William bratton and the nypd essay

yale case 07-015 rev. february 12, 2008 William Bratton and the NYPD Crime Control through Middle Management Reform Andrea R. Nagy1 Joel Podolny2 William Bratton, commissioner of the New York Police Department from 1994 to 1996, presided over a dramatic decline in the city's crime rate. Hired by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani as part of a new crime fighting initiative, Bratton embraced the " broken windows" theory that had made him so successful as chief of the city's transit police.

According to this theory, when a community ignores small offenses such as a broken window on a parked car, larger offenses such as burglary, robbery, and assault inevitably follow. Conversely, serious crime can be prevented if a community polices the little things, the " quality-of-life" offenses such as vandalism, graffiti, panhandling, public urination, prostitution, and noise. This theory had been discussed and partially implemented in the city of New York since the 1980s, but it was Bratton who fully executed it.

Bratton realized this vision through two main strategies. First, he decentralized the bureaucracy, giving more authority to precinct commanders. Each precinct was made into a miniature police department, with the commander authorized to assign officers according to the needs of the neighborhood, and to crack down on police corruption in his precinct. Second, Bratton increased the precinct commander's accountability. Through an automated tracking system called Compstat, Bratton monitored the time, type, and location of crimes in each precinct on a weekly basis.

Commanders were summoned to monthly meetings and questioned about increases or aberrations in crime in their precincts. They were called to

account for enforcing quality-of-life offenses and were rewarded for decreases in crime. The response to Bratton's changes was immediate. Crime rates plummeted, and morale skyrocketed. Bratton was credited with transforming the structure and culture of the NYPD in a way that had never been done before. In addition, he was praised by many in the press for proving that crime was not an intractable fact of modern life but rather a problem that could be solved.

But the ensuing years also revealed some risks associated with the Bratton reforms. The push to bring down crime rates had the unintended consequence of encouraging unscrupulous officers to fabricate statistics. The Compstat meetings sometimes became so demanding that morale was harmed. The department also faced charges that it had encouraged overly aggressive policing. The cases of Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo in the late 1990s raised questions of whether Bratton's methods had cut crime at the cost of increasing abuse.

Policing in the 20th Century: Corruption and Reform When Bratton came to the NYPD, he was part of a long tradition of police reform movements. The police have always been charged with the mission of preserving civil order while respecting civil rights, but early on a tension developed between these two objectives. When the police focused on preventing crime, they were tempted to become either too abusive or too involved with the criminals they were trying to prosecute. But if they focused on cleaning up their own corruption, they became timid in fighting crime.

The history of policing shows recurring problems with abuse, corruption, and unresponsiveness, followed by concerted cleanup efforts. In New York City, in particular, the history of policing is also a history of reform. Founded in 1844, the NYPD quickly became entangled with the city's vice industries and gangs. Officers were notorious for taking payoffs from gambling establishments and brothels, extorting legitimate businesses, and harassing immigrants. Every 20 years or so a corruption scandal would arise, and the city would respond by appointing a commission to investigate the charges.

Beginning in the 1890s, six commissions were appointed over the years, but in spite of repeated investigations, there was little sustained change. 3 Two Reform Movements In the century before Rudolph Giuliani became mayor, two main reform movements took place in response to corruption scandals. First, between 1890 and 1930, the management of the police force was centralized. Virtually every decision had to go to the top for approval, with the goal of limiting the low-level officer's exposure to temptation. To reinforce the hierarchy, specialized units were created to deal with such problems as drugs, youth, guns, and gangs.

As Bratton described it, [The department] was divided into little fiefdoms, and some bureau chiefs didn't even talk to each other…. Each bureau was like a silo: Information entered at the bottom and had to be delivered up the chain of command from one level to another until it reached the chief's office. 4 But centralization did not solve the problem of corruption, and it added the problem of inefficiency, because the bureaucracy was not capable of responding to the individual needs of different neighborhoods. The reflexive solution to every police problem was more centralization and

stronger controls," according to criminologist George Kelling. But as the years went on, centralization became an end in itself, and even chiefs who wanted to make changes could not, for fear that they would be labeled soft on corruption. 5 Then, between 1930 and 1970, a second reform movement applied a scientific management model to the NYPD. The goal was to reduce policing to standard rules and routines. In essence, patrol officers became factory workers who performed simple, repetitive tasks that required no discretion.

The officers' role was law enforcement, not crime prevention: that is, they would investigate a crime and arrest a perpetrator after the crime was committed, but they would not work on preventing crime from happening in the first place. Success was measured only by the number of arrests an officer made, not by a decrease in the number of crimes committed. Compounding the lassitude caused by centralization and automation was a new set of beliefs th about crime adopted during the mid-20 century.

On the liberal side, President Lyndon Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice declared that crime was caused by poverty and racism and could not be prevented without eliminating these " root causes. " It was also argued that to suppress such " victimless" crimes as begging, graffiti, littering, public drunkenness, and noise was to impose bourgeois values on a legitimate subculture. On the 2 william bratton and the nypd conservative side, it was asserted that crime was caused by the decline of the family and the rise in the number of fatherless children.

Both sides implied that the police could do little to prevent crime but could only arrest criminals after the fact. De-Policing New York By the 1970s and ' 80s, the NYPD had become defensive and inefficient. The patrol officer was sequestered inside a squad car with a radio. His geographic territory was expanded so as to limit his contact with the community and thereby prevent corruption. He drove a random patrol in order to give the feeling of police presence in a community, but there was little attempt to focus patrols on problem areas.

