

# Police Culture and Change: The Case Of Compstat In Police Organizations\*

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## ABSTRACT

Organizational change is an important concept in management literature. Most of the studies in this literature refer to the concept of culture due to the multidimensional role it is acknowledged to play in promoting, managing, or impeding planned organizational change efforts. The central purpose of this paper is to understand the change of cultural values in The Newark Police Department (a large police department located in the east coast of the USA) after the implementation of a popular planned organizational change model known as Compstat. This model has been implemented by numerous police organizations in the United States over the last two decades. The main question is if the introduction of Compstat perceived to have changed the cultural values of the organization? If so, how it changed the cultural values of the Newark Police Department. Data were collected in this case study through in-depth interviews, documents, and observation of the Compstat meetings, and analyzed using grounded theory.

The study revealed that technological change (i.e., computerization of work), generational differences (i.e., education level, new priorities), change of society, leadership, diffusion of new ideas about management, and new policing approaches (i.e., community policing, problem oriented policing) developed in the academic world have all contributed to the cultural change in the NPD. In addition to these factors, there was an unexceptional agreement regarding the influence of Compstat on the cultural change in the NPD in terms of 'policing approach' and 'management of police organization'. Specifically, officers pointed out the role of Compstat in terms of having a proactive approach in policing that goes along with a 'can do' mentality; the centrality of information and crime statistics; the focus on crime analysis instead of reliance on just anecdotal evidence and experience; adaptation of different policing approaches and tactics based on scientific analysis; and a closer relationship with the public. Change in the management in the NPD can be categorized as accountability that goes along with responsibility, organizational flexibility, and institutionalization of performance orientation and follow up mechanisms, and managerial control.

However, there was a greater 'change in philosophy' than 'change in practice', but it was clear that there was substantial movement in the intended directions. The findings suggest designing differently the structure and setting of the Compstat meetings in a way to spur brain storming and promote a learning environment. This paper extends existing works on cultural change by presenting a dynamic and contextual understanding of the change process; presenting the perspectives of not only police managers but also officers from different ranks and positions; and using alternative data sources.

**Keywords:** Planned Organizational Change, Police Culture, Performance Measurement, Compstat.

## Polis Kültürü ve Değişim: Polis Kurumlarında Compstat Örnek Olayı

### ÖZ

Örgütsel değişim yönetim literatüründe önemli bir kavramdır. Bu alanda yapılan çalışmaların bir çoğu, kültür kavramının planlı örgütsel değişim çabalarının desteklenmesi, yönetilmesi ve engellenmesinde oynadığı çok yönlü role atıfta bulunur. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı popüler bir örgütsel değişim modeli olan Compstat'ın uygulanması sonrasında Newark Polis Departmanında (Amerika'nın Doğu kıyısında bulunan büyük bir polis departmanı) yaşanan kültürel değerlerin değişimini anlamaktır. Bu model son 20 yılda Amerika Birleşik Devletleri merkezli bir çok polis biriminde uygulamaya konmuştur. Çalışmanın temel sorusu, bu modelin bu kurumda kültürel değerleri değiştirip değiştirmediği ve algılanan bir değişim varsa bunun nasıl olduğudur? Bu örnek olay çalışması içerisinde veriler derinlemesine mülakat, döküman analizi ve Compstat toplantılarının gözlemlenmesi ile toplanmış ve bu veriler tümevarım yaklaşımı ile analiz edilmiştir.

Bu çalışma, Newark Polis Teşkilatında yaşanan kültürel değişimde, teknolojik ilerlemeler (iş ortamında bilgisayar kullanımının yaygınlaşması), jenarasyon farklılıkları (eğitim seviyesinin artması, iş beklentileri ve önceliklerinde yaşanan değişim), güçlü ve etkin liderlik becerileri, yönetim alanında yeni fikirlerin yaygınlaşması ve akademik dünyada geliştirilen yeni polislik yaklaşımlarının (toplum destekli polislik, problem odaklı polislik) etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Tüm bu faktörlere ilave olarak, Compstat modelinin Newark Polis Departmanının 'polislik yaklaşımı' ve 'yönetim anlayışının' değişiminde etkili olduğu istisnasız biçimde kabul edilmiştir. Spesifik olarak, memurlar, Compstat'ın yapabilirlik mentalitesi ile uyumlu bir proaktif anlayış kazanılmasında, bilgi ve suç istatistiklerinin merkezi bir role sahip olmasında, kişisel tecrübelerin ötesine geçen analiz odaklı bir yaklaşım geliştirilmesinde, bilimsel analizlerle uyumlu polislik yaklaşımlarının uygulanmasında ve halkla ilişkilerin geliştirilmesinde etkili olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Yönetim anlamında ise, Compstat'ın, hesap verebilirlik ile bağlantılı olarak sorumluluk alma anlayışının gelişmesinde, kurumsal esneklik noktasında, performans odaklı bir anlayışın kurumsallaşmasında ve yönetici kontrolünün artmasında etkili olduğu ifade edilmektedir.

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Yönetim tarafından istenen doğrultuda bir değişim olduğu açık olmakla birlikte, Compstat sonrası filozofi anlamında yaşanan değişim uygulamada yaşanan değişimden daha fazladır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, Compstat modelinin en temel unsurlarından biri olan Compstat toplantılarının yapısı ve dizaynının beyin fırtınası ve öğrenen bir organizasyon yaratmak için yeniden düzenlenmesi gerektiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışma, kültürel değişim sürecini dinamik ve bağlamsal bir yaklaşımla ortaya koyarak alana özgün bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda, hem polis yöneticilerinin hem de memurların yaklaşımını ortaya koyması ve farklı veri toplama araçlarını kullanması bu çalışmaya değer katmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Planlı Örgütsel Değişim, Polis Kültürü, Performans Ölçümü, Compstat.

