

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN MEASUREMENT OF POLICE PERFORMANCE: COMPSTAT AND BEST VALUE

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Abstract

The argument is put forward that by comparing policing in the UK to policing across the Atlantic in New York, one can gain significant insight into the underlying processes which drive the managerial regimes of Best Value in the UK and Compstat in the USA. The paper begins by setting the introduction of the 'new' public managerialism into its socio-economic and political contexts in both countries. A brief articulation of both Compstat and Best Value are offered before the discussion draws upon some of the most striking parallels between the two. The respective underlying conditions which promoted a sense of 'crime crisis' in both countries are explored, together with the philosophy that contemporary police management must be about attempting to secure 'continuous improvements' in service delivery. Despite appearing to be 'new', the principles which underpin both Compstat and Best Value have a long history and they are both often presented as being politically progressive compared to previous modes of policing and public sector governance. Both regimes appear to empower middle police managers in terms of autonomy and decision making to a greater degree than ever before whilst at the same time increasing responsibility at this middle managerial level. The paper culminates by considering the potential for censure to be exerted under both Compstat and Best Value, together with some of the negative unintended consequences, including the undermining of attempts to make genuine improvements in community justice, which may result because of the threat of naming, shaming and blaming of police managers.

Introduction

Mawby (1999) took an optimistic view about the benefits of international comparisons in policing. He argued, firstly, that comparisons extend our knowledge of the possibilities for reform; secondly, that we are able to develop more insights into human behaviour; thirdly that the chances for successful reform are increased and finally, that comparison enables us

to gain a different perspective on ourselves. This is an article which likewise takes an optimistic view with regard to the benefits of international comparison. The US structure of policing can be characterised as localized, fragmented and dispersed, whilst the UK system can be depicted as more centralized and uniform. Indeed much of the comparative literature has rightly been devoted to highlighting the differences in policing between these two countries (Mawby, 1999). Whilst these significant cultural and political differences should not be overlooked, this paper takes an alternative view by choosing to focus on certain similarities. Police forces in both countries, for example, have undergone similar managerial transformations in recent decades to the extent that the parallels are quite extraordinary. The origins, nature and positive and negative consequences of these changes are remarkably comparable. These commonalities are perhaps even more noteworthy in the context of the divergent UK and US histories and their relation to policing. By comparing policing in the UK with the specific case of the New York Police Department, many insights can be gained in terms of generating a deeper level of understanding of the drivers of change. According to Jones and Newburn (2004: 123),

A number of writers have commented on what appears to be a growing convergence between criminal justice and penal policies in different nation-states. In particular, attention has been drawn to the emergence of 'US-style' criminal justice policies in other industrial democracies.

This work aims to make a contribution to the wider project of assessing the possible convergence of US and UK crime control policy more generally.

The paper also attempts to assess whether both Compstat and Best Value as managerial systems of governance are likely to contribute to improvements in community justice. According to Williams (2002), this notion of 'community justice' has been a pivotal idea for criminal justice reformers since the late 1970's, after its advocacy across North America by Saul Alinsky (1972). Whether the practice of this concept is compatible with the 'new' public sector managerialism in the UK and USA, will be considered.

The 'New' Public Sector Managerialism in The UK And the USA

This new managerial culture first arose in the context of the dissatisfaction with public organizations' ineffective and inadequate service provision and results (Clarke and Newman, 1997). In the 1980's, parties of the political 'right', namely Republicans in the US and Conservatives in the UK favoured this approach rather than a Keynesian emphasis on demand-side economics. This predominantly monetarist approach was later adopted in the 90's by parties of the centre-left, namely Democrats in the US and 'New' Labour in the UK. According to McLaughlin et al. (2001: 302), a key part of the 'new public managerialism' was an increased emphasis on achieving results rather than administering processes. This effectively meant a shift away from throwing money or 'inputs' at social problems, in favour of measuring what public sector organisations actually produced in terms of 'outputs'. Linked in with a focus on 'outputs', was the setting of

explicit targets and performance indicators to enable the auditing of efficiency and effectiveness. This meant that what public sector organisations produced in terms of 'outputs', was to be measured according to quantifiable, numerical criteria. (Smith, 1995). These policies were fuelled by the rejection of Keynesian economic principles in favour of the adoption of laissez-faire monetarist free market economic principles. Public sector growth, it was argued, resulted in non-productive and inefficient public bureaucracies which bred waste, nepotism, patronage and corruption (Minogue, 1988).

