

From CompStat to RespectStat: Accountability for Respectful Policing

By **Garry F. McCarthy, Superintendent, Chicago, Illinois, Police Department, and Dennis P. Rosenbaum, Professor for Criminology, Law and Justice, University of Illinois at Chicago**

In the aftermath of the Ferguson, Missouri, incident and other highly visible force incidents, public trust and confidence in the police has been shattered in cities across the United States. As a result, many police departments have sought ways to restore police legitimacy through community policing initiatives, procedural justice training, and other strategies. In fact, many have turned to Chicago, Illinois, for direction, since the Chicago Police Department has been involved in such initiatives for several years. Yet surprisingly, the law enforcement community has no way to evaluate the success of these efforts. Are the police treating people respectfully or not? Is the department improving over time? How does one city compare with other cities?

As part of the National Police Research Platform, a team of researchers and practitioners developed the Police-Community Interaction (PCI) Survey to allow community members to evaluate their contacts with the police and determine whether officers were treating the public in respectful, fair, and compassionate ways.¹ After preliminary testing in Chicago and other cities, this methodology was rolled out in more than 50 U.S. jurisdictions in 2014.

A customer satisfaction survey not only gives police executives a mechanism for evaluating the success of their legitimacy initiatives, but also can be an important tool of innovation and reform. In the same way that CompStat is used to establish norms and expectations within the organization, surveys can be used to reinforce desired behaviors during police-citizen contacts. The Chicago Police Department plans to use this approach to increase accountability for police officer demeanor and procedural justice. In addition to holding district commanders accountable for using effective strategies designed to reduce serious crime (the CompStat process), why not use

this approach to help strengthen accountability for respectful treatment of the public? Hence, a new approach—one called RespectStat—analyzes data on the quality of police-citizen interactions to provide constructive feedback to command-level personnel about performance in specific geographic areas.

There are several elements that make the RespectStat survey different than traditional community surveys. First, it focuses specifically on the quality of police-citizen contacts during traffic stops and crime reports, rather than the views of all community members (the average person has no knowledge about the quality of police services because they have no direct contact with law enforcement). Second, the survey focuses on procedural justice aspects of the encounter and police legitimacy—things that are important to the public. Third, the survey is independently managed by the University of Illinois at Chicago and, therefore, reduces public concern about giving the police negative feedback. Finally, the survey has the potential to be institutionalized as a core measure of police performance, rather than a one-time survey used to confirm the agency's legitimacy. It is this last advantage that is being explored in Chicago: building the survey findings into the operations of the organization, which is consistent with calls to integrate community policing and CompStat.²

The Survey Methodology

In Chicago, the survey is being used to collect data from citizens who have had a recent (within the past two weeks) contact with a Chicago police officer as a result of a traffic stop or crime report. A letter is sent from the police superintendent to the citizen, inviting him or her to complete the RespectStat survey either online or by calling a toll-free phone number. The survey

respondents are a diverse cross-section of the community in terms of race and ethnicity (55 percent minorities), gender (45 percent female), income (43 percent under \$50,000 per year), and age (average 47 years).

Using RespectStat Data for Training

The RespectStat survey results were initially used by instructors at the Chicago Police Education and Training Academy as they developed and implemented a new training program on police legitimacy as requested by the superintendent. The survey findings provided some context for procedural justice training, showing, for example, that “car-side manners” during traffic stops, specifically respectful treatment, can have a significant influence on the driver's overall satisfaction with the traffic stop. The message to officers is that writing a ticket will not automatically guarantee a low rating from the driver—and that respectful, fair treatment is a good way to deliver bad news.

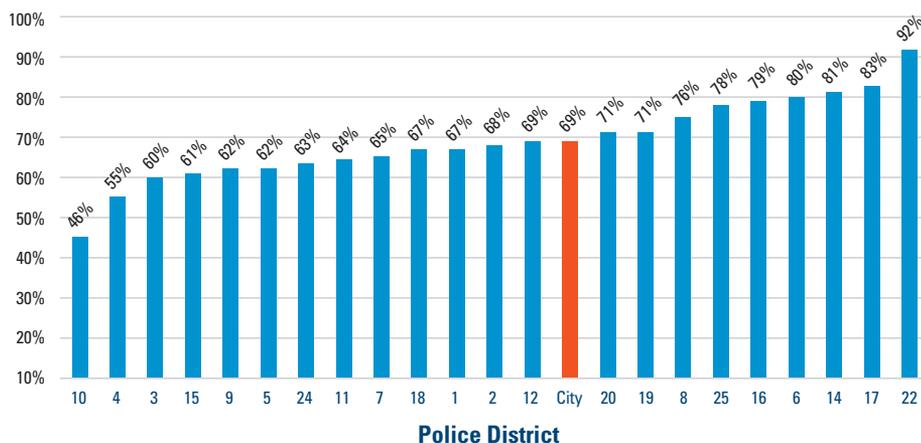
Using RespectStat for Accountability

Now that the RespectStat data system is up and running, the Chicago Police Department is exploring different ways of utilizing the data collected, including some of the following possibilities.