He was not allowed to make low-level drug arrests; instead, he had to let the drug trade take place and report the information to detectives at headquarters. His performance was judged by the number of arrests and the response time to 9-1-1 calls, not the crime rate. As Kelling and Bratton put it in a co-authored article, the business of the NYPD had become staying out of trouble: "…it was the worst of all possible scenarios: too much abuse and corruption, too much corruption control, and not enough quality policing. " At the same time, during the 1970s the NYPD was forced to lay off thousands of police because of a city budget crisis. 6

These three influences— a social climate that said that crime could not be prevented by the police, a police force driven by fear of controversy, and a decrease in the number of officers—combined to produce an increasingly unsafe environment. As Bratton described it, in the 25 years before his arrival at the department, the city of New York " de-policed" its streets: " Police officers were walking by disorderly conditions and letting them fester. They were openly giving freedom of the streets to the drug dealers, the

gangs, the prostitutes, the drinkers, and the radio blasters. A sense of fear and anarchy pervaded many neighborhoods. " 7

The rate of violent crime in New York City increased seven-fold between 1960 and 1990. And in spite of the resolute efforts of the department to repress corruption, corruption continued, with rogue officers selling drugs and guns and taking payoffs for protecting drug dealers. These problems were not unique to New York. Cities all over the country were plagued by violence, crime, and disorder. Families who could afford it fled to the suburbs, and some sociologists feared that the American city was dying. Broken Windows and Zero Tolerance At the same time as New York was struggling with crime and urban decay, political scientists James Q.

Wilson and George L. Kelling wrote an influential article that would eventually be credited with helping to revive America's cities. The article, published in the March 1982 issue of Atlantic Monthly magazine, was entitled " Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety. " Wilson and Kelling developed a theory based on the research of Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford psychologist who showed through experiments in Palo Alto and the Bronx that a single broken window in a neighborhood leads to further destruction of property. The broken window is " a signal that no one cares," and it leads to an overall breakdown of community controls. By extension, proposed Wilson and Kelling, all minor " quality-of-life" offenses have serious consequences. A community that allows panhandlers, addicts, gangs, and prostitutes free rein creates an atmosphere of intimidation and sets the scene for more serious crimes. Conversely, if a community polices minor offenses, it can prevent violent crimes. " According to this model," said Kelling and Bratton in a later

discussion, " waiting until serious crimes occur to intervene is too late: dealing with disorderly behavior early, [as] successful communities have in the past, prevent[s] the cycle from accelerating and perpetuating itself. The proposals of Wilson and Kelling were further developed and tested by sociologists Wesley Skogan, Mary Ann Wycoff, and 9 3 william bratton and the nypd others, who demonstrated that disorder creates a high level of fear, which then leads law-abiding citizens to abandon the community. The broken windows theory, also known as the " zero-tolerance" approach, emphasized respect for property and for community norms of behavior. But implementing this theory required a th different type of policing than the method that developed during the first half of the 20 century.

The new approach encouraged proactive, involved officers who would be an integral part of the community rather than impersonal, scientific, reactive policing. But a widespread change from the old model to the new came slowly: it would take nearly 15 years before the new method of policing would become standard practice in America. 10 Bratton's Early Experiments Policing Small Offenses in Boston Even before he became acquainted with Wilson and Kelling's theory, William Bratton embarked on his own reform programs as a police officer in the 1970s and 80s.

Born and bred in Boston, Bratton began his law enforcement career in 1970 as an officer in the Boston Police Department. He rose quickly to managerial positions, and in the late 1970s, he took over a community policing program in the Fenway Park district, which had deteriorated into a dangerous condition. One of Bratton's first strategies was to set up community meetings at which residents could share their perspective on the

neighborhood's problems. To his surprise, he said, " it turned out that the police had one perception of the largest problem in an area and the neighborhoods had another one altogether. Ours was usually serious crime.

Theirs was usually a lot more mundane. " Even in the most dangerous neighborhoods, residents complained not about rape and murder but about noise, filth, and antisocial behavior. For example, at one community meeting, the police were trying to solve a string of burglaries, while the public was more concerned because the streets were dirty and the police were not giving parking tickets so that cars could be towed and the streets cleaned. 11 At first Bratton found it difficult to focus on these small offenses: " It wasn't the easiest lesson in the world to absorb. I was still a young cop. We all wanted to make the good pinch, the gun pinch.

We wanted to disarm felons; we didn't want to be wrestling with drunks. " But policing the small violations started to pay off: in the case of the neighborhood with the dirty streets, as officers started writing parking tickets, they soon met people who had seen the burglar, and it was not long before the criminal was apprehended. It was a win-win situation: the citizens got their neighborhood cleaned up, and the cops caught the burglar. 12 Tracking Crime in Boston During the Fenway Park assignment, Bratton also began a rudimentary data-gathering scheme. In the station house, he covered the walls with large maps of the district.

Each day an employee would stick dots on the map showing where crimes had been committed, with red for burglaries and blue for robberies. Bratton recalled that at first the officers were uninterested in the maps, but soon

they started to compare their sectors with others and to work to bring down the number of dots in their own sector. " I got the cops interested by giving them timely, accurate, easy-to-digest information," Bratton said. " I didn't order them in and show them, I made it available, and the cops bought in. They went about solving some crimes and preventing others. Bratton was beginning to go " beyond 9-1-1," that is, beyond getting the cop to the crime scene quickly, to actually preventing crimes from happening in the first place. 13 4 william bratton and the nypd After his success in the Boston-Fenway program, Bratton further developed his approach to police force management during the 1980s as chief first of the Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority Police and then of Boston's Metropolitan District Commission Police. In these assignments Bratton both gave more to officers and demanded more from them. He purchased new police radios and new uniforms.

He fought for funding to replace dented motorcycles with spacious new police cruisers. He publicly recognized officers with exemplary performance and publicly reprimanded those who abused privileges. And he installed large maps to track crime on a daily basis. Both in the way that he managed the police force and in the way that he directed the police to patrol the community, Bratton focused on the details. He improved the small things, and higher morale and lower crime followed. Busting Fare Beaters at the New York Transit Police Bratton began to gain national prominence when he was hired to head the New York Transit Police in 1990.

It was during this assignment that he consciously and explicitly applied the " broken window" principles of Wilson and Kelling. In fact, Bratton hired

George Kelling as a consultant to the transit authority to propose solutions to the problems of crime and disorder on the subway system. The system was plagued by fare beaters, muggers, panhandlers, vandals, and vagrants camping out in the stations. Some 170, 000 riders dodged the $1. 15 fare each day, costing the transit authority over 70 million dollars a year. Law-abiding citizens feared the underground chaos.