By the 1990's, the full force of the new managerialism was applied to policing in both nations. Business-based managerial solutions were offered to combat what were perceived as troubling crime rates in the UK and US. As well as performance indicators, there were policies around 'downsizing', 'delaying' and 'de-tiering'. What was significant in ideological terms about the 'new' managerialism, (Clarke and Newman, 1997) was that socio-economic phenomena were no longer sufficient explanations for crime rates - police managers were now to be held responsible for crime statistics. One of the ways in which 'new' managerial philosophies have been embraced in policing both in the US and the UK, are by means of 'Compstat' and 'Best Value'.

What is interesting about the emergence of the 'new' public sector managerialism in both the USA and the UK is that this may begin to explain certain similarities between respective managerial modes of governance in policing terms. Newburn and Jones (2004) argue that any 'convergence' between the UK and USA may be partly explained by social, economic and cultural changes at the structural level. They also point out that the appearance of 'convergence' may also be explained by more 'micro' level factors, namely key actors and agencies who are involved in policy transfer and adoption between the countries. One thinks here of David Blunkett's numerous visits to New York and other American cities to identify best practice and its potential transferability whilst serving as Home Secretary and prior to this Jack Straw made several visits to explore zero-tolerance policing at the time of the 1997 election (Newburn and Jones, 2004).

Before turning to an analysis of both Compstat and Best Value one has to address the question as to whether the 'new' public sector managerialism is actually compatible with attempts to achieve community justice. The ideas promoted by Alinsky (1972) in North America were practiced by the National Association for Community Justice from 1975 onwards (Williams, 2002). Whilst the notion of 'community justice' has diverse meanings which are open to contestation, one of the ways in which it has been predominantly characterised is by reference to a 'bottom up' promotion of neighbourhood based participation in civil society generally and in criminal justice decision making more specifically. This type of communitarian approach is compatible with a 'rights' and 'responsibilities' type ideology which is underpinned by the notion of citizenship. In many ways the 'new' managerialism can be seen to be the opposite of this because rather than treating people as 'citizens' who are active in terms of shaping service delivery, they are very often treated as 'customers' or consumers of public sector service delivery (Clarke and Newman, 1997). The new managerial agenda additionally can be characterised as being

driven by a centralised 'top down' agenda set by the state and central government rather than a localised, 'bottom up' agenda.

Before further judgement is made on 'new' managerial compatibility with attempts to sustain 'community justice', an examination of what specifically constitutes the managerial technologies of Compstat and Best Value is explored.

What Is Compstat?

Compstat was introduced in 1994 in New York City by police commissioner William Bratton. Whilst directed patrol and the use of information mapping and technology are integral to Compstat, its most notable feature is the geographic accountability of precinct commanders who are called to account at 1 Plaza - police HQ. According to Eck and Maguire (2000: 230), '...they are held accountable through frequent debriefings at police headquarters, where they are 'grilled' about crime-reduction strategies and resource allocation decisions'. Commanders are ranked and evaluated based on their comparative crime statistics and anticrime plans. Commanders who do not measure up are reassigned to other positions.

What is Best Value?

The Local Government Act of 1999 put a statutory responsibility on police authorities to 'challenge', 'compare', 'compete' and 'consult' in terms of conducting Best Value reviews. As well as this a rigorous new suite of Best Value performance indicators were developed which were designed to ensure that police forces would strive for 'continuous improvements' in service delivery. These indicators effectively institutionalised 'league tables' whereby forces and nowadays, Basic Command Units could be ranked in quartiles according to performance against targets. On occasion in this paper, the doctoral research of Long (2004) is referred to because of the insights which can be generated from the empirical work conducted whilst interviewing a sample of 41 police middle managers in the UK between September 2000 and March 2001. This work focused on police middle management perceptions of the introduction of the Best Value regime and associated culture of performance management in UK.

Compstat Meets Best Value

At face value Compstat seems to have been a response to high crime rates in New York, whereas in the UK Best Value was very much a continuation of the logic of 'new' public sector managerialism of both limiting spending on the public sector generally and linking funding to quantifiable performance (Note for example the Police and Magistrates Courts Act 1994). Despite this difference, Compstat and Best Value not only have common themes, they have similar antecedents and introductions accompanied by comparable themes of crisis, insecurity and lack of public confidence in the police.

