive police activities in the area, such as narcotics arrests or the stopping and tagging of cars, and any reductions in crime. In addition to this district-level mechanism, the lieutenant in charge of the CAU was responsible for checking crime patterns and monitoring crime responses between Compstat meetings. He then prepared notes and follow-up questions that the officer in charge of Compstat used to query district commanders about their crime strategies. He also summarized what had been discussed during the meeting and disseminated this record to top management and each district commander. Consequently, follow-up was a regular feature at both the department- and district-level.

In Newark, follow-up was the primary domain of the officer in charge of the weekly Compstat meetings. It was facilitated by the Compstat book, which recorded the discussions and suggestions that occurred at the regular morning and weekly meetings. As such, it provided a helpful tool for ensuring that relevant information was not lost or forgotten. As in Minneapolis, a lieutenant was responsible during Compstat for taking notes that were used to remind the officer in charge of what issues needed to be reviewed.

At Lowell, an administrator took notes during Compstat, but these cursory jottings only consisted of a line or two on each Compstat slide and were for the chief's personal use rather than for review by command staff. One respondent expressed concern that there was not a more effective "feedback loop" in the department's Compstat program. He further noted that when a problem came up at one meeting, there was no guarantee that it would be addressed at a subsequent meeting. Our observations supported the assertion of this and other respondents that there was a discontinuous relationship between Compstat meetings. In the absence of a more systematic means of monitoring the effectiveness of crime strategies than weekly Compstat meetings, follow-up was fairly haphazard.

To sum up, the weight of accountability and the delay between a crime's occurrence and its presentation at Compstat hampered innovative problem solving. District commanders were under pressure to implement a crime strategy quickly or to have already responded to an "old" crime prior to Compstat. Furthermore, follow-up focused on holding middle managers

accountable for having done *something*; they were not accustomed to thoughtfully assessing "how interventions work, under what circumstances, with what effort, and for how long"—norms commonly associated with problem-oriented policing (Greene 2000, 316). It is instructive to look at a sector lieutenant's vague response to a deputy chief's question about why there had been a decrease in his district's auto thefts and thefts from motor vehicles: "Maybe the directed patrol; they flood the areas. There are still pockets, but there is a lot of presence and they have fliered the areas." He added that he was not sure why the district's crime numbers were down from the previous year, surmising that it was "probably seasonal."

Since there was no careful evaluation of whether different crime strategies were actually achieving their intended results, officers generally had to resort to their impressions of what appeared to have worked in the past. Knowing this, some middle managers actually avoided thinking more innovatively—presumably because there was no tangible reward for doing so. We watched one executive officer actually advise his officers, the day before their Compstat presentation, to stop worrying about identifying and discussing hot spots. He instructed them to focus their discussion on describing the kinds of activities—whether they were arrests or use of a decoy car—that they had used to respond to a recent spate of thefts from motor vehicles in their district. The utility of this tip, it appeared, lay in its capacity to divert attention from a more in-depth discussion of crime patterns and alternative strategies. His advice was sound. During the discussion of motor vehicle crimes, the presenters were not asked to elaborate on the characteristics of these incidents or the possibility of a crime hot spot.

Traditional responses

Most of the problem-solving approaches identified at Compstat relied on traditional police strategies that had been used before—in particular, asking patrol officers to identify suspects and keep an eye on things, area saturation, stepping up traffic enforcement, knock-and-talks, and increasing arrests. For example, in response to two unrelated incidents, an increase in prostitution in a particular location and the constant use of a specific pay-phone by suspected drug dealers, one of Lowell's district commanders put extra cruisers in the area. During another Lowell Compstat meeting showing that the street-side windows of several parked cars had been smashed, the chief asked, "What kinds of things have we done in the past?" His deputy suggested that they clamp down on motor vehicle violations: "You know, chief, sometimes you just get lucky. You catch a kid and they just talk. We need to get people in to talk to them." Similarly, when we asked a district commander in Newark what he had done regarding a spate of violent crimes within an area of the city, he told us, "good old police work" that included putting extra people in the area, increasing police visibility, and sending in the drug unit.

There did, however, appear to be some small but observable differences in the capacity of individual organizations to facilitate innovative problem solving. In Lowell, the chief strongly encouraged his command staff to share ideas on crime strategies, and in Newark, task forces provided a similar forum. In Minneapolis the importance accorded directed patrol, Compstat's focus on crime numbers rather than strategies, and the absence of task forces combined to limit innovative thinking.

Innovative responses

Many incidents that are identified at Compstat are temporary crime blips that will disappear by the time the next Compstat meetings rolls around. Should crime analysis reveal that there are no patterns, it is appropriate to implement a routine response, such as taking a report and assigning follow-up. Nevertheless, there are some incidents that are clearly related and their resolution may demand significant time, resources, and innovation. Lowell's chief often emphasized "thinking outside of the box" during Compstat, and we did observe an innovative problem-solving response to the criminal activity associated with a dilapidated boarding house occupied by vagrants, criminals, and down-and-outers. Despite increased police activity, there were continuing incidents involving alcohol abuse, drugs, vandalism, and serious crime, such as robbery and stabbings. As a result, the district commander pursued two more innovative problem-solving strategies to great effect: (1) Patrol officers conducted bed checks and arrested non-residents for trespassing; and (2) The department encouraged city administrators to secure a order demanding that the recalcitrant landlord close the building down. These police activities, the district commander noted, proceeded on two levels—administration and patrol—and represented a clear example of a coordinated response to a difficult problem. Invoking laws against trespassing, officers were able to make arrests, identify suspects, and use Compstat to catalogue the ensuing information. The chief, along with his district commander, then presented this evidence at City Hall to demonstrate the extent of the problem—the building had been responsible for over three hundred calls for service over a ten-month period—and to end the legal foot-dragging that had prevented the city from closing the building. Although we did not have the opportunity to observe Newark's task forces in action, they were often composed of officers who had reputations for being experienced investigators and innovative thinkers. Task forces could have continued to implement more traditional crime strategies, but the selection of officers with backgrounds in brainstorming and problem solving suggests that the department was making an effort to encourage in-depth thinking on some crime issues.