With declining ridership and declining revenues, the system was a shambles. The police force was demoralized by the obvious failures, yet it was also resistant to change. As Bratton recalled, They didn't want to deal with fare beating because they had no interest in protecting the Transit Authority's property; they didn't want to collar turnstile jumpers because that had nothing to do with real police work; and they didn't want to deal with the panhandlers and underground population because they didn't want to put their hands on people who might have AIDS.

They were happy, however, to go after serious crime. 14 The broken-windows approach at first struck employees as demeaning: trained police officers who were accustomed to investigating major crimes like murder and robbery were now being asked to pay attention to minor housekeeping tasks. But Bratton overcame their reluctance by allowing them to work in business clothes, a desirable assignment for the uniformed cop.

Bratton developed a " fare-evasion mini-sweep," in which plainclothes officers would go to problematic subway stations, arrest 10 or 20 turnstile jumpers at a time, handcuff them together in a long line, and then take them outside the station to a " bust bus" mobile arrest processing center. Bratton

enlisted the marketing department to publicize his efforts, and he made sure that the " daisy chain" of handcuffed offenders was paraded to the bus in full public view. The strategy produced multiple benefits: not only was the fare evasion problem solved, but crime was also attacked.

Many petty offenders turned out to be not decent citizens having a bad day but rather hardened criminals: one out of every seven people arrested for fare evasion was wanted on an outstanding warrant for a previous crime, and one out of 21 was carrying a weapon. Under Bratton's tenure, robberies in the system fell 40 percent, and felonies overall declined by 22 percent over two years. 15 Moreover, department morale rose: although officers had at first been reluctant to deal with small offenses, they soon became energized by their success.

Without spending any additional money, Bratton achieved the disparate goals of controlling disorder, cutting crime, improving internal morale, and winning public approval. Bratton's career went from strength to strength: he 5 william bratton and the nypd achieved his long-awaited goal of becoming chief of the Boston Police and not long afterward was tapped for the position of NYPD commissioner. New York on the Brink of Change The changes in policing philosophy that Bratton would implement at the NYPD were already in preparation well before he arrived.

Around 1970 the department began to adopt a model called " community policing," in which officers cultivated closer relationships with the neighborhood by getting out of their cars and going on foot patrols. In 1980 a report by the Fund for the City of New York essentially recommended a

broken-windows approach when it noted that loitering and street solicitation created an atmosphere of intimidation that potentially led to more serious crime. Then in the early 1990s, 7, 000 new patrol officers were hired, and they met regularly with community leaders to discuss problems.

Mayor David Dinkins' police commissioner, Raymond Kelly, engaged George Kelling as a consultant to study ways of dealing with quality of life violations in New York. Under the Dinkins administration, crime rates started to decline, first by . 03 percent in 1990, then 4. 4 percent in 1991 and 7. 8 percent in 1992. 16 But in spite of these gains, the city was still experiencing substantial problems. Crime had reached a 30-year high in 1990, and New York continued to be harassed by low-level nuisance crime, what Rudolph Giuliani would call " the street tax paid to drunk and drug-ridden panhandlers. A 1993 poll showed that nearly 60 percent of New Yorkers believed that crime had gotten worse during the previous four years, and 45 percent of respondents said the quality of life had gotten so bad that they would move out the next day if they could. Equally as problematic as actual crime was the high level of public fear and pessimism. " There is no will to fight crime anymore," a local Catholic priest told a reporter in late 1993. " No municipal will. No community will. People are too frightened. It permeates the whole system. " 17 18

Giuliani's Mayoral Campaign Rudolph Giuliani said that he did have the will to fight crime, and he cited as evidence his reputation as a tough prosecutor. In his campaign for mayor, he would tell audiences that he had imprisoned so many criminals that his friends felt uncomfortable meeting him in a restaurant, lest a thug mete out revenge over dessert. In other speeches he

would boast that he had met a convict just released from prison who sneered that he would be voting for the other guy. His law-andorder appeal struck a chord, and in November 1993 he defeated David Dinkins and was elected mayor of New York. 9 Mayor Giuliani committed to several crime-fighting strategies: begin arresting small-time drug dealers and buyers; increase the number of patrol officers on the streets; arrest aggressive panhandlers and " squeegee men" who forced motorists to pay for having their windshields cleaned; improve school safety by putting police in charge of school security; and fine 10, 000 illegal vendors crowding the streets. In order to streamline operations among intersecting law enforcement agencies, he also proposed consolidating the NYPD with the housing police and transit police.

He promoted his strategies as means by which New Yorkers could " regain control of everyday life. " The only thing that Giuliani needed was a police chief who could realize his vision. Re-engineering the NYPD Giuliani turned to Bratton, who had the experience and ideas that he required. Bratton arrived in New York promoting the broken windows theory explicitly. He promised to attack the largest crimes by focusing on the smallest, beginning with squeegee men. " Squeegees are of great 6 william bratton and the nypd ignificance," argued Bratton shortly after his appointment, " because like fare evasion and like disorder on the subways, it's that type of activity that is generating fear. " 20 Bratton could have simply directed officers to begin arresting squeegee men, panhandlers, drunks, drug pushers, and prostitutes. But he was more ambitious. In his job interviews with Giuliani, he committed to fast, dramatic results: a 40 percent reduction in crime in three years and a

measurable reduction in public fear within four years. In order to secure this outcome, systemic change was required.

As one department executive put it, " Yeah, it can be done, but you're going to have to change everything about this place. " It was not only a new theory of policing that was needed but also the re-engineering of an unwieldy bureaucracy of 30, 000 employees. In order to achieve significant improvements in the crime rate and the quality of life, the NYPD needed to change its culture. 21 22 First Bratton needed a leadership staff that was committed to crime control. Before he arrived in New York in January 1994, he asked for resignations of all senior staff.