Perception of a 'Crime Crisis'

In New York, a 'crime crisis' was in the process of being generated before Compstat's introduction in February 1994. A month before Mayor Giuliani's November 1993 election (which was followed by his January 1994 appointment of William Bratton as police commissioner), 59% of New York City voters polled, declared the city less safe than four years earlier and 46% said that crime remained a major issue (Dao, 1993: 1). In addition, the NYPD's leadership promoted a sense of internal crisis within the department in order to facilitate organizational change and confront the external crime crisis. According to Silverman (2001: 91), Commissioner Bratton claimed that,

Organizations can change the most when they are in crises. When I came to the New York Transit police, it was clear to everyone that the department was in crisis, with crime escalating and morale very low. With the NYPD, we had to create a crisis since there was no crisis of confidence. The prevailing view was that we did things well. We are the best. There is no one any better. So the strategies and reengineering process was intended to create a crisis and a process to move the organization through changes...It was revolutionary.

Newburn and Jones (2004: 140) are keen to point out the differences in the crime rates between the UK and the USA. They make the point that unlike in New York, 'There had been no particularly spectacular rise in the murder rate in the UK or, say, in London. Secondly, despite fears to the contrary, crack use in the UK never reached anything approximating 'epidemic' proportions'. Despite differences in crime rates between the two countries, the point is that fear of crime and a sense of impending crisis was evident in both countries. This sense of 'crisis', real or imagined, was a necessary catalyst for change both in the United States and in the UK. The Best Value regime, which is underpinned by The Local Government Act of 1999, has to be traced back to the drive for the pursuit of 'economy', 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' which occurred across the public sector from the early 1980's onwards. The UK's call for a change in 'Manpower, Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Police Service' (Home Office: 1983) was activated by officialdom's criticism of contemporary 'crises'. As with New York in the 1990s, crime levels were perceived to be unacceptable in the UK in the early 1980's. Circular 114 stated that, 'The number of serious crimes recorded by the police has practically doubled'. (Home Office 1983: 1). Unacceptable crime rates, coupled with more police and better funding, was deemed to be reflective of a crisis in ineffective police performance and strategies. 'Since 1971, police strength (excluding civilians) has gone up by some 24,000 and on 31st March 1983 there were 121,003 police officers in England and Wales'. As with New York, the Home Office spoke to the public's dwindling sense of security and confidence in the police, with there being reference to consecutive British Crime Surveys which revealed declining public confidence (Home Office 1983: 2).

In both countries, therefore, 'crises' were provoked so as to hasten police reform which would then be perceived as 'natural', 'inevitable' and 'progressive' (Clarke and Newman,

1997). This sense of crisis led to the introduction of the kind of management culture whereby performance was not just encouraged but rather it was demanded.

The Common Philosophy of ‘Continuous Improvements’

Under the ‘new’ managerial calculus, ‘citizens’ are being increasingly treated as ‘customers’ (Clarke and Newman 1997). This shift towards viewing recipients of welfare services as paying customers has meant that both Compstat and Best Value require the police to demonstrate ‘continuous improvements’ in service delivery. The key point here is that Best Value is not just a review process and Compstat is not just a series of meetings at headquarters. Both Best Value and Compstat have to be treated as philosophies in that they represent somewhat more than their constituent parts.

In the UK context of Best Value, forces have to demonstrate their commitment to securing ‘continuous improvements’ in service delivery by improving their positions within the league tables. Forces and Basic Command Units can be grouped into ‘families’ which are then used to rank them in terms of classification into quartiles. Rather than being in the bottom two quartiles - namely ‘failing’ and ‘coasting’, the regime requires forces and BCU’s to at least have the status of being ‘striving’ and if possible to emulate ‘top quartile’ success.

In the US context of Compstat, the implicit philosophy of ‘continuous improvements’ was effected in practice through the setting of performance standards for the whole department and its sub-units. Entrance to Bratton’s higher echelon was restricted to commanders committed to double-digit crime reduction. Establishing a specific objective - a 10% reduction in crime for 1994- was the initial propellant for change:

While target setting is the norm for the private sector, it usually is anathema for public organizations because it offers a yardstick against which performance can be more accurately measured and, if deficient, condemned. Some of Bratton’s top aides, reflecting traditional bureaucratic caution, advised him against this public commitment. ‘I told him he was flirting with media disaster and cynicism’, recalls one former top official. The commissioner, however, was aware of the power of goal setting as a focus and a rallying cry for action. Specific goals, as Bratton knew, operate as mobilizers of personnel, enabling an organization to see that old ways do not work and that one must ‘push the envelop’ in order to reach new heights (Silverman, 2001 : 89).