## 1. Introduction

Pervasive change is one of the predictable features of contemporary life, and organizations are no exception. Society's rapidly changing conditions and needs, demographics, market demands, government regulations, pressures created by globalization, increasing competition and resource constraints, and technological developments coalesce to make change a critical issue for all types of organizations. Pressure for organizations to change has increased worldwide as layoffs, mergers, and closings are becoming an increasing survival strategy (Lewis, 2011). In the case of public organizations, taxpayers and funding sources are progressively demanding higher levels of performance at lower costs, and these pressures also require organizational changes of various kinds (Tromp and Ruben, 2004). All of these factors as well as institutional and cultural pressures have led to more change attempts among both public and private organizations.

In this environment, all types of organizations have increased their efforts to identify new technologies, innovations and new management models in order to address the many emerging challenges and opportunities they face, and to become flexible and adaptable (Zorn, Page and Cheney, 2000). Cameron and Quinn (1999) found that 69% of the U.S. organizations and 75% of European organizations have engaged in at least one planned change effort over the last decade. A vast and highly profitable consulting industry has emerged in an attempt to respond to the demands of organizations regarding issues such as change management, cultural change, performance measurement, transformation, organizational development, and reengineering (Gallivan, 2001). The actors of this industry have suggested a number of planned organizational change models such as '*Total Quality Management (TQM)*', '*The Balance Scorecard*', '*Strategic Planning*', '*Benchmarking*', and '*Management by Objectives (MBO)*', all of which claim to increase the organization's performance, profitability, accountability, effectiveness, legitimacy, quality, and customer satisfaction (Eisenberg, Goodall and Trethewey, 2006).

Therefore, organizational change has become a regular part of management and organization literature, business language and organizational functioning. Most of the studies in this field refer to the concept of culture due to the multidimensional role it is acknowledged to play in promoting, managing, or impeding planned organizational change efforts. Consistent with Kurt Lewin (1947), an early pioneer of organizational psychology, who stated, "If you want to truly understand something, try to change it," any type of planned change effort brings cultural considerations to the surface. Culturally accepted practices, interactions, goals, and routines that have not been salient, or have been taken for granted prior to an organizational change attempt, can be a source of resistance or receptivity, or spectacles for perceiving, understanding, and interpreting change efforts which result in different reactions, effects, processes, and outcomes (Dawson, 1994). Scholars suggest, for instance, that it is important for those planning change initiatives within an organization, to endeavor to determine the chief role that culture will play, to try to understand the reactions of organizational members to change efforts, and assess how effectively change agents will be in moving cultures in specific directions to achieve particular goals related to performance, quality, or customer satisfaction (Eisenberg and Riley, 2001).

In fact, the proliferation of organizational culture studies beginning in the 1980s comes in part from the claim that culture is manageable as a way to increase commitment, loyalty, productivity, performance, and sometimes even profitability (Smircich and Calas, 1987). However, the 1990s introduced a proliferation of critical and interpretive studies that challenged the direct link between culture and effectiveness, and the use of culture as a form of value-based unobtrusive control. These traditions also drew attention to the literature's limitations regarding cultural change, how to change or manage culture, specific strategies and tactics used to change culture, and the possible consequences (Martin, 2002). Although a range of different approaches can be found in these traditions, the idea that is more

commonly supported is that cultural change in organizations, like a society's culture, is possible yet difficult to accomplish since it breaks routine, habits, or traditions (Dilling and Moser, 2007). Therefore, an organization's culture may evolve in response to changing organizational and environmental conditions, or it may be influenced by change agents but not exactly controlled or changed in a certain direction (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002a; 2002b). Related to these discussions, the relationship between a specific planned change model called Compstat and change of cultural values after the implementation of this model in a specific police organization will be questioned in this paper.

Compstat emerged in 1994 in the New York Police Department (NYPD) as a new, complex, multifaceted system (Bratton and Knobler, 1998). It was initially developed as a means to collect timely and accurate data about daily crime patterns to initiate tactics and strategies, increase the flow of information and communication among police station commanders and departments, and ultimately increase performance and accountability (O'Connell and Straub, 2007). Over time, "the initiative has been transformed into a more comprehensive form in its structure and promises, claiming to instigate the changes needed in police organizations and boasting the ability to reduce crime by making police organizations more responsive to management's direction and performance indicators" (Vito, Walsh and Kunselman, 2005, p. 189). This model combines a range of management principles in its structure to respond to problems. For instance, "the use of different policing styles (i.e., real time crime analysis, targeted crime interdiction, broken windows enforcement, directed patrol), adaptive culture, structural reorganization (i.e., empowerment, managerial accountability, teamwork, geographic decentralization), and a set of innovative strategies and motivational tools are counted in as a part of Compstat" (Silverman, 1999, p. 130). Basically, Compstat is considered a police version of the strategic planning or/and performance based management system. This model has been adapted by nearly half of the police departments in the USA (Vito, Walsh and Kunselman, 2005).

In the case of Compstat, it has been asserted that Compstat had certain impacts on culture of the NYPD. In this particular organization, "there was a shift from a largely hierarchical, centralized, formalized management style with an emphasis on mistake avoidance, conformity, security, order, caution, and systematic rule application toward an adaptive culture, where the values of innovation, collaboration, creativity, flexibility, exchange of information, accountability, and problem solving became dominant" (O'Connell and Straub, 2007, p. 77). Although this cultural shift may be true for the NYPD, it is likely that implementing these kinds of models does not necessarily result in their intended benefits in all police or public organizations. Thus, there is a need to question the success or failure in each organization that implemented these types of models without making assumptions as to their inherent success.