District or area comparisons. Drawing on the CompStat approach, the survey findings can show similarities and differences between districts or between larger areas of the city. Figure 1 illustrates the use of PCI survey data to make comparisons between districts using the results from a six-month period in Chicago from July 2014 through December 2014. The data show the percentage of respondents who reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way they were treated by the officer and reveal that there are substantial differences in overall citizen satisfaction across the districts, with satisfaction figures ranging from 47 percent to 83 percent.

Within district trends. Police departments may want to look at district trends over time. This is a promising approach because it is free of the many constraints associated with district-by-district com-

Figure 1 | Satisfaction with Traffic Stops and Crime Reports (from 9/1/2014 to 2/28/2015)
Percent "Somewhat" or "Very" Satisfied with Encounter



parisons. In cities like Chicago, there are sizable differences between districts in their levels of violent crime, concentrated poverty, racial and ethnic populations, and other variables that have been shown to significantly influence perceptions of the police. Therefore, the comparison of a district against itself may be a better indicator of performance. Many commanders have been assigned to communities where the ratings of the police are historically low because of decades of negative experiences and historical discrimination from all sectors of society. These commanders have inherited these low ratings and should be judged on whether they can show improvement over time, not whether they can "catch up" with districts that do not have the same level of concentrated disadvantage or historical tensions with the police.

Mapping "hotspots" of dissatisfaction. Why not map public perceptions in the same way that crime patterns are mapped? Data analytics, typically applied to crime data, can be applied to public sentiment as well, allowing organizations to identify and visualize geographic areas where the public is most dissatisfied or concerned about procedural fairness by the police. Using RespectStat data, agencies have the capacity to map "hotspots" of public dissatisfaction or disrespect during police encounters. Hotspots may overlap district boundaries and help police departments target areas where additional work is needed to improve police-citizen interactions and restore public trust.

Differences by hour, shift, or unit. In larger cities, executives can drill down even deeper if they would like, looking at community satisfaction rating by shift, unit, employee, community demographics, or other factors.

For example, Chicago looked at differences in citizen satisfaction by time of

day (see Figure 2). The color differences roughly reflect different shifts on a 24-hour clock. Overall, the data show that people are somewhat less pleased with the police on the midnight shift than at many other times, although it must be taken into consideration that the police are dealing with a different group of people who are awake and active late at night. In general, shifts start off strong and end fairly strong, with a dip in public satisfaction in the middle.

Closing Comments and Cautions

CompStat is a methodology that uses accountability, metrics, and crime analysis to successfully guide the implementation and coordination of multi-faceted crime control strategies. Building on this model, the law enforcement community can measure process, as well as outcome, to confirm that the profession values police officers interacting with the public in ways that are respectful, fair, and responsive to community expectations. RespectStat is a tool that

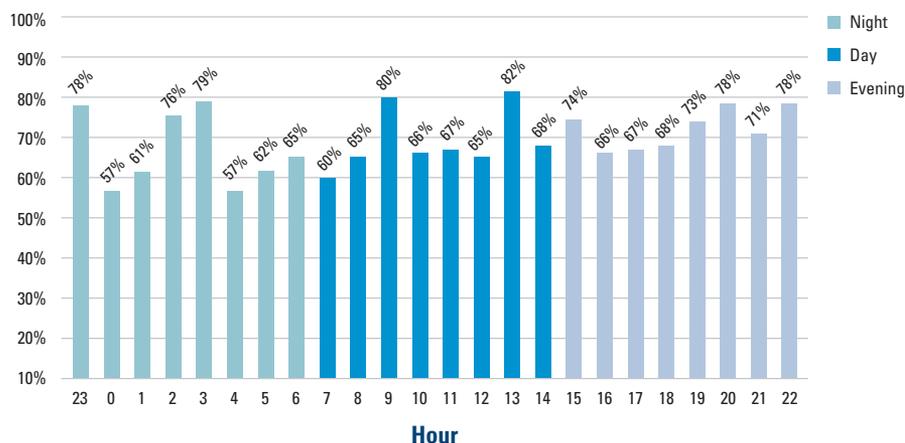
uses metrics to assist police agencies in achieving this mission.