In Minneapolis, innovation was mainly composed of directed patrol and zero-tolerance policing. Eck argues that problem-oriented policing can take one of two forms. The first is the meticulously researched, carefully coordinated, in-depth, problem-solving response advocated by Herman Goldstein (1990); the second is what Eck refers to as "enforcement problem-oriented policing" (1993, 68). Directed and tactical patrols are illustrative of this approach, but departments that use these approaches run the risk of defining problems narrowly and addressing them with rather traditional methods, as Eck cautions. Since directed patrol in Minneapolis was combined with zero-tolerance policing, it limited the exploration of problem-solving alternatives. Criminal law, not the problem, was the defining characteristic of this approach. Innovative thinking was not encouraged in task forces or at Compstat meetings, where time constraints left no opportunity for questions or discussions until the end of meetings. The organization, consequently, was not structured to facilitate the sharing of ideas, as became clear at one of the department's annual command meetings to assess Compstat. When one of the top managers advocated the creation of a poster delineating the most effective problem-solving strategies, his suggestion was opposed; the district commanders responded that they already knew the answers to the problems in their districts.

Unfortunately, time constraints prevented us from exploring the department's CCP/SAFE units in more detail. The MPD's top leadership commented that these were important loci of in-depth, problem-solving activities. Our own observations, though limited to brief descriptions of CCP/SAFE activities by command officers during Compstat meetings, suggested that problem solving may actually have occurred on a more modest scale. In response to patterns of burglaries, thefts from motor vehicles, and smash and grabs that arose during several Compstat meetings, CCP/SAFE units distributed crime prevention fliers, offered to initiate a "Crime Watch," and warned business owners to remove cash from their registers at night.

In sum, it is a serious overstatement to claim that Compstat in these three sites fostered problem-solving innovation and experimentation, based upon brainstorming in Compstat meetings, collaboration among districts, and a close examination of research evidence. Compstat's data orientation did affect what problems were identified and consequently influenced the timing and location of responses. Compstat generally did little, however, to stimulate a data based analysis that could drive the decision about how to respond. This is not entirely surprising because the sort of sophisticated data analysis that might go beyond targeting problems and hot spots was not yet part of the departments' routines. While innovation in police responses was not absent from the Compstat process, it was hardly the hallmark that Maple considered it to be. Finally, in most cases middle managers were responsible for coming up with problem-solving tactics. District commanders and their lieutenants took the lead in the decision-making process and rarely approached the lower ranks for suggestions. In other words, some input may have bubbled up from below, but ideas tended to originate from the top and filter down the chain of command.

VI.   DISCUSSION

Results from out national survey showed Compstat to be a policing phenomenon that was sweeping across the nation (Weisburd et al. 2001). However, the popularity and praise afforded Compstat by many police practitioners and scholars is fueled more heavily by rhetoric and anecdotes than by a body of systematic research. Rather than focus on the NYPD, we decided to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Compstat by analyzing how it operated in three police agencies of different size and organization. In our discussion, we compare how each Compstat element worked in Lowell, Minneapolis, and Newark (see Table 7 for a summary) to illuminate the contributions and challenges of Compstat: Does Compstat function in the ways its supporters claim? In addressing this question, we distinguish between different types of challenges that arise in implementing Compstat: problems that are within a department's capacity to correct and those that stem from inconsistencies and contradictions within Compstat as a program. Finally, we examine how Compstat worked with another highly publicized and widely heralded program, community policing. Although much has been written about this current transformation in American policing, we know very little about its relationship with Compstat. Some of our field observations suggest the existence of tension or conflict between some of Compstat's elements and key tenets of community policing. By revealing some of the complexities surrounding Compstat, we hope to provide police and policy makers with some initial insights into how they might achieve desired outcomes and avoid undesired consequences.

Table 7: Summary comparison of Compstat elements across sites

	Lowell	Minneapolis	Newark
Mission Clarification	Ambitious and visionary goal: "To be the safest city of its size in the United States" Message not reinforced with any other mechanisms No specific operational tactics implemented for accomplishment of mission Strong acceptance of Compstat mission with some criticism of goal for being unrealistic	Tangible and specific goal: to reduce index crime by 10 percent in the year 2000 Message reinforced through training Directed patrol and zero-tolerance policing implemented for accomplishment of mission Lowest acceptance of Compstat mission. Zero-tolerance policing not associated with accomplishment of goal and regarded as conflicting with other important organizational values	No mission statement that explicitly mentions crime reduction Message not reinforced through Compstat-related mechanisms but more general crime-fighting ethos. No specific operational tactics implemented for accomplishment of mission Strongest acceptance of Compstat mission.
Internal Accountability	High level of accountability experienced by district commanders due to regular Compstat meetings No similar Compstat structure for making rank and file feel equally accountable for their performance Reassignment of underperforming district commanders very rare—top leadership constrained by fear of appearing arbitrary. Small pool of qualified candidates and limited availability of slots for promotion imposes additional constraints General impression that underperforming district commanders would not be replaced counteracted potency of Compstat meetings among lower ranks Decision making under Compstat experienced by rank and file as a series of commands	High level of accountability experienced by district commanders and sector lieutenants due to regular Compstat meetings District commanders scanned crime maps and officers' reports to check that patrol officers had engaged in directed patrol, but rank and file still experienced low level of accountability Reassignment of underperforming district commanders very rare—top leadership constrained by fear of appearing arbitrary General impression that underperforming district commanders would not be replaced counteracted potency of Compstat meetings among lower ranks Decision making under Compstat experienced by rank and file as a series of commands. Autonomy further constrained by focus on directed patrol and zero-tolerance policing	High level of accountability experienced by district commanders due to regular Compstat meetings No similar Compstat structure for making rank and file feel equally accountable for their performance Reassignment of underperforming district commanders very rare—top leadership constrained by fear of appearing arbitrary General impression that underperforming district commanders would not be replaced counteracted potency of Compstat meetings among lower ranks Decision making under Compstat experienced by rank and file as a series of commands
Geographic Organization of Operational Command	Twenty-four-hour responsibility for a geographic area devolved down one level to district commanders Nature of district commanders' authority was complex. Top management still played an important role in how decisions were made, especially on critical issues, such as resource allocation Modest shift toward geographic management. Some detectives placed under direct supervision of district commanders	Twenty-four-hour responsibility for a geographic area devolved down two levels to district commanders and sector lieutenants Nature of district commanders' authority was complex. Top management still played an important role in how decisions were made, especially on critical issues, such as resource allocation More significant shift toward geographic management. Each district assigned own property crimes investigation unit, community response team (CRT), and CCP/SAFE unit; district commander ultimately in charge of these units	Twenty-four-hour responsibility for a geographic area devolved down one level to district commanders Nature of district commanders' authority was complex. Top management still played an important role in how decisions were made, especially on critical issues, such as resource allocation Modest shift toward geographic management. Some detectives placed under direct supervision of district commanders