Next he put together a new team of " deep selects" that included Jack Maple as deputy chief, John Timoney as chief of department, Louis Anemone as chief of patrol, John Miller as deputy commissioner of public information, and Michael Julian as chief of personnel. Then Bratton created a crisis. He hired a consultant, John Lindner, to perform a " cultural diagnostic" of the NYPD, describing its strengths and its obstacles to change. He appointed more than 300 employees from every rank of the NYPD to " re-engineering teams" that studied everything from uniforms and equipment to discipline and training.

Publicizing the Problem Finally, Bratton publicized the need for change. In an interview in 2007, former chief of department John Timoney recalled a speech that Bratton asked him to give at a management retreat early on. " Ladies and gentlemen, we have been doing it wrong for the last 25 years," Timoney said to the department managers. He acknowledged that the NYPD was staffed by many talented and experienced individuals, but he said that it

had been crippled by a failure at the top: The failure was the organization's leadership over the previous 20 to 25 years.

They wasted your most valuable resource: your human beings; that's what they wasted—by micromanaging, by setting systems in place that stifled creativity.… With the best of intentions, they set up a structure that was meant to fail as a crime-fighting mechanism. It was built for failure. Timoney argued that the most important failure was focusing on corruption rather than crime. He recalled that during his 25 years on the force " there was only one thing important in my career, growing up: corruption. " As a result, crime control had been neglected.

Although some individual commanders made fighting crime a priority, the department as a whole was preoccupied with avoiding bad press. " Nobody ever lost a command because crime went up," said another department executive. " You lose a command because the loudest voices in the community don't like you, or because of a bad newspaper story, or because of corruption. " But this sense of priorities was distorted, said Timoney: 23 … if you ask the average citizen, " Why do you pay cops? What do you expect from your cops? " [they say,] " I want my cops to go out there and lock up the bad guys and make me safe. The average citizen knows what the cops are supposed to do. The only ones who don't know what to do are the cops. They think that they were hired to prevent corruption. The world has turned upside down. It's on its head. 7 william bratton and the nypd Bratton's team laid out the urgency of the problem and announced the new goal: a 10 percent reduction in crime in 1994. Then they began the process of refocusing the NYPD from a bureaucratic, top-down organization focused on

corruption control to a flexible, responsive organization focused on fighting crime. Decentralization: Giving the Middle Manager More Authority

In re-engineering the NYPD, Bratton focused on middle managers. They were " the heart of strategic innovations," Bratton believed; " leading, inspiring, and directing middle-management was the key to improving police organizations. " He empowered middle managers in two main ways: first, he decentralized the organization, giving them more authority; and second, he created a crime data tracking system to increase their accountability. 24 25 For policing purposes, the NYPD divided the city into eight patrol boroughs. Each borough contained two or three divisions, for a total of 18 divisions, and each division contained three or four precincts.

In all there were 76 precincts in the city of New York, each comprising about 100, 000 citizens. Each precinct also had different policing needs. There were the quiet residential areas of Staten Island, the crowded business districts of Manhattan, the rough neighborhoods of Brooklyn, and everything in between. Each precinct was headed by a commander, who managed several hundred cops on the beat. The precinct commander reported to the division commander, who reported to the borough commander, who reported to the chiefs at headquarters. See Exhibit 3 for NYPD organizational charts.) Under the old system, the precinct commander was a middle man who communicated to the officer on the street the directives from headquarters. Policies and procedures were one-size-fitsall for every precinct. The patrol unit was separated from the narcotics and detective units, with all units reporting to a central staff. A patrol officer who dealt with burglaries and robberies was forbidden to get involved in narcotics enforcement and was

not even allowed to enter bars and clubs because they were " corruption-prone locations. Decoy and undercover operations were performed by specialized task forces that knew little about the individual precinct and its needs. As Bratton summarized it, Precinct commanders went to community meetings and got their heads handed to them about all the crime locations in their precincts, but they didn't have the power to address those issues; they had to go up the borough chain of command and then over to the OCCB [Organized Crime Control Bureaus] or Detective Bureau chain of command to get the resources. 26

Seventy-Six Miniature Police Departments Bratton devolved authority down from the central planner to the precinct commander. Previous NYPD experiments with community policing had attempted to decentralize by emphasizing the cop on the beat. But Bratton believed this strategy to be unwise, because it placed too much authority in the hands of young and inexperienced officers. Instead, Bratton placed the main authority one level up in the hands of the precinct commander, creating what he called " 76 miniature police departments. " Staff was cut from specialized units and added to the precincts.

Weak precinct commanders were replaced with stronger leadership. The division level was eliminated entirely so that the precinct commander now reported to the borough commander. 27 In order to emphasize further the importance of local command, Bratton restructured the department's internal promotion mechanisms. In the past, according to Timoney, there had been " a bit of the old boy network…. If you hung around long enough, they'd promote you. " There was a lot of talk about the importance of the

uniformed patrol officer, but in practice there were 8 william bratton and the nypd any top managers who had never experienced the reality of day-to-day patrol duties. But under Bratton, said Timoney, there was " a conscious shift to set up a reward system that did more than give lip service to the notion of patrol being the backbone of the job. " Precinct commanders were now acknowledged to play the most important role in the police department. With the help of Timoney, a new career ladder for precinct commanders was devised. Timoney did a regression analysis of the 76 precincts and then rated them according to crime, police corruption, civilian complaints, and other criteria.

The precincts were then grouped into highlevel-crime " A" precincts, middle-level-crime " B" precincts, and low-level-crime " C" precincts. A new commanding officer would begin in a C precinct house with a moderate workload, then be promoted to a more demanding B precinct, and finally advance to the highest pressure A precinct. The high-crime districts thus received the highest pay and prestige, and leadership positions at headquarters were awarded based on success in the precinct command.