At face value, with its emphasis on fundamental performance reviews over a period of years, Best Value purports to be about a longer-term strategy of delivering continuous improvements in performance, whereas Compstat appears to be a more short-term and immediate response. To overstate this difference would, however, be naïve in the sense that both Best Value and Compstat are dependent on achieving quantifiable performance

indicators, which tends to result in short-termism or organisational 'myopia' (Smith, 1995).

As well as representing a drive towards continuous improvements in performance, it is worth considering the lack of genuine originality of both regimes.

The Long History of Both Regimes

Despite Alexander's (2000: 263) perception of there being a, 'revolution in public service delivery', in the late 1990's, both Best Value and Compstat are not 'new' in the sense that they are both underpinned by Taylorist principles of 'scientific management' (Taylor, 1911). It was the time-served mechanical engineer, Frederick Winslow Taylor, who in working for the Midvale and Bethlehem Steel Companies towards the end of the nineteenth century, devised new systems of industrial production. The basic principle behind this was that human labour could be broken down into its constituent parts and measured accordingly. A pre-requisite of Taylorism was that performance should be monitored to ensure that tasks are done in a prescribed way to achieve the results required. In the catering industry, chains like Pizza Hut and McDonald's have taken this to an extreme, with Ritzer (2000) noticing that this kind of McDonald's effect was so pervasive in terms of its spread to the operation of organisations in both public and private sectors. This paper will go on to suggest that whilst Best Value and Compstat respectively appear to empower police middle managers to make their own decisions, something which is completely anti-Taylorist, in reality the performance culture engendered by both regimes effectively places police managers into a 'straightjacket' by prescribing on exactly what they should focus on.

Best Value and Compstat Appear to be Politically Progressive

Best Value and Compstat are seen by many police managers themselves as being politically progressive compared to 'what came before'. In the UK, for example, the change agenda around 'economy', 'efficiency', and 'effectiveness' which led to Best Value, was, according to the following middle manager whom Long (2004) interviewed, part of a necessary response to increasing public dissatisfaction and corresponding public pressure:

The police at that time were very much seen as a power unto themselves. They were unique in any sort of sphere in the country and they dictated what the people got which can't be a good thing and this recognition that we were inefficient, publicly meant that we had got to address these issues and change and respond to what the public wanted.

In New York in the wake of repeated corruption scandals prior to Compstat, the emphasis was on preventing future police corruption and maintaining favourable community relations. Commanding officers were more likely to be assessed on their anti-corruption records and their neighbourhoods' confidence in their precinct police presence than in their performance in addressing crime. The Compstat orientation shifted the primary focus

to anti-crime strategies and reduction. The new emphasis of assessing the accountability of police middle managers on their performance rather than in terms of corruption required them to be given more power and yet more responsibility at the same time.

Devolution of authority

Compstat and Best Value are underpinned by the ideology that the devolution of powers and decision making from the 'centre' to the 'localities' is beneficial. This is positively but perhaps somewhat naively referred to by its supporters as 'empowerment'. Power is devolved from the 'top' to a lower level in the organisation. It rests on the belief that the middle manager has more autonomy to control and direct resources to appropriate local problems as he or she sees fit. According to Silverman (2001: 84-85):

In New York, reengineering acted like a booster cable to the NYPD's battery, providing the cranking power needed to activate decentralization and command accountability. Relinquishing control of daily operations was the most fundamental yet difficult challenge facing the new administration. Traditionally, the person at the apex of the NYPD pyramid would retain control through standardized procedures and policies. In order to hold precinct commanders accountable for crime prevention, however, the new leadership in NYPD in the early '90's, knew the organization must grant them more discretion. Rather than allow headquarters to determine staffing and deployment on a city-wide basis, it was decided that reducing crime, fear of crime, and disorder, would flow from patrol borough and precinct co-ordination of selected enforcement efforts.