	Lowell	Minneapolis	Newark
Organizational Flexibility	Flexibility of resource allocation achieved mainly though ad hoc decision making. Formation of task forces was rare, since management regarded them as anomalous to geographic-based management. No district-level taxi squads	Flexibility of resource allocation largely achieved through district-level taxi squads. Less reliance on ad hoc decision making and formation of task forces	Flexibility of resource allocation largely achieved through formation of task forces and ad hoc decision making. No district-level taxi squads
	Within-district flexibility limited by absence of taxi squads. The occasional poaching of officers to form task forces mitigated this effect but simultaneously reduced between-district flexibility	Taxi squads increased within-district flexibility. Task forces were relatively rare, thereby reducing between-district flexibility.	Frequent formation of task forces increased between-district flexibility but simultaneously reduced within-district flexibility. Within-district flexibility further limited by absence of taxi squads.
	Pressure of internal accountability fostered competition that hindered resource sharing among districts	Pressure of internal accountability fostered competition that hindered resource sharing among districts	Pressure of internal accountability fostered competition that hindered resource sharing among districts
	Flexibility limited by traditional internal and external constraints: lack of manpower, conventional approaches to resource allocation, and city politics	Flexibility limited by traditional internal and external constraints: lack of manpower, conventional approaches to resource allocation, and city politics	Flexibility limited by traditional internal and external constraints: lack of manpower, conventional approaches to resource allocation, and city politics
Data-Driven Problem Identification and Assessment	Timely crime data were a feature of organization and operation. Daily crime reports made available to districts. CAU did not provide daily aggregates of crime incidents. Daily crime maps unavailable	Timely crime data were a feature of organization and operation. Daily crime reports made available to districts. CAU did not provide daily aggregates of crime incidents, but crimes were mapped immediately	Timely crime data were a feature of organization and operation. Daily crime reports made available to districts. CAU provided districts with daily aggregates of crime incidents, including crime types and location. Daily crime maps unavailable
	Crime reports facilitated the identification of crime problems and patterns at the command level	Crime reports and incident mapping facilitated the identification of crime problems at the command level. Crime maps generally used for the identification of crime patterns on a weekly basis	Crime reports facilitated the identification of crime problems and patterns at the command level
	CAU provided aggregate data, descriptive statistics, and crime maps a few days prior to Compstat	CAU provided aggregate data, descriptive statistics, and crime maps a few days prior to Compstat	CAU provided aggregate data, descriptive statistics, and crime maps a few days prior to Compstat
	Data used to inform rather than drive decision making at command level. Data analysis not diffused to line officers	Data used to inform rather than drive decision making at command level. Data analysis not diffused to line officers	Data used to inform rather than drive decision making at command level. Data analysis not diffused to line officers
Innovative, Problem-Solving Tactics	Continued reliance on traditional strategies to solve problems	Some innovation through directed patrol and zero-tolerance policing, but continued reliance on traditional law enforcement powers of police. Emphasis on directed patrol and zero-tolerance policing appeared to limit focus on more innovative responses	Continued reliance on traditional strategies to solve problems, but task forces might have encouraged in-depth thinking on some crime issues
	Leadership encouraged innovative thinking, but the pressure of internal accountability discouraged brainstorming and rewarded quick and decisive action over innovation	Leadership encouraged innovative thinking, but the pressure of internal accountability discouraged brain-storming and rewarded quick and decisive action over innovation	Leadership encouraged innovative thinking, but the pressure of internal accountability discouraged brainstorming and rewarded quick and decisive action over innovation
	Follow-up was unsystematic. It occurred at Compstat but depended upon leadership remembering what had happened at prior meetings. District commanders did not receive any record of what was discussed during Compstat	Follow-up was fairly comprehensive and systematic. Middle managers monitored but did not assess why a particular strategy worked. At Compstat, CAU recorded questions and responses that were used at subsequent meetings. District commanders were given a copy of what was discussed during Compstat	Follow-up at Compstat was systematic. CAU recorded all the information provided to district commanders through district detectives at daily crime meetings and all the questions and responses raised during Compstat in a "Compstat Book."

Mission Clarification

Supporters of Compstat argue that one of the program's key features is the proclamation of a bold crime-reduction mission that fosters widespread commitment within the organization. Our observations suggest that the implementation of Compstat does, indeed, help top management convey a powerful message about the importance of fighting crime; the patrol officers we surveyed strongly associated Compstat with crime fighting. Nevertheless, the level of officer commitment was the opposite of what we had predicted. It was strongest in the NPD, whose mission statement made no explicit mention of crime reduction, and it was weakest in Minneapolis, where management had made the most concerted attempt to foster acceptance of Compstat. Not only did leadership in the MPD establish a specific target for which the organization could be held accountable, it also reinforced this message through other mechanisms and implemented tactics designed to help the organization accomplish its goal. Despite these efforts, Minneapolis' rank and file appeared the most disaffected or ambivalent about Compstat: Some failed to associate directed patrol and zero-tolerance policing with the organization's attempt to reduce Part I crimes, while others felt that this approach conflicted with other equally important goals.

The reaction of Minneapolis' patrol officers highlights some of the challenges associated with the attempt to distill a public organization's many, and often conflicting, goals into one simple objective. Unlike Compstat, community policing explicitly recognizes that no contemporary police organization is long allowed to pursue one single objective. The organization resolves this by working within the bounds of acceptable compromises that do not provoke crises or make the organization the target of negative publicity. Minneapolis' patrol officers disapproved of directed patrol because they felt it left less time for other equally important activities. In complaining about their inability to provide quality service to other constituents, and in articulating the harmful effects of an aggressive crime-fighting approach to community relations, they explicitly recognized the limitations of the traditional focus on crime reduction. Fighting crime, providing services, and solving problems are not mutually exclusive, but Minneapolis' emphasis on all three fostered cynicism and frustration. Although top leadership worked hard to expand department goals well beyond crime control, officers felt the underlying focus on crime fighting undermined the organization's commitment to a much broader mission.