The precinct commander was now responsible for all police work in his district. Each commander was empowered to assign plainclothes officers, community policing officers, bicycle patrols, or robbery squads, according to the priorities of the neighborhood. Each commanding officer was authorized to design and implement his own crime-fighting plan: Commanding officers (COs) were authorized to allow their anticrime units to perform decoy operations, a function that had previously been left to the Citywide Street Crime Unit.

Precinct personnel were permitted to execute felony arrests warrants, and COs could use plainclothes officers for vice enforcement activities. Patrol cops were encouraged to make drug arrests and to enforce quality-of-life laws. Headquarters' restrictions on the total number of personnel that precinct commanders could assign to their own " specialty units" (for instance street narcotics units) were lifted. 28 Local Control over Local Problems This devolving of authority encouraged precinct commanders to exercise a great deal of creativity in responding to local problems.

As Timoney remembered, " these young, energetic captains would come up with ideas that would put a guy like me to shame…. I used to sit there and marvel at their ingenuity. " Timoney gave two examples of this grass-roots creativity at work. First, he remembered one strategy to prevent drunken youths from engaging in criminal behavior: We had in the West Village on the weekends crowds of people who would come in to go to clubs and bars— but also to drink and get themselves in trouble.

We'd often have teenagers—late teens, early 20s—coming in from the suburbs, theoretically to enjoy what the Village offered, but often engaging in drinking in public at seven o'clock at night, so that by ten o'clock at night, they were fiercely drunk, getting into fights, sometimes engaging in gay-bashing or robbery … a whole host of anti-social behavior that was exhibited later on as a result of the drink consumed during the night. Traditionally, our response would have been to go out, find them, and lock them up after the crime was committed.

But the police in command in the sixth precinct came up with a strategy in which, beginning at six or seven o'clock, they'd have officers in plain clothes confiscating beer, giving summonses out, and stopping the nonsense early on, which prevented the more serious nonsense from happening later on. In another neighborhood, remembered Timoney, a precinct commander devised a scheme to squeeze the lifeblood out of drug dealers: 9 william bratton and the nypd

One young captain came up with an issue in Washington Heights, where on some blocks drug dealers had taken over, so that the legitimate residents were terrified to go into them, where people and vehicles from New Jersey and other places would drive in and line up in traffic jams to buy their drugs. He came up with a pretty simple solution: they blocked off the streets with police barricades and posted police officers, and nobody was allowed on the street unless they lived there. Well, of course, the drug dealers couldn't live, couldn't make money if there were no customers allowed on the block.

Doing creative things like that had a remarkable impact. Some of these innovations might seem " almost trite and axiomatic," said Timoney, and yet they were new to an NYPD that had been accustomed to waiting for the 9-1-1 call before acting. The focus of the NYPD changed from reacting to crime after the fact to acting early on to arrest minor offenders before they had a chance to become violent. Compstat: Holding the Middle Manager Accountable Bratton did not simply let the precinct commander loose and then hope for the best.

At the same time as he devolved authority down to the middle manager, he also increased the middle manager's accountability. The innovations that Timoney described were made possible by an elaborate computerized system that measured the precinct commander's effectiveness and revealed new ways in which resources might be allocated. Traditionally at the NYPD, the only results that had been measured were the response time to emergency calls and the presence or absence of corruption scandals. When Bratton arrived at the NYPD, he was surprised to find that the department did not even have up-to-date crime statistics.

Headquarters was not tracking crime trends, and the most current data available was three to six months old. As Timoney summarized it, … up to 1994 police departments all across America collected statistics with the sole purpose of getting those statistics to report them to the FBI on an annual basis. Every once in a while, they would come up with a pattern burglar or a pattern robber, but that was only once in a while and by happenstance or serendipity. The police were generally good at getting to the crime scene quickly and doing the detective work to catch the perpetrator, but they had little awareness of details of the crime landscape.

This modus operandi was becoming increasingly unworkable, because it had resulted in unacceptable levels of crime and disorder. As Jack Maple used to argue, " until officers got out of their patrol cars and started fighting crime instead of responding to 911 calls…the crime rate would keep climbing. " But what did it mean to fight rather than respond to crime? Was it enough simply to put precinct commanders in charge and get the officer out of the patrol car to arrest squeegee men? 29 The Compstat Crime-Tracking System

Bratton believed that in order to prevent crime before it happened, it was crucial to have timely, accurate intelligence.

In his early assignments in Boston, he had seen the importance of tracking crime on a daily basis, because in order to get results, he had to know the nature and scope of the problem. In New York Bratton placed a similar emphasis on getting detailed information. We began to run the NYPD as a private profit-oriented business. What was the profit I wanted? Crime reduction. I wanted to beat my competitors—the 10 william bratton and the nypd criminals—who were out there working seven days a week, 24 hours a day. I wanted to serve my customers, the public, better; and the profit I wanted to deliver to them was reduced crime. 30

Just as a delivery company, in order to maximize speed and accuracy, would track the location of packages and trucks hour by hour, so the police department, in order to deliver a low crime rate, needed to track crime. The precinct commander needed to know not just in general what were the tough neighborhoods but in detail what crimes were being committed and when and where. Bratton directed Jack Maple to come up with a crime-tracking system. Like Bratton, Maple was fascinated by crime data. In his job at the New York Transit Police, he had created large wall maps on which he recorded every crime committed at every stop on the subway.

Now at the NYPD, Maple directed staff members to create a computerized mapping system for generating crime statistics on a weekly basis for every precinct and borough and for the city as a whole. Murder, robbery, rape, assault, burglary, grand larceny, motor vehicle theft, and gun arrests were

all recorded by precise location, date, and time of day. The system, which became known as Compstat, quickly became indispensable. According to one researcher, " Information exploded. Some correlations, which were previously suspected, were demonstrated: Homicides' yellow dots mingled with drug complaints' red dots.