Thus, an attempt will be made in this paper to understand whether Compstat changed the cultural values of an organization as intended. More specifically, this paper tries to understand cultural change in a specific police organization (Newark Police Department) after the implementation of Compstat. If there is in fact a strong perception among police officers regarding the change of cultural values after Compstat is implemented, then the following related question will be addressed: How? To examine this point, in addition to opinions expressed by police officers in interviews, written documents, an analysis of communication practices employed during the Compstat meetings will be used as manifestations of cultural change. Based on this ground, the main research questions are:

- 1) *Was the introduction of Compstat perceived to have changed the cultural values of the organization?*
- 2) *If so, how?*

## **2. Culture As A Concept**

The roots of organizational culture as a theoretical perspective date back to the early human relations movement that originated in the 1940s; however, it was not until the early 1980s that the concept became a popular field of study in other areas. Several factors have increased the recognition and popularity of cultural metaphor in both academic and practitioners circle. Especially, the increasing dominance of multinational organizations and organizational interaction; the dissatisfaction of early studies that focused on structure, bureaucracy, and control to the exclusion of people: 'organizations without people' (Scott, 1998, p. 54), the emergence of Luckman's social construction of reality; the awareness of cultural differences and the success of Japan's organizations, which is thought to be related to the culture of

Japanese organizations (Eisenberg, Goodall and Trethewey, 2006); and finally the promotion of cultural change through consulting firms and popular publications as the core of organizational effectiveness and productivity (Peters and Waterman, 1982) were the main factors. In addition, in a 1980 cover story in *Business Week* entitled '*Corporate Culture*', academic journals were littered with special issues on culture, and thus media attention to this concept increased the popularity of culture as a part of business language (Smircich, 1983). Culture has been recognized as an innovative way to investigate life in organizations, predict most organizational practices, and increase quality, effectiveness, and productivity.

Although scholars differ on the generally accepted definition of culture, organizational culture has historically been described as widely shared patterns of beliefs, norms, rituals, symbols, and stories that develop over time. Regardless of different definitions of this concept, most academicians agree on the important role that culture plays in organizations. Some scholars suggested an explicit or implicit link between culture and motivation, strong identification, control, and ultimately increasing an organization's productivity and effectiveness (Pettigrew, 1979). Some scholars view culture as a metaphor for understanding organizational life rather than a managerial tool that can be used to increase effectiveness. According to the scholars in this line of thought, culture guides the interpretation and actions of organizational members by defining appropriate and inappropriate expressions of behavior for various situations (Witherspoon, 1997). As Weick (1979) suggested, culture plays an important role in how members make sense of the organization, their evaluation of certain situations and appropriate behavior and expressions, including dress codes, working hours, leadership practices, and emotional responses. Although scholars change their positions on whether organizational culture is viewed as a tool to increase effectiveness and performance, as a sense-giving tool that guides actions, or as a form of unobtrusive control at the workplace, they appear to agree that culture is essential in understanding organizations and the behaviors of organizational members.

## 2.1. Culture and Organizational Change

Planned change efforts involve deliberate and purposeful attempts of change agents to enhance individual development and improve organizational performance and effectiveness through the alteration of an organization's structure, technologies, policies, processes, culture, practices, and behaviors of members (Weick and Quinn, 1999). Because the world is changing in a rapid and dramatic way, no organization can remain the same and expect to survive. Thus, the majority of corporate and public organizations engage in planned efforts in an attempt to change their overall practices, structure, culture, and technologies through strategies and techniques or package systems of change that will keep them in line with the demands of governments, public needs, new technologies, legal requirements, and other normative and cultural pressures (Collins, 1998).

Regardless of its main purpose, any planned change effort must interact with the organization's culture. Increasingly, practitioners and scholars have begun to argue that implementation of any planned change initiative is more about cultural change than about any specific practice (Michela and Burke, 2000). According to Cameron and Quinn (1999), most change programs (i.e., TQM, MBO) did not achieve the desirable level of performance because the organization's culture remained the same. They suggested that if an organization's only intention is to change procedures, practices, and strategies without targeting the cultural features and goals, change will remain on the surface, and organizations will quickly return to the status quo. Based on this assumption, changing the organizational culture is claimed to be a key factor in successful change efforts.

Parallel to the increasing popularity of initiatives that directly target an organization's culture, the debate regarding whether culture can be managed or changed and if so, how, has become a prominent issue among organizational scholars (Cameron and Quinn, 1999). The dominant line of research treated culture as a concept that could be deliberately created and changed by leaders and managers in order to build value consensus and thus increase organizational effectiveness (Martin, 2002). Despite the divergence of scholars on the nature and extent of control, studies in this camp (i.e., corporate culture, national culture) view culture mostly as a variable that is subject to either complete or partial control of management under certain conditions following certain approaches. The other camp takes culture as a root metaphor for understanding and analyzing organizations. Scholars in this camp either support the

idea that culture is not manageable or that it can be managed or controlled only with difficulty, and that management also may lead to unintended consequences. These two camps set the background for discussing this issue (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002a, 2002b).

Early studies of organizational culture were most often in the first camp and followed the idea that the creation of a strong, unifying organizational culture could be a solution to weak performance. Organizational leaders were viewed as the main actors who were able to create or change culture, and they could build a strong culture by emphasizing a set of values and norms, adapting certain policies, rituals, and performances, and communicating vision (Bryman, 1999). This idea was promoted through consulting firms and popular publications that supported a universally appropriate, prescriptive list of cultural characteristics such as '*customer orientation*' and '*constant innovation*' that were applicable to all organizations (see Peters and Waterman, 1982). This literature drew attention to the culture of organizations known for their success by suggesting an explicit or implicit link between culture and effectiveness. Specifically, the attractiveness and simplicity of these solutions to poor performance increased the recognition and popularity of these publications among practitioners and thus brought about the idea that culture can be changed in accordance with these prescriptions (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002b). Despite the limited success of these efforts, Ogbonna and Wilkinson (2003) reported widespread attempts for planned cultural intervention in the UK.