Internal Accountability

Many people in our three sites considered Compstat's principal element to be internal accountability, or making a specific individual responsible for tackling and reducing crime. It was also an element with some positive effects. Top management and district commanders were more aware of their crime environment and more motivated to get on top of crime problems than before.

Internal accountability, however, did present some significant challenges. Since it was experienced most acutely at Compstat meetings, it impacted disproportionately on middle managers, particularly district commanders. In the absence of a similarly potent mechanism for pushing accountability further down the chain of command, first-line supervisors and patrol

officers did not feel the same kind of pressure to perform. We have argued elsewhere that the pressure of internal accountability has the paradoxical effect of undermining the utility of two other Compstat elements. Not only does it discourage innovative problem solving by substituting speed for effectiveness and hindering open discussions; it also reduces organizational flexibility by fostering competition (Willis et al. 2004b).

By enforcing internal accountability for middle managers, Compstat centralized decision-making authority and left line officers with the primary responsibility of carrying out the district commander's orders. Their compliance allowed the district commander to provide an adequate response to the chief's inquiries at Compstat. If they neglected to follow orders, however, or decided to pursue alternate strategies, the district commander would be vulnerable to censure from the chief. Therefore, first-line supervisors and patrol officers experienced Compstat as a series of directives that flowed down the chain of command rather than a system that encouraged them to exercise discretion and solve problems. Since one of the crucial elements of community policing is the decentralization of decision-making authority, Compstat works at cross-purposes with this approach (Weisburd et al.2003).

Geographic Organization of Operational Command

Operational command in all three departments had been lowered to middle managers, but it had devolved furthest in Minneapolis where district commanders *and* sector lieutenants exercised twenty-four-hour responsibility for their specific beats. All middle managers exercised considerable decision-making authority over their geographic territories, but there was significant variation in how resources were allocated. In Lowell and Newark, top management was responsive to each commander's needs, but functionally specialized units remained centralized. In Minneapolis, however, several of these units were allocated to the districts and put under the direct control of the district commander. This reassignment of specialized units to the districts was a significant organizational development under Compstat.

Although Compstat is supposed to decentralize decision making to the district level, it also continues to reinforce the concept of top-down control. District commanders in all three sites were encouraged to take initiative, but top management was willing to exercise its authority to override their decisions. The chief and his deputies were in charge of department task forces and were ultimately responsible for the distribution of resources among districts. Furthermore, top management intervened in deployment decisions and arbitrated problems in coordination.

Broadly speaking, both Compstat and community policing orient operational command around the policing of specific territories. This explains the ease with which Compstat can be grafted onto existing community-policing programs in departments, like Lowell and Minneapolis, where management is structured geographically. Unlike community policing, however, Compstat revitalizes centralization of command and control—a key feature of the traditional police bureaucratic model (Weisburd et al. 2003). According to this model, top management establishes performance criteria for middle managers, holds them accountable, and controls resources. Compstat, therefore, represents a challenge to departments that have community- policing programs and are consequently attempting to reengineer their command structures to decentralize decision making to the street level.

The tension between top management and district commanders over centralized versus decentralized decision making was nicely encapsulated in one district commander's summation of the chief's leadership style as, "You can do anything you want, as long as I agree with you." This captures the contradictions of a program that functions as a centralized information system for monitoring and evaluating performance and as a mechanism for decentralizing decision-making authority. Compstat decentralizes tactical decisions to district commanders but centralizes up-to-date statistics that top management uses to hold district commanders accountable and to reallocate resources (Mastrofski and Ritti 2000). In short, Compstat's principle of internal accountability limits the extent to which geographic organization of operational command can be realized and vice versa, lending a zero-sum quality to the allocation of decision-making authority.

Organizational Flexibility

Compstat demands that the police organization develop flexibility to deal with emerging or unforeseeable problems. Our field observations showed that all three sites had used a variety of informal and formal mechanisms to increase their capacity to shift resources to where they were needed most. Lowell's top leadership had sought to increase flexibility by encouraging teamwork and coordination among districts and between districts and the department's specialized units. For the most part, however, the strategic reallocation of resources operated on an ad hoc basis. Unlike Lowell, Newark and Minneapolis had established specific organizational structures that facilitated resource reallocation. Newark responded to non-routine work demands by temporarily creating department-level task forces focused on specific crime problems. Minneapolis had made the most concerted attempt to enhance flexibility at the district level with the formation of permanent taxi squads, such as the CRT, and the use of directed patrol. These units were relieved from the burden of having to respond to every call for service so that they could focus on their district's emerging problems.

Unfortunately, geographic organization of operational command can reduce overall flexibility. For example, the creation of centralized task forces in Newark siphoned off resources from the districts, thereby limiting the resources at the district commanders' disposal and reducing within-district flexibility. Allocating additional resources to the districts did not solve this dilemma. Between-district flexibility was reduced in Minneapolis with the creation of specialized units that left fewer resources available for other department priorities and problems that crossed district lines. One Minneapolis sergeant commented: "They take people from patrol for specialty units like CRT and SAFE, and there are very few officers left for calls for service." In addition to these constraints, Compstat's emphasis on accountability combined with geographic organization of operational command to hinder teamwork and foster competition among districts. Since district commanders were responsible for their own beats, they were unlikely to share resources with each other (Willis et al. 2004b). Their reluctance to use Compstat as a mechanism for the redistribution of resources combined with their department's use of more traditional criteria, such as population size, to further constrain flexibility.

Our fieldwork also suggested a source of conflict between community policing and one of the approaches to increase organizational flexibility that we have previously discussed. In Lowell, which has a nationally recognized community-policing program, the chief explained that

the department had rejected a centralized task force approach to policing in favor of a district-level response. He explained that task forces were less familiar than district commanders and their staff with the complexities of beat problems and often adopted a "heavy-handed" response that was counterproductive. Consequently, task forces were rarely used in the department, thus providing instance in which geographic organization of operational command trumped organizational flexibility.

Data-Driven Problem Identification and Assessment

Compstat borrows from problem-oriented policing, a recent innovation that attempts to shift policing from a system based on response-driven calls for service to one in which police use data to structure decision making. We found it particularly noteworthy that all three police departments had developed sophisticated information systems and formed crime analysis units to assist them in the collection, processing, and analysis of timely crime data. In addition, our fieldwork showed that district commanders and their executive officers consistently used data to actively identify problems, establish priorities, and decide when and where to mobilize responses. As one patrol officer stated bluntly, "Concern over information is different than ten years ago when police officers did not give 'two craps' about the UCR."