Gun arrests' blue squares, added to the number of desk appearance tickets … helped track quality-of-life arrests. " Accurate and complete data on crime throughout the city was now at hand. 31 Compstat Meetings But just collecting data was not enough to bring the crime rate down. As Bratton and Maple saw it, it was essential to analyze the information properly, devise an effective and legal plan for action, and then follow through. The Compstat database was paired with a new system of Compstat meetings at which the data was examined and an action plan drawn up. Twice a week at 7: 00 a. m. Maple would lead the three-hour meetings to examine crime trends in several precincts. Each precinct commander would appear once a month to report on progress and to be grilled about problems in his district. Eight-foot-by-eight-foot computer monitors mounted on the walls displayed the detailed maps for all to see. One precinct might show a spike in car thefts; another might show robberies around the subway stations; a third might reveal problems with hookers loitering outside clubs at night. The maps showed crime rates, arrest data, shooting incidents, a list of residents on parole, and data on citizen complaints. The maps made crime clusters visual," remembered Bratton. " It was like computerized fishing; you'd go where the blues were running. " 32 Indeed, once the information was made available in graphic form, it was often not difficult to decide how to respond.

Officers could be assigned to problem areas at the proper time of day to stop a crime trend before it got out of control. Timoney described the way in which the Compstat process was used in partnership with broken-windows policing: We recognized early on that you have these two guys, and they do one burglary a day—that's what they do.

That's 30 a month. After three months, it's 90 burglaries. We set up systems to capture the data as soon as possible and analyze it. So in an area we would recognize, maybe after 10 days or two weeks, " Hey, we have these two guys committing burglaries. " Then we would send resources into the area and maybe after two weeks, we would capture them. So they did two weeks of burglaries, we discovered it, and we were now looking for them. They did two more weeks, and then we grabbed them at the end of the month. They have done 30 burglaries.

But what have we prevented? We prevented the other two months of burglaries that we normally accepted before we got them. It was a 11 william bratton and the nypd novel concept—prevention through apprehension. When we think of prevention traditionally, it's the notion of placing a uniformed officer on patrol to prevent crime. That's the old notion. It's not a bad notion. But it's not the only notion. Now we have a new method of getting detectives out there and preventing crime by apprehending them early on before they can commit further crimes.

Statistics on arrest activity were added to the map in order to gauge whether arrests were having an effect on crime. If crime remained high, a new strategy was tried. With his flamboyant personality, Maple made the

Compstat meetings both entertaining and intimidating. He would bully, tease, or joke in order to extract information from commanders and prod them to action. When one narcotics officer who was having trouble executing an undercover operation pleaded, " Do you know how hard it is for our undercovers to buy drugs in those projects? Maple retorted, " If you think it's hard buying drugs, how hard to you think it is to live there and raise your children? " On another occasion, a precinct commander was hesitating to answer a question, and Maple whispered, " Now, do we do it, or we don't do it? Tell me. Tell the Jackster. " At other times, the atmosphere was celebratory: high-performing commanders would be recognized for their achievements, and exemplary patrol officers would be introduced to the top brass and rewarded with a month of special duty in the detective unit.

The Compstat maps showed police where to focus their efforts, and the Compstat meetings provided a system of accountability to ensure that the police were acting on the data. 33 Corruption Control The danger of decentralization was the potential for increased corruption and abuse of authority. Bratton addressed this risk directly by increasing accountability not only for crime control but also for corruption and abuse control. Traditionally, Bratton believed, cops had been taught what not to do in a difficult situation— don't lie, don't take bribes, don't use excessive force.

But they had never been taught how to get their jobs done effectively and lawfully. Now the department began to offer training in proper policing techniques. For example, a retired officer was brought in to teach a course in " verbal judo," or ways to use aggressive behavior in others to the cop's advantage. On another occasion, a training video was made to demonstrate

ways in which officers could restrain a violent suspect without a chokehold. 34 Bratton institutionalized a higher standard of performance by improving recruitment and training procedures.

The requirements for new officers were increased: the minimum age was raised from 20 to 22, the minimum educational requirement was increased from a high school diploma to two years of college, and physical fitness standards were upgraded. At the police academy, Bratton attempted to develop more realistic training procedures. Instead of separating training from the job, the academy began to put recruits through five months of classroom work and then put them on the street for a month so that they could experience the realities of police work.

Then they returned to the academy to discuss their real-world experience. One of Bratton's most important changes was to make corruption an open topic of conversation. " Prior to my tenure, the Head of the Internal Affairs Bureau and the Police Commissioner were sometimes the only two people who had overall knowledge about corruption investigations in the Department," Bratton recalled. " I changed this policy as well, noting that you have to have confidence and be able to trust the integrity of the command staff and precinct commanders. Commanding officers were given as much information as they wanted about internal corruption investigations in their precincts. The internal affairs unit was strengthened, and its commanders were called to account in regular Compstat meetings of their own. As Timoney remembered, 35 12 william bratton and the nypd … we brought them into headquarters to my conference room once a month. And we would grill them the same way that we had grilled precinct commanders

and detective commanders in regard to how they were handling corruption cases. " What were the telltale signs?

What were you doing? You were investigating police officer activity. Have you done this? Have you checked? " We would grill them and make sure. And they would realize, " Oh, my God, somebody's inspecting our work. We'd better do it properly. " … So we dealt with corruption the same way as we dealt with regular crime. The only difference was this was crime in the Police Department …. This openness was extended to the damage control following a corruption scandal. When things went wrong and corruption was discovered, Bratton did not try to deny the problem but attacked it openly.

A series of high-level arrests demonstrated that corruption was being dealt with proactively. Bratton's aggressive publicizing of even embarrassing episodes initiated a change from the NYPD's old defensive posture to a new openness. This strategy of trust and strict enforcement was intended to promote a change in attitude on the part of the low-level officer, said Bratton: We demonstrated early on that we would support them when they were right and that we would lead them toward unprecedented achievements.

When we then warned them against brutality and corruption, they listened out of respect and trust, not just fear. … 36 Bratton was thinking long-term: he wanted to change the culture of the NYPD, " to develop in police officers the internal constraints that would have them make the right decisions not out of the fragile fear of being caught, but out of deep respect for themselves and the NYPD. " 37 Implementing Change through the Press

Bratton supported his managerial changes with a sustained public relations campaign.