Re-engineering reports sought to 'empower' precinct commanders to tailor and implement their own crime-fighting plans, thereby shifting the NYPD from a routine of patrol-and-arrest activities to one weighted towards results. Commanding officers (CO's) were authorized to allow their anti-crime 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 CO's 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 'speciality units' (for instance, street narcotics units) were lifted. These operational moves were significant departures from the NYPD's long-standing practice of prohibiting precinct personnel from conducting sensitive, corruption-prone enforcement activities. Compstat meant that the police manager in New York had to be more active in terms of making interventions, demonstrating a more committed approach to the ownership of performance delivery (Long, 2003). According to Silverman (2001:99):

Not only will the high command hold the front lines accountable, but street captains themselves must be committed to ownership.

Devolution of powers down from senior towards middle police management has occurred in the UK as well as in New York. Middle police managers are increasingly expected to play a pivotal role in terms of delivery of Best Value in policing, by leading and managing their staff at local or Basic Command Unit level on an everyday basis. The Audit Commission (2001: 5) refers to performance management in policing as being characterised by 'a culture of devolved responsibility'. According to the Audit Commission (2001: 12):

BCU's are acquiring increasing devolved capability. This reflects a wider trend in organisational management: that of moving decision making closer to the front-line, be it school headteachers and governors, primary health care groups or, in the private sector, regional directors of national companies. There is widespread acceptance that local managers will perform more effectively, and make better use of resources, if they have control over the means by which corporate objectives are achieved.

Greater empowerment in terms of the increased opportunity to make decisions was something which several middle managers mentioned when interviewed by Long (2004). For example; 'Empowerment has certainly taken place and I think people have got hold of it quite well.' This statement by a middle police manager in the UK, is indicative of a belief in the benefits of a less hierarchical and militaristic rank structure. This has meant that middle managers are more able to influence and take decisions and that this has been a definite benefit in terms of the introduction of Best Value style managerial culture. Police leadership tended to used to be about commanding in terms of taking control of a 'crisis' situation or a major incident, or secondly, making sure 'troops' on the 'front-line' are supported well and guarded against complaints (Long, 2003). Both Compstat and Best Value require the police manager to be far more active and interventionist in management terms than ever before in taking ownership of local performance delivery. So it is no longer about 'command' style leadership in the militaristic sense.

Added Responsibilities Accompany Devolution and 'Empowerment'

While both Compstat and Best Value involve the devolution of powers to the middle manager, these powers come with added responsibilities. It is here that these 'responsibilities' link back to the previous argument about performance culture being 'Taylorist' in the sense of breaking down police labour into its constituent parts and measuring it. Whilst both Compstat and Best Value appear to empower middle managers in reality, the responsibilities that they have far outnumber the so-called 'freedoms'. This is what Garland (1997) more broadly refers to as 'responsibilisation'. In the UK context, middle management performance as part of a BCU team is assessed according the criteria set by a national suite of Best Value performance indicators. Alexander (2000: 271), makes reference to, 'the output orientation that is at the heart of the process'. This output orientation by means of performance indicators, creates additional pressure. This extra pressure is coupled with the fact that there has been significant downsizing of middle

management posts from the late '80's and throughout the '90's. Between 1988 and 1997, for instance, there was a decrease of 37% in the number of officers in the superintending ranks. The inspecting ranks witnessed a reduction of some 12% between 1992 and 1997 (HMIC 1998: 42). As a consequence of downsizing, middle managers in the organisation have found themselves having to take on more and more responsibilities. The following statement by a middle manager interviewed by Long (2004) illustrates this:

There is a lot more responsibility for lower middle managers - Inspector level particularly, and Sergeant as well. They're having to take on more responsibility and are more accountable for their actions than perhaps they were 20 years ago.

Similarly, in New York, many division commands, which stood between the precinct commanders and their borough commanders, were eliminated. As a result, middle level precinct managers and commanders were held responsible for all types of crimes within their commands. Not only were they assessed on the comparative crime statistics but their anti crime strategies and tactics were regularly reviewed at Compstat and other meetings. Pressure to meet these demands became a way of life and only intensified from year to year as the expectations grew that crime would continue to decline on a yearly basis. Indeed, the relative downsizing of the middle ranks in both the USA and UK has effectively meant that police middle managers have less power to assert their 'freedoms' as they are increasingly burdened with additional responsibilities (Mulraney, 2001).