Despite this increased use of information to guide decision making, middle managers were not given any special training to help develop their skills in crime analysis; nor were they provided with any support staff trained in research methods, statistics, or crime mapping. Regular Compstat meetings might have helped familiarize district commanders with the use of data, but the meetings did not help them develop the kinds of skills that might have helped them analyze data in order to detect plausible patterns. These limitations dulled the impact of the "cutting-edge" technology that was available through the departments' crime analysis units. District commanders had become significantly better at rapidly identifying the location of problems, but they did not analyze the data to figure out the specific cause of a problem and decide exactly what to do. Moreover, the available data drew only on incident reports rather than multiple information sources from other agencies. District commanders relied upon a serial review of officer reports, rather than statistics, to form their impressions of crime problems. Even when daily maps were available, they were little used. Furthermore, the identification of patterns using descriptive statistics only occurred a short time before Compstat. In sum, data were used strategically but district commanders bypassed much of the analysis so that they defined problems narrowly and responded with traditional methods. By responding to the immediate crisis and not implementing a preventive approach, Compstat resembled a more sophisticated model of reactive policing, not a revolution in the use of crime analysis to solve or prevent problems.

Compstat, community-oriented policing, and problem-oriented policing all share a focus on the use of intelligence to broaden the scope and range of police activities (Ericson and Haggerty 1997). The existing research shows that this data-driven approach has not advanced beyond a rudimentary level in most police organizations that claim to have adopted problem-oriented- and community-oriented-policing (Clarke 1998; Scott 2000), and our fieldwork supports these findings. Police officers are craft workers and pride themselves on knowing the tricks of their trade. If a chief really wants them to change their methods, he or she must

convince them that new methods will work better and not make their work environment less pleasant (Mastrofski 1990).

Innovative, Problem-Solving Tactics

Silverman writes: "Compstat is the forum where new problem-solving approaches are often presented, reviewed, analyzed, reexamined, and circulated. Many of the solutions are first developed at the precinct level" (1999,193). Our research suggested that Compstat has encouraged some innovation, but we did not observe a process in Lowell, Minneapolis, or Newark that resembled Silverman's description of the NYPD. Of course, traditional law enforcement tactics *might* provide the best response, but this can only be determined under Compstat after considering an array of other possibilities, such as collaborating with other agencies, mediation, public education, mobilizing the community for social control, altering the physical environment, enforcing civil law, and so on (Mastrofski and Ritti 2000, 191). Based on our observations, Compstat had only made short inroads into previous practice due to the pressure of internal accountability and the absence of a follow-up mechanism for evaluating crime responses.

Compstat demands that middle managers do something quickly about crime problems, though more innovative responses would require that district commanders have sufficient time to foster, develop, and test long-term, preventive plans. Compstat has made this process more difficult. The pressure of accountability, coupled with any lag between a crime's occurrence and its presentation at Compstat, limited the utility of follow-up. Rather than acting as an opportunity for reflection and reassessment, follow-up concentrated on whether a district commander had implemented a crime strategy. Furthermore, district- and department-level Compstat meetings were treated as an opportunity to review what had already been done, not as a forum for encouraging brainstorming and in-depth discussions about problem-solving alternatives. Some innovation did occur, but it was fostered by non-Compstat mechanisms such as a chief's encouragement of creative thinking, as in Lowell, or the creation of task forces, as in Newark. In the absence of these mechanisms, it was unlikely that innovative thinking would challenge the more traditional responses that were commonplace in Minneapolis.

Organizational environments that are characterized by a supervisory system that is essentially negative undermine proactive, creative police work—a signature of both community- and problem-oriented policing (Kelling 1999, 1-2). Although its supporters claim that Compstat does not aim to cultivate traditional, reactive police responses,[15] our fieldwork indicated that it actually did. Its emphasis on internal accountability prized a rapid response, thus discouraging innovation. A formidable challenge that Compstat presents to police leaders is how to increase accountability without inhibiting an environment that tolerates reasonable trial and error. Failure is ultimately a prerequisite for success, since it is rare for any organization to be successful the first time it tries something new. Proponents of community policing have argued that this obstacle can be overcome if departments recognize and accept officers' good-faith efforts to

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[15] Jack Maple's oft-quoted comment could be interpreted as trying to capture this quality: "Nobody ever got in trouble because crime numbers on their watch went up ... trouble arose only if the commanders didn't know why the numbers were up or didn't have a plan to address the problems"(Maple 2000, 33).

solve problems, even if they are unsuccessful. A policy that allows creative failure encourages innovative thinking and experimentation, and it could also be beneficial for Compstat.

VII. CONCLUSION

Compstat has been hailed as a way to make profound transformations in the way that police departments operate. Many consider New York City's pioneering Compstat program to have introduced a revolution in American policing. Our research at three sites that followed in New York's footsteps suggest that what has taken place thus far is not a transformation so much as a graft of some elements of progressive management onto fundamentally unaltered organizational structures. Some of those new appendages appear to have flourished, and some have not. Others are behaving in unexpected and possibly perverse ways.

Compstat's creators and advocates present it as a way to transform sluggish, unresponsive police organizations into focused, efficient, and smart organizations. The basic transformational elements are:

- Motivated employees who are guided by a focused mission, disciplined, and stimulated by a rigorous system of direct and personal accountability,
- Organizational nimbleness, or a capacity to deliver resources to places and at times that will nip problems in the bud,
- Organizational decisions informed by knowledge of the problems that require attention beyond that provided by normal organizational routines and facilitated by sophisticated electronic information management and data-analysis systems,
- Problem-solving that reflects collaboration and exchange of ideas among members of an organization, draws on research dealing with successful practices, and acknowledges the experience of other agencies, and
- Decision making in an atmosphere that has an elevated tolerance for risk and encourages new approaches to persistent problems.

Together, these transformational elements paint a picture of police organizations that are capable of reading their work environment, discerning important trends within it, and acting quickly in ways that deal with problems effectively. The realization of this vision would constitute a profound transformation in how local U.S. police agencies do business, but such transformations are not easily achieved. Our fieldwork suggests that the alterations to fundamental organizational structures that would facilitate these changes were not fully in place in our three study departments.