Since the late 1980s, mostly scholars in the interpretive and critical camp questioned the intellectual foundations of the link between culture and performance, manageability of culture, and the idea of a strong culture characterized by widely-shared values among organizational members by pointing out cultural diversity, conflicts, and ambiguity within organizations (Smircich, 1983). One group argued that cultural values and assumptions are deeply embedded in the individuals' subconscious, which is beyond the control of managers. At the same time, they argued that the transformation of organizations from modern to post-modern in their structure as well as greater competition, globalization, and technological innovations increased the organization's cultural diversity and complexity. As a result, the response and interpretation of organizational members to any sort of cultural intervention cannot be controlled. It may both lead to ethical dilemmas and unintended consequences for the organizations and individuals (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 2003).

Another line of research in this camp provided a more realistic view of culture change and argued that cultural control is difficult and slow, but not impossible. Similar to society's culture, an organization's culture may be influenced, although it may not be controlled completely (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 2003). Rather, it may be influenced by some societal, national, and organizational conditions, including the efforts of managers to influence certain aspects. For instance, Schein (1985) claimed that managers have the capacity to control the organization's cultural artifacts, rules (i.e., promotion systems, reward systems, forms of recruitment), or practices which, in turn, may facilitate or influence change at the deeper levels of culture such as values, assumptions, and beliefs. Thus, managers must be realistic concerning the nature and extent of change that is possible considering the complex nature of organizations and deep-rooted set of values (Collins, 1998).

As suggested by Ogbonna and Harris (2002a), camps can be classified under three categories identified as '*optimistic*', '*pessimistic*', and '*realistic*'. Overall, whereas the optimistic camp may be too positive in perceiving that organizational culture can be easily changed, the pessimistic camp may not portray a complete explanation of the dynamics of cultural change by supporting the idea that culture cannot be changed or managed. Based on this discussion, it would be fair to say that the realistic view represents a more practical position. The realistic camp proposes that an organization's culture may evolve in response to changing organizational and environmental conditions or it may be influenced by change agents through certain interventions; however, it cannot be controlled or changed in an exact direction. In a number of articles, Ogbonna and Harris (2003) provided evidence for cultural change in the hospital and food industry of the UK through certain interventions.

Taking the assumption that cultural change is possible through certain interventions, numerous studies focused on what kind of cultural interventions are needed, the target of these interventions, and difficulties that are likely to occur in this process. In fact, the most common suggestions can be classified as structural reorganization, which includes changing the promotion and reward systems and decreasing

hierarchy and bureaucracy in order to facilitate and promote change in a certain direction (Jermier and Berkes, 1979). Other than this, the implementation of new recruitment criteria (i.e., young, educated, diverse in gender and race) and hiring new people, assessment through benchmarking or other systems, training of organizational members consistent with the new direction, and introducing new technologies that change the organization's daily practices are considered key to successful cultural change efforts (Chan, 1996). Other than these cultural change tools, scholars also recommended the use of physical artifacts, symbols, heroes, rituals, and stories to reinforce new values and practices in the organization (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). In the process of change, although middle and lower level organizational members are not totally passive recipients of change, members who have the power, namely leaders, upper managers, or founders of organizations, undoubtedly play a more central role in influencing and shaping organizational culture even if they are unable to totally shape or control cultural change (Schein, 1985).

## 2.2. Police Culture and Change

Most police organizations around the world are designed as quasi-military, rigid, centralized, hierarchical, and bureaucratic structures dominated by formal rules, regulations, procedures, standards, and operational protocols (Walsh and Vito, 2004). These aspects were "largely grounded by the works of Wilson, Weber's bureaucratic organizational model, and Fayol's administrative management theory" (Jermier and Berkes, 1979, p.3). Taking its roots from these organizational studies, the classical structure of a police organization is viewed as a strict bureaucracy that is intended to rationalize management practices, cultivate strict and unquestioned obedience and discipline for rapid mobilization, and accomplish proper direction, coordination, and control (O'Connell and Straub, 2007). The bureaucratic structure of police organizations, pre- and in- service training and the long, intense, and unique background of police work are believed to produce key aspects of practices and common cultural values in police organizations. According to Maanen (1974), the chief organizational norms and values produced and reproduced in police organizations include conformance to authority, discipline, loyalty and dedication to the system, mistake avoidance, security, order, caution, and systematic rule application. These norms and values are believed to play a key role in advancing and being accepted within the police organization. All of these traditional assumptions of police culture are believed to play a critical role in change efforts. Scholars have consistently pointed out the difficulty of changing police practices (Manning 1977); the most common and popular explanation is the existence of a police culture (Davies and Thomas, 2003). Given its lengthy and dramatic history, the police culture strongly shapes an individual officer's characteristics, and such strong cultural practices and values often undermine change efforts as they lead to ambiguity and anxiety among police officers.

The popularity of Compstat comes from the intended success to change police culture. It is common to suggest that after the implementation, NYPD's largely hierarchical, centralized, formalized management that emphasized mistake avoidance, security, order, caution, systematic rule application changed in a way that stressed innovation, creativity, flexibility, information-sharing, accountability, and problem solving. Compstat was presented as a vital component of the NYPD's reorganization process, and regular Compstat meetings in particular are believed to provide a platform to sustain change by constant monitoring, communication, measurement, and accountability to achieve the goals (O'Connell and Straub, 2007). It is suggested to contribute system thinking, benchmarking, and continuous measurement, which promoted an outcome, performance-oriented culture. Most importantly, the Compstat claimed to alter the existing mindset of officers in the organization by engendering the belief that police can reduce crime (Bratton and Knobler, 1998; O'Connell and Straub, 2007). Most of these claims rely on the case of Compstat in the NYPD. This study will focus on implementation of the Compstat in another police organization and try to determine whether Compstat reached the same results and how.