He hired John Miller, a television news reporter, as deputy commissioner of public information to work on marketing the NYPD. He widened access to the department for the press, researchers, and others. He cultivated contacts with union delegates and key members of the press, giving them advance notice of important developments. He allowed the press to see departmental training videos and newsletters. Bratton knew the risks of allowing the media wide access to the police, but he believed that it was worth it. The press looks for its own angles," he acknowledged, " but by excluding them you lose the opportunity to demonstrate the dangers, satisfactions, and joys of being a cop. Many police officials worry about what a reporter might find; I had faith in my officers, and I knew that the net result … could only benefit us. " 38 The purpose of this marketing campaign was twofold: to arouse public support and to inspire officers. First, Bratton wanted to be in continual communication with the public regarding his goals and strategies. He was not nterested in working quietly behind the scenes and then announcing changes after the fact. In order to produce sustained change in New York, Bratton believed, it was essential to enlist the public's enthusiastic approval. It wasn't enough simply to bring about change; we had to sell a better image of the department, and we had to market the change as it came. In fact, we had to market the change before it came. " Get ready, things are about to get better. 13 william bratton and the nypd Things are getting better, see? Things are already better. " We wanted to capture the press early on and build momentum. 9 Bratton's second purpose was to inspire employees. "

Departmental memos can establish formal guidelines, but headlines give cops the feeling," he said. We can issue directives telling them we're changing procedure, and they'll take it as an order; let them see the commissioner on the tube … and they'll get the picture. It will affect their lives. " The regular repetition of the crime reduction message helped to push the police force into an assertive law enforcement mindset. 40 Bratton had a flare for the dramatic that gave the media good copy.

Echoing Winston Churchill, he would proclaim that the NYPD was " taking back the city street by street, block by block, borough by borough. " On another occasion, he called in the press to witness the arrest of a dozen officers who had become corrupted and entangled in the drug trade. Bratton publicly confiscated their badges and declared that never again would an officer of the NYPD wear those disgraced numbers. In his use of the press, Bratton was looking for more than just a reduction in the crime rates; he wanted to transform the culture of the NYPD. It has long been assumed in the police business that a commissioner can either come down hard on his department, and be applauded by editorial writers, good-government groups, minority organizations, and other outside arbiters, or strive to be liked by the rank and file," noted a journalist who profiled Bratton in The New Yorker. But Bratton believed that he could achieve both aims at once. It was possible to organize a police department that was clean and corruption-free, effective in fighting crime, and supportive of its officers. 41 Bratton's Achievement By 1996 Bratton was at the height of his achievement.

In just two years, every one of the 76 police precincts in New York City had seen a double-digit decline in crime. Serious crime overall had fallen by 32

percent, with the city's murder rate decreasing by 47 percent and car theft by 40 percent. (See Exhibits 1 and 2 for crime data.) By April 1996, Bratton enjoyed a 71 percent approval rating among the general public, and the department as a whole had a 73 percent approval rating, up from 37 percent in 1992. 42 43 It was not only the public who loved Bratton: internal surveys of the police department showed job satisfaction at an all-time high.

One admiring profile of Bratton said, " Up and down the ranks, the great majority of the city's thirty-one thousand police officers have nothing but good things to say about him—an unprecedented phenomenon in the modern history of this chronically disgruntled organization. " 44 45 With a string of successful leadership positions in both Boston and New York, Bratton became celebrated as the cop who reinvented policing. He was the subject of admiring profiles in The New Yorker, The Economist, The Harvard Business Review, and other media. He appeared on the cover of Time magazine.

He was the model for a fictional police chief in a crime novel. And he was discussed by Malcolm Gladwell in the bestselling book The Tipping Point, which argued that Bratton's success proved a whole new theory of human nature: that behavior is shaped not by complex social factors but rather by a person's immediate physical surroundings. However, there was one individual unhappy with Bratton's high profile: his boss, Rudy Giuliani. Bratton's poll numbers were higher than Giuliani's, and the mayor was interested in regaining control of the NYPD and taking credit for the reduction in the crime rate.

First, the mayor pushed out John Miller and much of the NYPD's communications staff. Bratton later noted about Miller's treatment at the hands of the mayor, " Rudy Giuliani, in his haste to sweep up every 14 william bratton and the nypd crumb of credit, had disregarded reason, personality, and honor. " Then Giuliani began to veto the promotions of policemen that Bratton was recommending for higher positions and leaked this story to the press to show he was in charge. As a final insult, Giuliani ordered all of Bratton's trips and his book contract investigated, even though no one had accused Bratton of wrongdoing.

Bratton felt that he was facing " death by a hundred cuts" and resigned in March of 1996, just 27 months after taking the job. Soon afterward, Timoney was forced out, and Maple resigned. Louis Anemone resigned in 1999. A Giuliani loyalist, Howard Safir, was appointed the new commissioner. 46 After Bratton Safir kept in place nearly all of Bratton's innovations, except that he did not appear as frequently before the press. New York City's crime rate kept falling through the end of the decade, and it became one of the safest large cities in the country.

In spite of this impressive legacy, the new system brought with it some accompanying risks and tradeoffs. As Bratton's system became standard procedure over the next 10 years, the department leadership had to deal with several challenges: the incentive to under-report crime, the danger of the Compstat meetings driving away good officers, and the incentive to promote the excessive use of force. Fighting Crime with an Eraser Bratton and his team recognized the temptation to " use a pencil and an eraser to

get the crime numbers right," as Timoney put it, and they put in place a system of three types of audits.

First, each precinct had an integrity control officer, a lieutenant, who was in charge of performing a self-audit for his precinct. He would match 9-1-1 calls against the precinct's crime statistics and check to see if any calls had been downgraded or re-classified. Second, a more thorough audit was performed by the quality assurance bureau at headquarters, which would inspect the data on a random basis to see if crimes were coded properly throughout the year, so that, for example, a grand larceny stayed a grand larceny and was not changed to missing property. Timoney also performed a third kind of audit based on intuition.