First, there was a gap in each agency between the theory of a highly focused organizational mission of crime fighting and the reality of a complex mission with a complex set of organizational structures that remained largely at odds with the ostensible simplification of the department's objective. Although Minneapolis provided some relief from the calls-for-service apparatus that dominates the organization of patrol work in most urban police departments, this framework remained virtually untouched by Compstat reform. Indeed, in Newark, rapid response to calls for service was a key element in top leadership's performance agenda for the department. This calls-for-service apparatus is the principal means by which the predominantly non-crime

aspects of police work become part of a police department's workload (Mastrofski 1983). Concerns expressed by many patrol officers that Compstat encouraged officers to neglect this aspect of their work is one indication of the extent to which there was discord between Compstat and the unspoken, but powerful, message conveyed by continuing the traditional calls-for-service mode of generating work for the largest sworn unit in the department. For the most part, other parts of the organizations' missions were not eschewed; the structural reality of police work in these cities remained as complex as before, and Compstat provided only a rhetorical facade.

The police departments we observed struggled with the mandate to create a more nimble organization that could move resources about strategically, or "put the soldiers where the battle is." Sometimes flexibility was achieved by decentralizing command and by giving district commanders control of more personnel, such as detectives. Other times, it was attained through use of overtime. Within this framework, organizational flexibility was achieved by one or more of the following: (1) ad hoc changes in who did what—usually without altering fundamental job assignment routines, such as officers' shift assignments, (2) district taxi squads not bound by permanent shift assignments, or (3) department-level task forces. Ad hoc changes and district taxi squads appeared to work well for relatively small-scale problems, but problems requiring larger resource allocations ran headlong into the limitations imposed by shift assignments, the changing of which are governed by union contracts. In this regard, police departments are very *unlike* military organizations, whose virtually complete freedom to alter work routines of the rank and file make them, at least potentially, among the most flexible of groups. Department-level task forces did enable the department to concentrate more resources on specific problems, but they also reduced the routine availability of resources to the districts, thereby reducing flexibility at that level. Indeed, this creates the inevitable dilemma that arises when a department tries to enhance flexibility without increasing resources and simultaneously tries to concentrate command of resources under the authority of district commanders. The best that top management can do is to try to anticipate the level at which flexibility will be most beneficial and then organize accordingly. Finally, pressures from political interest groups forced police managers to allocate resources to places and jobs that would not have received priority according to the dictates of Compstat. We can say, therefore, that these Compstat programs came to grips with the challenge of organizational flexibility but were unable or unwilling to alter the fundamental constraints that largely determine work schedules and allocation of personnel.

The new information technology and the emphasis Compstat placed on using it did appear to have a striking effect on key strategic decision-makers in the three agencies. District commanders, in particular, found that Compstat produced a profound change in the nature of their work as managers. Before Compstat, middle managers did not routinely and proactively pore over reports and scan maps to familiarize themselves with crime problems and identify crime trends. This became a daily imperative, due in no small part to the accountability mechanism to which these activities were so closely tied. Based on accounts of earlier practices, Compstat appears to have made middle managers highly sensitive to the need to know in considerable detail what was going on in their areas. This awareness in turn sensitized them to the location and timing of crime spikes, which in turn affected when and where they mobilized their resources. The considerable improvements in the timeliness of these hot spot data have made the use of data far more meaningful to these police managers. This focus on identifying hot

spots is, of course, one of the more important objectives of Compstat, which seemed fully realized at these sites.

Middle management's immersion in the data, however, was of a limited sort. Most of their daily data analysis was confined to familiarizing themselves with specific cases and looking for links or patterns with other cases. The search for patterns took place primarily in the minds of managers who relied on "mental maps" and other specific knowledge of people and places, the traditional tools of the police officer's trade (Rubinstein 1973; Van Maanen 1974). With the exception of the maps—which were used less frequently—computer analysis was narrowly restricted to the search for hot spots. Interest in areas and problems, and the attention accorded them, usually disappeared as soon as crime levels declined and the next hot spot arose. "Relentless" follow up really meant focusing on a hot spot only until it was no longer hot. This, of course, greatly weakens the capacity of an organization to learn much about the long-term effects of any intervention. Because attention shifted with the rise and fall of crime levels in given areas, analysis was usually episodic and highly reactive, not proactive. In other words, police did not respond to individual calls for service, but they did react to calls for service in the aggregate. Long-term follow-up and tracking of the life course of geographic areas, regardless of fluctuations in crime levels, was not a part of the crime-analysis routine, so departments did not develop systematic and verifiable knowledge explaining when and why crime might have risen or declined. Systematic data analysis that would examined and predicted hot spots was rarely undertaken; use of crime data to devise new solutions occurred only occasionally; and spatial modeling did not occur at all. It is fair to note that some of the more sophisticated methods of spatial crime analysis are of unproven utility and not yet routinely available in software that is widely marketed to the police (Anselin et al. 2000). It may also be noted, however, that none of the Compstat programs provided middle managers with any special training in the analysis or use of analyzed crime data.

Thus, Compstat at these sites did markedly energize middle managers to do something about crime, but in many respects, the pattern that evolved mimicked the reactive forms of policing about which advocates of strategic problem solving have complained. Compstat seemed to engender a pattern of organizational response to crime spikes in hot spots that was analogous to the Whack-a-Mole game found at fairs and carnivals. Moles pop up randomly from holes in the game board, and the object of the game is to whack them with a paddle before they submerge. A premium is placed on responding quickly rather than monitoring problem holes continuously to try to discern patterns in the eruption of moles. Successful players scan the entire board to make sure that they can quickly identify the next mole to surface. The pressure to act decisively and nip hot spots in the bud may be an improvement over prior practice, but it does not conform to more ambitious notions of how police can use data effectively to ascertain the bigger picture and act proactively to get at underlying problems. It merely transfers to the district commander the same sort of pressure that the patrol officer experiences to respond rapidly to assigned calls for service.

Given the ostensible importance of strategic crime analysis to these Compstat programs, it is noteworthy that departments failed to give their CAUs enough staff, training, and support. As a result, the CAUs could only provide police decision makers with limited, and fairly rudimentary crime analysis. This is not to demean the CAUs' contributions, which are quite

impressive, especially given the many challenges involved merely to process data to a state that the software could analyze. It does, however, indicate that the accoutrements of new information technology and data analysis were introduced into the organizations without preparing their members to make the most effective use of them.