## 3. Research Setting

In this study, a large police department, Newark Police Department (NPD), in the east coast of the USA was selected for an in-depth analysis of cultural change. This police department was selected due to its relevance for this research. First and foremost, the NPD has employed the Compstat since 1997, and

the department was receptive to conducting interviews. In addition, its large size, crime ridden environment, similarities with the NYPD (i.e. geographic closeness, high population, crime problem, organizational dysfunctions), and reduction in crime rates after the implementation of Compstat made this police department a good and interesting sample of study.

### 3.1. Data Collection and Analysis

Data regarding on this issue was collected through in-depth interviews of police officers in different ranks and positions, observation of the Compstat meeting, and analysis of the documents. The researcher conducted 26 interviews with members of the NPD. The basic sampling strategy was to reach a sample of individuals from diverse groups and varied functions within the organization. This enabled cross-checking of information in an effort to establish different views held concerning the cultural change after the implementation of Compstat. Observation was another data collection method used for this study. The main setting for observations was the Compstat meetings. The researcher attended nine meetings in 6 months. The meetings, as the most visible component of Compstat, presented a unique context in which to examine certain practices and conversations conducted in the scope of Compstat. They also allowed to researcher to understand the cultural change in the organization manifested in the rules, rituals, relationships, and preferred styles of communication of officers during the meetings. Documents are critical to the function of organizations. In this study, a variety of documents were analyzed. These documents included the Compstat report, organization web site, the organizational chart, mission and vision statement, media articles, brochures, general orders and memos. All these documents were essential to understand and confirm the claims of cultural change in the NPD.

The data obtained from the interviews, observation and aforementioned documents were used for the analysis and interpretation of the cultural change after the implementation of Compstat. The research took an inductive approach to examining the present phenomenon, insofar as the “categories emerge out of the examination of the data ... without firm preconceptions dictating relevance in concepts and hypotheses beforehand” (Walker, 1985, p.58). Specifically, the constant comparative method was used for the analysis and interpretation. In fact, this method appears to be particularly useful in coding a large amount of texts, forming categories, establishing the conceptual boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, and summarizing (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The analysis process involved three stages: *open coding*, *axial coding*, and *selective coding*. Open coding can be considered a form of content analysis where the data are read, coded, and categorized into themes on the basis of ‘look-alike’ characteristics rather than predetermined categories (Orlikowski, 1993). The purpose is to “group similar events, happenings, and objects under a common heading or classification” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 103). Within this iterative process, a total of about 141 codes were generated. This process ended by classifying 141 codes under the 14 broader categories. The next step, axial coding, is “the process of relating categories to their subcategories and linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 142). During axial coding, these categories were reviewed and re-sorted in order to relate them to subcategories, linkages, and relationships that have greater explanatory power to answer research questions. The final step is selective coding, in which core categories were selected and systematically integrated to narrate what is happening, form general explanations, generate a larger theoretical stance, and make knowledge claims about the organization studied.

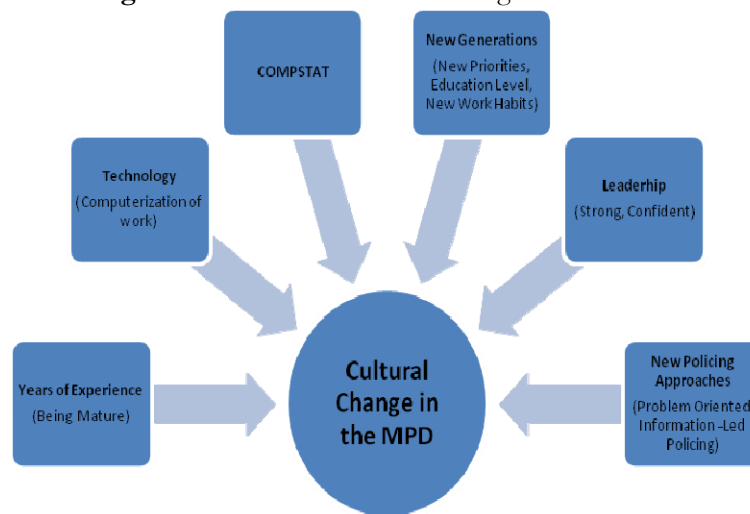
## 4. Results

The findings of this study regarding the cultural change basically relied on officer perception of change after the implementation of Compstat. Observation of the Compstat meetings and documents enabled the researcher to check and confirm the personal accounts of officers regarding the change of cultural values as well as how and in what ways these cultural values are enacted and manifested in different cultural forms including regular documents, organizational habits, rules, norms, setting, and communication practices.

#### 4.1. Cultural Change

Compstat has been in place for more than eighteen years in the NPD. Through these years, not only this change model, but also policing approaches, officers' understanding of police work, society, and the technology that supports policing have changed extensively, all of which have something to do with the culture of police organizations in general. Illustrated in the statements of officers, it would be wrong to assume that the change in the cultural values of officers since the introduction of Compstat can be fully explained by referring to Compstat. Officers specifically mentioned the role of technology, leadership, generational differences, and years of experience, and environmental change in these years, all of which certainly changed the culture of the NPD. For instance, many officers mentioned the great role of information communication technologies (ICTs) in the change of policing approach, policing practices, habits of officers, and the capacity of police investigations as well as the Compstat itself. Some officers emphasized the role of generational differences in priorities, education level, economic expectations, work habits, perception of hierarchy and discipline while discussing the change of police culture. Similarly, some officers pointed out the change of attitudes and understanding during their occupational life as a result of increased experience and maturity. A number of officers mentioned the role of different leaders, not only in the change of culture in the NPD, but also in the successful implementation of Compstat throughout these years. Finally, a few officers talked about the role of different policing approaches developed in the academic world (i.e., problem oriented policing, community policing, broken windows policing), which, in turn, changed the culture of police including the NPD. All these factors reciprocally changed the culture of the NPD. A model of cultural change that shows all these points is presented in the figure I.