The Impact of Censure and Blame

There is the very real threat that both Compstat and Best Value can result in the public naming and shaming of 'underperforming' middle managers. In New York, Compstat has led to demotions and sackings. According to Silverman (2001: 118), 'Generally, precinct scheduling is based on unfavourable crime statistics or sudden upturns in particular crimes or shootings-known by the NYPD as 'spikes''. Some commanders have been known to be subject to public humiliation and scorn at Compstat meetings.

There is less party-political interference in the UK than the US, due to the doctrine of non-partisanship, so it is harder to sack or demote 'inefficient' and 'ineffective' police managers. Having said this, in the context of Best Value, Section 15 of The Local Government Act of 1999 gives the Home Secretary reserve powers to intervene in the running of statutory authorities who are deemed to be 'failing'. This has not yet occurred although if the same path is followed which occurred in both the education and health sectors in the UK, it has every reason to follow suit.

Thus both regimes are driven by the threat of censure, rather than there being genuine attempts to learn from 'good' or 'best practice'. The essence of this process of more 'empowerment' and yet increasing 'responsibility' is wonderfully captured in Powell's (1999: 364) cynical comment on the present political culture, which he characterised as one of, 'decentralizing blame and centralizing credit'.

Whilst some would argue that blame culture is justified in the name of increased accountability, what is often overlooked is that blame has displacement effects which may become perverse to the extent that they are counterproductive to the pursuit of accountability.

Potential for Performance Data Manipulation

Compstat and Best Value may spawn negative unintended consequences. One such consequence is the added pressure for police managers to manipulate or misrepresent performance information. In New York, a few commanding officers have been exposed as manipulating their crime figures although this is not a new phenomenon. Yet the demands for improved performance are enormous. This spills onto street level performance. According to Silverman (2001: 212), 'Numbers, sometimes any numbers, rule the day. This system, in the words of one participant, is 'wound up too tight'. A Brooklyn detective, who was a twenty-year veteran, put it this way, 'Compstat is everything. People are tired of being harassed, searched and frisked, and run off the streets. People are fed up; the cops are, too'.

In the UK context of Best Value, it appears that the misrepresentation of performance information continues to be a problem. The HMIC (2000) report *On The Record*, revealed widespread and varying interpretation of the rules, with many offences being wrongly classified. The 'league table' style of performance culture which Best Value engenders is likely to see an increase in this pressure for the manipulation of statistical data. Both systems put such an onus on performance that the pressure to cheat in order to manage appearances or what Adlam (2002: 31) calls 'managing the look', is huge. What this demonstrates is that Compstat and Best Value are attempts at Taylorist style management. They never fully achieve the type of total social control advocated by Taylor (1911) simply because there is room for manipulation of the figures and attempts to subvert managerial control.

Bureaucratic Increase

Max Weber (1961) argued that the institutionalisation of rationality is a constitutive feature of modern capitalism. The formal structures created by bureaucracies would lead to greater efficiency (Weber, 1968). In talking about the benefits of bureaucratic organisation in terms of precision and speed, Weber was cited by Gerth and Mills (1970: 124) as arguing that, 'The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organisations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs- these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration'.

Best Value and Compstat can be equated with Max Weber's theory of rationalisation as attempts to impose a formal rationality on police management, with police managers in both countries striving for the optimum and most 'efficient' delivery of performance. The performance indicators which underpin both regimes are an example of where there has

been an attempt to impose formal rationality onto the conduct of policing because they are attempts at increasing 'knowledgeability' (Dandeker, 1990: 12).

Whilst identifying many advantages of fundamentally bureaucratic systems, Weber (1958) acknowledged the negative and destructive, down-side. George Ritzer (2000: 123) coined the term, 'the irrationality of rationality' to acknowledge what sociologists nowadays refer to as the 'iron law of oligarchy'. Excessive paperwork and 'red tape' can cause bureaucracies to become like an 'iron cage'. When this occurs, procedural adherence and excessive rule-following make a formally rational system, simply irrational in practice. Compstat and Best Value may be guilty of increasing the bureaucratic burden on the middle manager in terms of the time it takes to compile, analyze and supply the information for meetings and auditors. With specific regard to Compstat, Silverman (2001: 211) makes the point that:

Demands to produce numbers have triggered the expansion of NYPD procedures that work, but without maintaining an eye on the structural health of the organization. The remedies of police 'doctors' are akin to doubling a medication of five milligrams to ten, since the current prescription has worked so well: more of the same strategic medicine is introduced, regardless of warnings about possible side effects.