If he suspected that the numbers presented by a commander were too good to be true, he sent his people down to investigate, and when fraud could be proved, the officer would be removed from his command. In spite of these audits, there were periodic reports that precinct commanders under-reported crime in order to look good at Compstat meetings. For example, in 1999 one new commander was reassigned when in the first year of his command crime rates seemingly jumped; later, however, an internal police audit revealed that the apparent " crime wave" was a result of the commander's predecessor routinely downgrading felony crimes into misdemeanors.

Similarly, in 2003 in another precinct it was found that 203 felonies were improperly reduced to misdemeanors in order to falsely cut crime rates. 47 48 These problems were not widespread enough to distort the city's overall crime rate; nevertheless, the periodic fabrication of statistics highlighted one

of the hazards of the Compstat process. Compstat Meetings Test the Commanders A second complication of Bratton's system was that the Compstat meetings alienated some commanders. As designed by Maple and Bratton, the meeting was supposed to be a grueling affair that created a culture of accountability.

But with crime rates falling and the same pressures to reduce crime, complaints arose that the meetings were becoming abusive. In a 2000 series on low morale inside the NYPD, The New York Times reported, 15 william bratton and the nypd Many commanders say Compstat evolved into an often humiliating experience that seemed more like hazing than brainstorming. Supervisors say they have been screamed at, or picked apart about details in crime patterns they could not possibly remember. Some have lost their commands.

And even those who have succeeded say they get flustered because, as crime has slowed to a trickle, they are unsure how they can possibly get it down further. " Initially, when it started, it worked well," one Bronx commander said of Compstat. " It woke everybody up. Now they are out of their minds. It's ugly. " 49 These pressures were aggravated by the relatively low wages earned by NYPD officers: in 2000, its policemen were earning less than officers in many neighboring jurisdictions. As a result of these strains, commanders were quitting the force, and some qualified detectives began refusing promotion to precinct commander.

Policing after the Windows Have Been Fixed A related problem of the Compstat system was that it gave an incentive for officers to become more

aggressive in order to raise arrest rates. Some officers questioned whether prosecuting quality-of-life offenses was turning into harassment. One commander told The New York Times that he felt so much pressure to crack down on public drunkenness that he pushed his officers to scrutinize anyone holding a paper bag or a plastic cup. " You are so desperate to get these summonses, you are … sniffing their coffee," he complained. 50

Two incidents that occurred in the late 1990s were cited as further proof of overaggressive policing inspired by Compstat. First, in 1997 a Haitian immigrant named Abner Louima was beaten and sodomized by police officers in a station house. The incident raised a storm of criticism and eventually resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of one of the officers involved. In the second incident, in 1999 an unarmed Guinean immigrant named Amadou Diallo was shot to death by four plain-clothes police officers who mistakenly thought that he was reaching into his pocket for a weapon.

All four officers were acquitted on charges of seconddegree murder, but critics again accused the NYPD of encouraging excessive force. However, other evidence suggested that the Louima and Diallo incidents were aberrations and not evidence of a systemic culture of abuse: overall, fatal police shootings went down during and after the Bratton years, from 41 in 1990 to 11 in 1999. 51 Bratton was aware of the dangers of broken-windows policing: " Improperly and unthinkingly done… order maintenance has considerable potential for trouble, especially in the form of improper, discriminatory, or abusive policing," he said.

He was also aware of the need for improvement at the NYPD in relations with minority communities: " Police officers must at all times understand that while the public demands respect, the police must earn it. " As the history of policing showed, it was not easy to patrol a large city effectively and also reduce officer abuse misbehavior. 52 53 At the same time, Bratton could argue that he had gone a good distance toward reaping the benefits of the new system while minimizing the risks. For the first time in decades, poor neighborhoods were receiving the same police attention as wealthy neighborhoods.

Because of the information provided by the Compstat system, police resources were allocated to the areas that needed help the most, and minority communities were no longer " written off as unimportant and unpoliceable. " 54 16 william bratton and the nypd Bratton's Legacy Perhaps the most telling evaluation of Bratton's effectiveness was his influence beyond New York. After leaving the NYPD, Bratton became a consultant, advising police departments in Caracas, Johannesburg, Berlin, Mexico City, and cities large and small throughout the United States.

Police forces throughout the world began to imitate the New York model, and NYPD officers were hired to lead other departments around the country. As the New York Times reported in 2004, " The gospel of New York-style policing—specialized units, statistics-driven deployment, and a startling degree of hands-on leadership—[has spread] throughout the country. " 55 In particular, the Compstat system that Bratton and Maple developed was praised by outside observers as a pioneering innovation. " Compstat represented a revolution in policing," said an article on Jack Maple in The New Yorker.

Compstat…developed into the new policing's major propellant and centerpiece," said a scholar who wrote a book on the subject. " Compstat has emerged as a new police management paradigm that is revolutionizing law enforcement management practice," said an article in a policing journal. Within the city of New York, other departments established Compstat-like systems: the parks department, the corrections department, the schools, and other city agencies began tracking statistics in order to increase safety and cleanliness.

Compstat also spread to cities beyond New York; for example, Baltimore implemented a similar system to track overtime and achieved a 40 percent reduction, saving the city $15 million over two years. 56 57 58 59 Before Bratton's arrival at the NYPD, some New Yorkers had dismissed the broken-windows approach as a fad that was more style than substance. One squeegee man, when he heard about the new policy in 1993, put it this way: I get busted and the judge lets me go, says there's worse problems to be worrying about.

I mean, we got kids in this city packing nine-millimeter pistols and the city ought to be figuring out how to stop them from moving on to assault rifles, am I right? It's politics. Everybody trying to rack up easy points. A few months it will be forgotten and I'll still be here. " 60 But the squeegee problem was not forgotten, and Bratton's ideas were not a passing fad. On the contrary, Bratton's leadership in New York ushered in a new system of