**Figure I.** Sources of Cultural Change in the NPD



This is not to say that officers were not able to identify the role of Compstat in this process. Among all these issues to be considered, it is clearly and strongly evidenced in the statements of officers, and displayed to some extent in their organizational practices that *this initiative changed the culture of the NPD*. In response to the question of whether Compstat has changed the culture of the NPD over these years, nearly all officers replied in a supportive manner, with statements such as, “Absolutely, yes. I think we would be lost today without it”, and; “Overall, I think it was necessary and it has been a success. It became culture. It changed culture. We are doing better than we did. If we did not have Compstat, we wouldn’t be as successful as we are today.” Another officer implied that it took years to make Compstat part of the culture in the NPD: “When the department adopted Compstat first, it was something very new, it was never experienced. Compstat is part of our culture now. So, now, it is our background.” There were many other examples that illustrate that the officers really believe in the positive role of Compstat in changing this organization and its culture. It is possible to categorize and present cultural change under two main headings: *‘policing approach’* and *‘management of police organization’*.



## 4.2. Change in Policing Approach

It is clear from the interviews, documents and observation that Compstat brings a new perspective for policing in which police officers creates new interpretations of how policing should be done and how police officers should behave. Specifically, officers pointed out the role of Compstat in terms of having a proactive approach in policing that goes along with a *'can do'* mentality; the centrality of information and crime statistics; the focus on crime analysis instead of reliance on just anecdotal evidence and experience; adaptation of different policing approaches and tactics based on scientific analysis; and a closer relationship with the public.

The first and foremost contribution of Compstat in the NPD is about the proactive approach in policing that goes along with *'can do'* mentality. Looking for the underlying causes of crime traditionally has not been something that police saw as their function. Their job was traditionally to respond crimes after they had been committed, and they measured success by the portion of crimes that were solved with arrests and conviction. As confirmed by one officer, "When I came in, the meaning of policing was catching bad guys." Another officer indicated the change in policing approach over these years as follows:

The Compstat process works. It breaks down when crime happened? Who is committing the crime? Geographical area of where the crime is being committed. It gives you all the tools you didn't have before to try to do something. Right now, we believe that crime can be reduced by using right tactic and strategies.

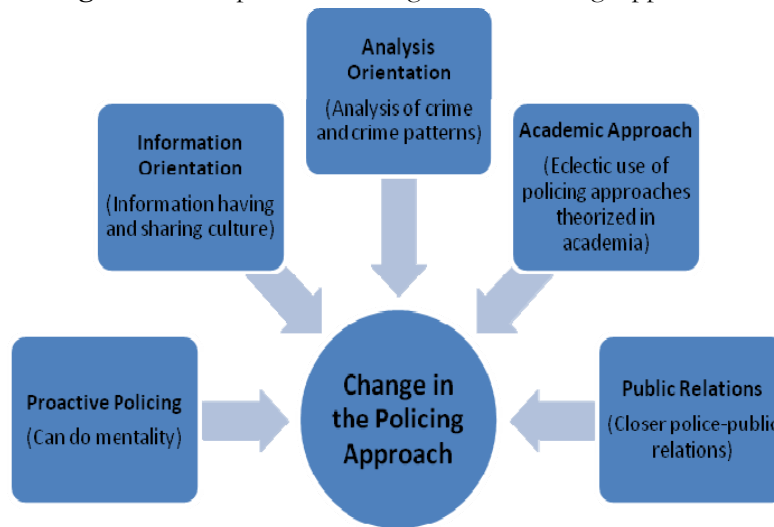
Another important point regarding policing approach is the central role of information in the Compstat era. Nearly all officers accepted that Compstat process led them to understand and accept the importance of having accurate and daily information, and using it for analysis to increase the effectiveness of the policing approach. In this new environment, a large amount of information is gathered daily and analyzed in the Compstat process by officers who seem to internalize the value of information gathering and analysis. As stated by one officer, "Information gathering is the most important step of Compstat which is used for policing purposes."

One of the biggest contributions of Compstat to the NPD is its focus on crime analysis and implementation of a plan and deployment of resources accordingly. In other words, Compstat brings a new approach for policing to the NPD where crime analysis, rather than anecdotal evidence and personal beliefs, is essential to responding to crime. As illustrated in a number of personal statements of officers, all these points are well accepted by officers as an inevitable part of policing. For instance, one officer illustrated the change of work habits and mentality by referring to the role of Compstat as follows:

Years ago, who really cared what time the burglary happened at the house? Nobody cared about that. You were reactive. If someone broke into a home, or there was a robbery on the corner, then they would say, Okay. It happened. Let's go to take the report. No one cared to follow up on that. Where they did it, if he had a silver gun, what time of the day; we did not look at things like that before Compstat. Compstat has allowed us to consider accurate and timely intelligence, affective tactics, rapid deployment and relentless follow up. Before Compstat, we did not analyze crime.

Finally, Compstat seems to help police officers to consider more academic and scientific approaches in policing and closer relationship with the public. The following statement of one officer shows how Compstat enabled the adoption of different policing approaches and tactics accordingly: "The Compstat process changes the role of patrol officers because now when we determine problematic areas, captains are directing them to these areas and asking them get quality of life summonses, check FIS, and stuff like that." In a Compstat meeting, a precinct commander talked about the role of community meetings as a part of an initiative: "The community meetings are an important part of this initiative. At least, a captain responded all these community meetings. That is a big deal for us. We always plug the community in. We also tried to put a uniform presence at the locations". As shown, rather than imposing one way of policing, Compstat is perceived as a tool to adopt different approaches based on the analysis of crime. While one officer emphasizes hot spot policing with a focus on crime ridden areas, or broken windows policing with a focus on quality of life crimes, another officer points out the need for community meetings, all of which are based on the analysis of crime. The following figure shows the change in the policing approach in the Newark Police Department.