Yet while performance demands increase on the commander levels, precincts are losing resources at the same time headquarters and specialized units augment their memberships.

In the UK context, empirical research conducted by Long (2004), revealed a perception on the part of police middle management that Best Value is in danger of becoming overly bureaucratic. Take the following statement from a police middle manager, for example, which refers to the conduction of Best Value reviews:

What is happening is people are being seconded into the middle to do them. And there's a lot of people doing them and the opportunity costs are extremely high. I mean we've got Superintendents, Chief Inspectors and all kinds of support staff, managers- involved in Best Value reviews for months at a time. Obviously we've got full-time people as well but people are seconded into them.

If this trend continues then both Compstat and Best Value are in danger of succumbing to the 'irrationality of rationality'. According to Ritzer (2000: 123), 'Rational systems inevitably spawn irrationalities that limit, eventually compromise, and perhaps even undermine their rationality'. Without talking specifically about police management systems, Clarke and Newman (1997: 89) made the point that 'new' managerial regimes, 'require a good deal of attention and resources to be spent on legitimating activity, whether this produces increased organisational efficiency or not'. The above evidence suggests that there is a real danger that supposedly formally rational regimes like Best

Value in the UK and Compstat in the USA are in danger of creating unnecessary bureaucracy and irrationality. This may have worrying implications for community justice. Should the pursuit of criminal justice policy aims and objectives become an end in themselves then there is a real danger that this will be at the expense of social policies required to ensure the upholding of values and aspirations which underpin community justice. This raises the wider debate about whether managerial modes of governance such as Best Value and Compstat are actually compatible with the pursuit of genuine improvements in community justice. The performance indicators, expressed in numerical terms which underpin both regimes are often alien and alienating for members of the public who are more concerned with their real life, everyday lived experiences of crime and the fear of crime, than how these feelings and experiences are expressed, bureaucratized and publicised through the managerial technology of quantifiable performance data (Long, 2004).

Genuine attempts at sustaining community justice should surely take into account the needs, concerns and expectations of the community. In terms of policing practice, these needs, concerns and expectations are increasingly expressed through fears about what is collectively referred to as anti-social behaviour (Blunkett, 2003). This is behaviour which can be characterised by litter dropping, noise, urinating in public places and so on. Much of these types of behaviours have traditionally not been captured by the tendency for both the Compstat and Best Value regimes to focus on volume crimes such as burglary, robbery and theft. There are, in effect, many so-called 'low-level' crimes and acts of anti-social behaviour which are not actually captured fully and effectively by Best Value and Compstat. This is not at all compatible with attempts to sustain improvements in 'bottom-up', community participation and justice. (HMIC, 2004). Whilst police middle managers may be 'responsibilised' (Garland, 2001) by the Compstat and Best Value regimes, genuine attempts at delivering community justice would have to 'responsibilise' members of the community as well. The civil renewal agenda launched by 'New' Labour towards the end of its second term in office (Blunkett, 2003) is an example of an attempt at 'bottom-up' community engagement and a revival of what Habermas (1989) referred to as civil society. This requires members of the community to take a more active and interventionist approach as citizens by effecting change both within the criminal justice system and wider society. This is quite separate and distinctive from centrally set targets and performance indicators which are imposed 'from above' by managerial regimes like Best Value and Compstat.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the fact that despite significant cultural and political differences between the US and the UK, a comparative study of how police performance is assessed in both countries produces considerable insights. These insights are sixfold and can be summarised as the following: (1) Both regimes were introduced as a response to a perceived crisis. (2) Both are underpinned by philosophies which demand continuous improvements in service delivery. (3) Neither regime is 'new' when one considers the historical dimension to its origins in terms of discipline and surveillance. (4) Both regimes

are considered to be politically progressive compared to what came before. (5) Both regimes 'responsibilise' (Garland, 1997) police middle managers in ways not achieved before. (6) It is because both regimes are ultimately underpinned by the threat of censure that it is up to those with a stake in police reform on both sides of the Atlantic to address the negative unintended consequences which the regimes may engender. One such unintended consequence is that these regimes may be counter-productive in terms of actually making genuine improvements in service delivery and contributing to the pursuit of genuine community justice. Further exploration of all dimensions of changes in policing can provide a fuller comprehension of police reform across national boundaries. The struggle, as always, begins here.

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The Anglo-American Measurement of Police Performance: Compstat and Best Value

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