Another partially realized innovation stimulated by Compstat in these organizations was providing a forum that would encourage people to exchange ideas about crime control. This was a frequently mentioned benefit according to middle and top-level managers who routinely attended Compstat. Again, from accounts of prior practice, Compstat introduced collaborative planning and problem solving in instances where it had once rarely occurred. The accounts of Compstat attendees and our observations make it clear that collaboration of this sort increased substantially because of Compstat.

However, there were definite limits to the nature, extent, and benefits of this collaboration. The sort of vision of brainstorming and problem solving evoked by Compstat's advocates is the gathering of cabinet officials and generals during the Cuban Missile Crisis, where there was a free give-and-take of views, ideas, and information (Allison 1971). The reality of Compstat meetings rarely approximated that vision. The pressures on managers to come to the Compstat meeting with problems identified and solutions already implemented were tremendous. Further, managers tended to be reluctant to volunteer "helpful" suggestions for fear that they would create problems for the person whose feet were being held to the fire of accountability— lest their colleagues return the favor when their turn arrived. Most of these commanders, moreover, were not in the habit of engaging in free-flowing debate because they had not been socialized to a problem-solving culture that exalts criticism as a means to improve the quality of management decisions. Theirs remained a culture in which the earliest socialization experiences onward emphasized the importance of following orders and deferring to rank. Managers in our three sites seldom sought the input and ideas of law enforcement personnel in other agencies or other professionals outside the department. It was even more rare for them to resort to researchers and their studies. Thus, the solutions selected tended to be parochial—that is, they relied on what those in the agency regarded as tried-and-true methods.

Compstat also failed to alter the low tolerance for risk that pervades the culture of police agencies and leads to parochial decision making. While this is by no means a feature unique to police bureaucracies, it remains a major stumbling block to the selection of effective solutions to emerging crime problems. Organizations that aspire to technical efficiency, such as effective crime control, need to have proven technologies to accomplish that goal. This becomes problematic because scientifically validated knowledge about what police can do to reduce crime is quite limited. Our capacity to predict reliably the success of even the most promising strategies is therefore limited (Eck and Maguire 2000; Sherman 1997). Although the police can scarcely be held responsible for the limits of scientific knowledge of this sort, they are placed in a position where they must blindly choose among the old methods or experiment with new tactics and strategies. Such experiments are fraught with a risk of failure that can only be tolerated if there is a sufficient buffer of faith or good will protecting those who are responsible for accomplishing results (Mastrofski 1998, 187). The irony here, of course, is that Compstat shrinks the size of that buffer substantially by requiring that organizational leaders broadcast a clear and concise statement of mission to accomplish the very thing that is so problematic when it comes to

producing results. The need to seize upon innovative, high-risk strategies may not be so great in times of declining crime. The real test of Compstat, however, will be in times of increasing crime, for it is then that political pressure will be greatest and the stakes perhaps higher. Under such circumstances, one might expect it to be better to risk failure, while being seen doing *something* new and different, than to cling to the hope that the old tried and true strategies will ultimately prevail. On the other hand, the record of police chiefs and their political overseers appears to be largely to engage in more of the traditional law enforcement activities—more suspect stops, more arrests, and more searches—when the crime rate rises precipitously.

Some who believe in the effectiveness of Compstat may be disappointed by the findings and implications of this study because we have found that Compstat has not operated as much of the prior literature, both promotional and evaluative, has indicated. Perhaps we have not studied the departments that have been most successful in implementing Compstat. We certainly must acknowledge that results could differ in other sites, but we take some confidence in the similarity of our small fieldwork sample to patterns in our larger national survey. Indeed, we must emphasize that many of the limitations of Compstat that we observed are built into the very principles of the program's design and are therefore inevitably replicated wherever it is faithfully attempted. That is, there are contradictions and paradoxes that naturally arise from the effort to create a program that aspires to overcome the many challenges involved in making police organizations effective, strategic tools for crime control. There is, for example, an inevitable tension between promoting heightened accountability for outcomes and engaging in the experimental risk taking required to find effective methods, between individual accountability and teamwork, and between organizational flexibility within districts and organizational flexibility between districts. There is a zero-sum element to these paradoxes, making it impossible to maximize both sides. That does not mean that police organizations are doomed to failure, but it does mean that trade-offs of this sort will be inevitable. The art is in finding the best compromises for each organization's circumstances. The test of that would require an evaluation that considers which set of compromises is most likely to produce the best crime-control outcome, a task for future research.

We have suggested that Compstat does not represent a radical transformation in the way these departments have done business. Instead, they have transplanted some new ways of doing business without making much change to some very fundamental structures of police organizations. This should not be surprising, for revolutions rarely come to U.S. police departments—or any organizations. Change is occurring, but at a much slower, evolving pace. To learn if the promises of Compstat will be fulfilled, future researchers should pay less attention to what police leaders say and more attention to the changes that may or may not occur in the fundamental structures of U.S. police organizations. Since the 1960s, the reform fashion has been to embrace complexity in the police mission—largely through the community-policing movement—and to decrease organizational flexibility by constraining management's power over resource allocation. One can only speculate on the impact of the domestic war on terrorism on these trends, but it is hard to imagine that it will reverse them. On the positive side for Compstat, the police have taken a lead role among justice agencies in embracing and using social science to decide what problems need solving and how to do it. As they grow more confident and more sophisticated in their ability to do so, it is possible that social science research will rise to meet

their expectations and thus provide a firmer foundation for the sorts of data analysis and problem-solving applications envisioned by Compstat's advocates and implementers.

Appendix:

Line Officer Survey

Officer Survey   Survey# __ __ __ __ __

The Police Foundation is conducting a study of Compstat. This research project is funded by the Department of Justice. As part of the study, we are conducting a survey of officers in your department. The survey is completely anonymous and you will not be identified in any report. The surveys will be kept under lock and key at the Police Foundation. The survey will take about ten minutes to complete. We greatly appreciate your participation. Please answer as many questions as you can. You may refuse to answer any question or stop at any time. Again, thank you for your participation.

1.   Please indicate whether each of the following is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important to the Compstat strategy in the Lowell Police Department [or NAME of other police department].