Figure II. Compstat and Change in the Policing Approach



### 4.3. Change in Management

Another important point is the change in the values of officers regarding the way the police organization is managed, and the role of Compstat in leading to differences in management. Change in the management in the NPD can be categorized as accountability that goes along with responsibility, flexibility, performance orientation and follow up mechanisms, bureaucracy, and managerial control.

The most foregrounding change in the management is accountability. Nearly all officers referred to accountability to both describe the role of Compstat and explain change in the NPD in terms of management. For instance, one officer stated, "I think the biggest thing that Compstat brings is accountability, and maybe gives more sense of urgency." Another officer confirmed the fact that accountability came into play after Compstat: "I think when we started Compstat, the precincts captain become more accountable." Compstat is intended to bring about accountability and responsibility to reduce crime. In fact, accountability is basically put into practice in the regular Compstat meetings. Officers, specifically precinct commanders' and heads of different units were questioned to check if they know their problems and have a plan to respond to these problems. These officers know that they are supposed to experience these meetings and will be put on hot spot to answer a number of questions regarding their problems and plans.

Flexibility is another important change in the management of this police organization. Nearly all officers suggested that Compstat functions as an early alarm system in terms of changes in crime trends, emerging hot spots, and problematic locations which, in turn, enable the police organization, at least theoretically, to adapt to these ever changing conditions. Time and time again, officers commented on the role of Compstat as being geographically driven and fluid in their deployment. The following statements of officers show how flexibility is put into practice in the NPD:

As you see in the Compstat, we do all crime related analysis to suggest areas of the city in which we have a problem and target zones. Then, lets' put more resources in this location. Talk to the supervisor who is in charge of that unit.

It is clear that performance based management became an inevitable part of police management in the NPD after the implementation of Compstat. Two basic mechanisms in Compstat, '*tangible indicators*' and '*follow up*', changed the evaluation of success and failure in the management, which, in turn, brought competition and careerism in the management of the NPD. The most basic and foregrounding measure of success and failure was crime rates. Crime statistics were prepared on weekly and monthly bases for seven index crimes. All these crimes were presented in a comparable manner to those from the same time period in the last year. In fact, the uniqueness of Compstat is not the focus on crime rates, but the use of a number of other indicators called productivity numbers and follow-up mechanism employed through

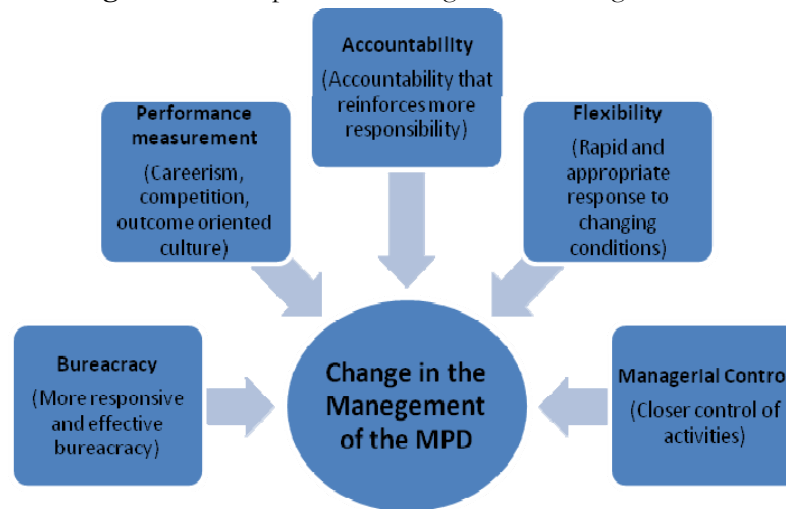
regular meetings. Productivity statistics (i.e., arrests, field investigations, search warrants, vehicle stops, cases closed or open) are prepared for each crime type such as robbery, narcotics, and burglary. All these numbers are indicators that are used to see the activity of each precinct. Commanders are kept responsible for the activity in their precincts. These written documents allow the upper echelon to check these numbers relentlessly and take necessary measures. This long list of indicators shows the focus of Compstat on performance measurement, which was not the case in the NPD before Compstat. The following interview excerpt illustrates this fact: “This is all stuff that we did not do before Compstat. We did it just kind of like, if we got around to it, not very largely, a matter of fact.”

Not only having these performance tools but also following up on those indicators systematically and relentlessly is a key factor for the success of Compstat in the NPD. Most of the change initiatives, even the best ones in theory fail as there are not any strong follow up mechanisms that create a sense of obligation among officers to adopt it. The Compstat meetings which have been conducted in the NPD for the last eighteen years create a sense of obligation to consider all these performance tools. The commanders know that there will be a meeting the following week or in two weeks in which they will be questioned on a number of things, including the problems that came up in the previous meetings. The following statement of one officer shows how this follow up mechanism works in the NPD: “You put them (commanders) in the hot seat. Commanding officers say that I am going to address this particular issue in my command, when they come back, I bet they do.”

Police organizations have historically been criticized in terms of the bureaucratic nature of police work that leads to paperwork, ineffectiveness, communication problems, and unresponsiveness to changing conditions. In spite of certain limitations observed in practice, it was noted that Compstat helped this police organization to respond to the changing outside conditions immediately and intelligently. Similarly, the focus on crime analysis using accurate and timely information helped officers to see emerging trends and problematic areas before it is too late, and enables commanders to deploy resources and adopt police tactics and strategies quickly and appropriately. The Compstat meetings that were held regularly with the participation of the upper echelon as well as officers from different ranks and units decreased the communication barriers among different ranks and units and helped to get things done. However, this is not to say that the NPD completely ignored or changed bureaucratic structure and hierarchy. This study showed that the hierarchical structure was not totally different, but the relations behind these lines were blurred, less strict, and more complex that brought more openness to the feedback, transparency, responsiveness to the ever changing conditions, and problem solving.