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	Don't Know
a. Reduce complaints against officers	1"	2"	3"	8"
b. Reduce violent crime in Lowell	1"	2"	3"	8"
c. Improve the quality of life in Lowell	1"	2"	3"	8"
d. Arrest people committing misdemeanor offenses	1"	2"	3"	8"
e. Hold sector captains accountable for crimes in their sector	1"	2"	3"	8"
f. Provide timely and accurate crime data	1"	2"	3"	8"
g. Respond quickly to calls for service	1"	2"	3"	8"
h. Identify crime patterns and choose appropriate tactics	1"	2"	3"	8"
i. Respond quickly to emerging crime problems	1"	2"	3"	8"
j. Hold officers accountable for crimes in their beats	1"	2"	3"	8"
k. Follow up to assess whether solutions were successful	1"	2"	3"	8"
l. Make officers and equipment available to different sectors as needed	1"	2"	3"	8"
m. Encourage officers to take responsibility for their beat	1"	2"	3"	8"
n. Resolve disputes among different segments of the community	1"	2"	3"	8"
o. Create and maintain open lines of communication with the community	1"	2"	3"	8"

2.   In the last five years, has your department's effectiveness in accomplishing each of the following increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	Increased	Stayed About the Same	Decreased	Don't Know
a. Reduce complaints against officers	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
b. Reduce violent crime in Lowell	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
c. Improve the quality of life in Lowell	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
d. Arrest people committing misdemeanor offenses	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
e. Hold sector captains accountable for crimes in their sector	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
f. Provide timely and accurate crime data	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
g. Respond quickly to calls for service	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
h. Identify crime patterns and choose appropriate tactics	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
i. Respond quickly to emerging crime problems	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
j. Hold officers accountable for crimes in their beats	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
k. Follow up to assess whether solutions were successful	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
l. Make officers and equipment available to different sectors as needed	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
m. Encourage officers to take responsibility for their beat	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
n. Resolve disputes among different segments of the community	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "
o. Create and maintain open lines of communication with the community	1 "	2 "	3 "	8 "

3.   Listed below are ten activities for which you might receive praise from your superiors. Please review all of these activities and then rank them from one to ten in terms of how much praise you might receive. Write a one by the activity which would bring you the most praise, a two by the activity which would bring the second most praise, and so on.

	Rank
a. Identifying a developing crime pattern	
b. Rapid response to 911 calls	
c. Assisting crime victims in obtaining services and cooperating in prosecutions	
d. On-sight misdemeanor arrests of persons known to the police	
e. Working with community members to solve local crime or disorder problems	
f. Recovering a weapon	
g. Writing accurate crime reports	
h. Working to provide legitimate activities for potential offenders	
i. Making a large drug bust	
j. Overall reduction of crime in your beat	

4.   Have you attended a Compstat meeting? Please check one.

1 " Yes   2 " No [SKIP TO Q6]

5.   If "Yes," please indicate what you did at the meeting. Please check all that apply.

1 " Observed meeting only – did not participate
2 " Assisted someone else make a presentation but did not speak
3 " Answered questions
4 " Offered an opinion or information
5 " Made a short presentation (less than two minutes)
6 " Made a long presentation (two or more minutes)

6. How often does your supervisor discuss what has happened at the Compstat meetings? Please check one.

    1 ″ Every week

    2 ″ About once a month

    3 ″ Every few months

    4 ″ Never

7. To the best of your knowledge, how much has Compstat changed your job responsibilities? By job responsibilities, we mean what you are expected to do on a daily basis. Please check one.

    1 ″ A great deal

    2 ″ Somewhat

    3 ″ A little bit

    4 ″ Not at all   [SKIP TO Q9]

    8 ″ Don't know   [SKIP TO Q9]

8. Please describe any changes.

9. Please indicate your view of each of the following statements by marking the appropriate box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Compstat has made supervisors place too much emphasis on statistics	1 ″	2 ″	3 ″	4 ″	5 ″
b. Compstat has made it possible for officers to get credit for doing quality work	1 ″	2 ″	3 ″	4 ″	5 ″
c. Compstat has kept supervisors from spending enough time on the street	1 ″	2 ″	3 ″	4 ″	5 ″
d. Compstat has made me more aware of what goes on in other parts of the department	1 ″	2 ″	3 ″	4 ″	5 ″
e. Compstat has increased teamwork between my unit and specialist units in the department	1 ″	2 ″	3 ″	4 ″	5 ″
f. Compstat will be an important feature of the department's organization in 5 years	1 ″	2 ″	3 ″	4 ″	5 ″

10. Overall, how would you rate the impact of Compstat on the department's performance in serving the public? Please check one.

    1 " Highly beneficial
    2 " Beneficial
    3 " No effect
    4 " Detrimental
    5 " Highly detrimental
    8 " Don't know

11. Please briefly describe your view.

12. Overall, how would you rate the impact of Compstat on the department as a good place to work as a police officer? Please check one.

    1 " Highly beneficial
    2 " Beneficial
    3 " No effect
    4 " Detrimental
    5 " Highly detrimental
    8 " Don't know

13. Please briefly describe your view.

14. How many years have you worked for the Lowell Police Department in a sworn position?

    1 " Fewer than 3 years
    2 " 3-5 years
    3 " 6-10 years
    4 " 11-20 years
    5 " More than 20 years

15. What is your current rank
    1 " Police officer
    2 " Rank higher than police officer

16. What hours do you work? from ___:___ am/pm   to ___:___ am/pm

17.   How old are you?

1 " Under 21   5 " 40-49
2 " 21 - 25   6 " 50-59
3 " 26 - 29   7 " 60+
4 " 30-39

18.   What is your highest level of formal education? Please check one.

1 " Some High School   5 " Some Graduate School /
                                                                Law School
2 " High School Graduate or GED   6 " Masters Degree / JD or LLB.
3 " Some College/A.A. Degree   7 " Ph.D.
4 " Bachelors Degree

19.   Are you male or female?

1 " Male
2 " Female

20.   What is your racial group? Please check one.

1 " White
2 " African American
3 " American Indian or Alaska Native
4 " Asian American or Pacific Islander
5 " Other

21.   Are you Hispanic or non-Hispanic?

1 " Hispanic
2 " Non-Hispanic

Thank you for completing the survey!

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