This study also points out that Compstat can be considered a new form of managerial control. From the critical perspective, Compstat is a strong tool to monitor the organization and officers and have a sense of control over what is going on in the organization. The idea of accountability, performance measurement injected into the system clearly enabled the upper echelon to monitor more closely activities of officers, especially mid-level officers, who were held responsible for any problems in their units and precincts. From the beginning, this initiative had the goal of monitoring officers. In response to a question regarding the implementation of Compstat in the NPD, an officer responded, “He (police director) puts out these initiatives and first things he wants to do is he wants to make sure that people are actually doing well, working towards these goals, he wants to monitor it”. The next figure shows the change in the management of the Newark Police Department after the implementation of Compstat model.

Figure III. Compstat and Change in the Management



## 5. Discussion

One of the main assumptions of Compstat is cultural change in police organizations. This point is highly important as changing police departments is viewed as a difficult task and police culture is cited as the primary impediment in the literature (Chan, 1997). As explained, technological change (i.e., computerization of work), generational differences (i.e., education level, economic expectations, new priorities), change of officers' understanding of police work, change of society, leadership, diffusion of new ideas about management, and new policing approaches (i.e., community policing, problem oriented policing) developed in the academic world have all contributed to the cultural change in the NPD. In addition to these factors, the role of Compstat on cultural change was clearly defined and accepted by the officers. There was an unexceptional agreement regarding the influence of Compstat on the cultural change in the NPD in terms of '*policing approach*' and '*management of police organization*'.

Information having and sharing, the focus on crime analysis and performance measurement, and openness to academic or scientific approaches in policing can be seen as new policing values that emerged in Compstat era. In terms of management, accountability and responsibility, flexibility, performance measurement that leads to careerism and competition, managerial control, and a more responsive and effective hierarchical structure can be seen as new management values that emerged in Compstat era. There were some problems to putting these emergent values into practice. However, this is not to say that officers did not see, internalize or accept the benefits these new issues in policing and management. There was a plausible gap between what they intend to do and what is accomplished. In other words, there is a greater '*change in philosophy*' than '*change in practice*', but it was clear that there was substantial movement in the intended directions.

It has been suggested in the case of the NYPD that there are some values such as innovation, creativity, risk taking, and empowerment that became part of the culture after Compstat implementation. In the case of the NPD, although a degree of innovation and creativity was seen, it was limited by the need for commanders to respond to crimes quickly, pressure to follow traditional tactics and strategies, defensive culture, and the structural design of communication in the meetings. Similarly, delegation of authority to precincts and different units was limited as the police directors were willing to keep power centralized. In short, these values were not in practice as much as others.

As suggested by Thayer (1988), the real change of values can be found in what and how people communicate with one another given that cultural distinctions are created and the potential for cultural change occurs through the alteration of communication processes and mindsets. It was evident in the NPD that there was a change in the discourse of officers, in the way of using language and speaking about organizational practices, policies, and relationships. Crime analysis, crime maps, hot spots, patterns,

proactive policing, accountability, and smart tactics certainly became part of policing discourse. The use of these terms in the Compstat meetings shows the new values in practice.

The change of cultural values can be explained at two levels. At the first level, the assumptions of Chan (1996) have an explanatory power for this change. As suggested by Chan (1996), due to the strong culture, habitual nature of work, and preferences for clarity, if the existing processes and practices are not challenged relentlessly, police officers will tend to follow existing ways of accomplishing organizational tasks. Chan (1996) found that successful change efforts in police organizations require the external pressure and longtime efforts of stakeholders. The case of the NPD illustrates the relentless efforts and struggles of the upper echelon to change the mindsets of police officers. The tough strategies to gain compliance of Compstat in the introduction phase, follow up strategies in the regular Compstat meetings, and the focus on performance measurement in transfers and promotion created a sense of obligation among officers in this organization. All these practices affected the mindsets of police officers (i.e., inefficient practices will not be tolerated) and created a sense of the new ways things should be done. The second way to understand and explain all these changes is to look at external pressures. Change in outside conditions, public administration trends, new technology, competition among police organizations, and new trends in policing interact with the needs of organization and reinforce change agents to create new policing approaches and management practices. In this process, Compstat functioned as a carrier of all these changes. The police managers who follow and interpret larger social, political, and occupational networks used Compstat model to make new practices and strategies work in the organization in order to adopt these trends and to be seen progressive.

In terms of cultural change, the contribution of Compstat in the NPD is undeniable. However, there are a number of problems that limit the capacity of Compstat to change the culture and increase the degree of success. A meaningful, honest, and authentic dialogue in the Compstat meetings is essential to getting different perspectives and revising the current cultural values that limit practices. In the same line of thought, authenticity in the decision making process and empowerment of mid-level officers who are held responsible for any problem in the precincts are two interrelated points to be improved to support a climate for cultural change. First, mid-level officers should be empowered to decide on appropriate tactics and strategies in their precincts. Similarly, risk taking need to be encouraged. Officers should have a sense of authentic participation in the decision making process, as this will encourage them to take more responsibility and risk taking in their practices.

The real change of culture occurs or should occur in the field. There are problems conveying the new values and new approaches to the front line officers. Meaningful dialogue, authenticity, empowerment, and participation are critical concepts for cultural and thus organizational change. Only if officers become part of the initiative or feel that they are the part of the initiative, their framework of understanding and interpretation of organizational events and crime cases are likely to shift. This process will compel them to reconsider their current identity and way of current thinking.

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