The RespectStat approach should be viewed with a few cautionary notes or restrictions. First, unlike CompStat, the RespectStat program will not generate enough data to provide weekly or monthly feedback to district commanders. Chicago is planning semi-annual reports at the district level. For smaller agencies, annual reports could be generated for the entire city or large areas of the city. The more breakdowns requested by management (e.g., by shift, by district, by type of assignment), the larger the required survey sample and the longer the period needed between accountability meetings.

Second, introducing a new way of measuring performance places an additional burden on management and one that may present a challenge to daily operations. Specifically, some might argue that using the survey places conflicting demands on police commanders. In big cities, they are under pressure to reduce gang activity, eliminate drug markets, and get guns off the street. This is especially true in low-income, high-crime neighborhoods where officers are, on average, likely to receive lower scores under the RespectStat system. Thus, the challenge for commanders is to balance and integrate proactive policing with respectful and fair policing.

Over the past few years in Chicago, the superintendent and his command staff have responded to this challenge by introducing department-wide legitimacy training (now in phase 2), placing the right people in these critical command-level positions, and beginning to monitor the quality of police-citizen interactions via RespectStat. There is always room for improvement, and RespectStat is another avenue for enhancing organizational performance.

Figure 2 | Satisfaction by Hour/Shift (from 9/1/2014 to 2/28/2015)
Percent "Somewhat" or "Very" Satisfied with Encounter



As CompStat has shown, when something is measured, it begins to matter—it takes on importance; it becomes a priority within the organization. For this same reason, police executives and community leaders should be encouraged to explore new systems of accountability like RespectStat that can supplement and balance the current emphasis on crime control effectiveness. ❖

Garry F. McCarthy became the Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department on May 16, 2011. In his role as the superintendent, Garry McCarthy moves forward with evidence-based initiatives to reduce violence and improve the quality of life in the city of Chicago. Among these strategic initiatives, he has led the establishment of CompStat, a command accountability process he supported in New York and Newark to reduce crime through a methodological system. Superintendent McCarthy stresses the integral relationship between the community and beat officers to work together to report, solve, and prevent crimes.

Dennis P. Rosenbaum, PhD, is professor of Criminology, Law and Justice and director of the Center for Research in Law and Justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). In 2014, he was elected the first chair of the Division of Policing, American Society of Criminology. Dr. Rosenbaum is the executive director of the National Police Research Platform, a research program initially funded by the National Institute of Justice to advance knowledge and practice in U.S. policing. He is currently working with police and sheriff departments across the United States to establish new metrics for evaluating individual and agency performance and to improve police-community relations.

Notes:

¹Dennis P. Rosenbaum, Daniel S. Lawrence, Susan M. Harnett, Jack McDevitt, and Chad Poscik, "Measuring Procedural Justice and Legitimacy at the Local Level: The Police-Community Interaction Survey," *Journal of Experimental Criminology* (February 2015): online.

²James J. Willis, Stephen D. Mastrofski, and Tammy Rinehart Kochel, "Recommendations for Integrating CompStat and Community Policing," *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 4, no. 2 (2010): 182–193.

Reply to RespectStat: Good, Now Let's Go One Step Farther

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Over the past two decades, CompStat has been widely used by police executives as a tool to increase accountability for crime problems in specific districts or precincts. Although CompStat is controversial in some circles, it does show that police managers can be held accountable for achieving management objectives. Given its prominence in U.S. policing, I like the idea of using an existing structure to advance a renewed interest in community oriented policing. Recently, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing called upon the law enforcement community to embrace a new model of respectful and fair policing in this post-Ferguson United States. The challenge is finding new ways to do that. I like the idea proposed by Superintendent McCarthy and Professor Rosenbaum to use RespectStat as a mechanism for achieving this goal. Middle and upper management could use a nudge in redirecting their attention to matters other than crime statistics, thus helping them to send the message to frontline officers and supervisors that all persons who have contact with the police, regardless of their age, the color of their skin, or other variables, deserve to be treated fairly and with dignity.

At the Oak Park, Illinois, Police Department, we were involved in the initial efforts to field test the Police-Community Interaction (PCI) Survey for the National Police Research Platform, which served as the basis for Chicago's planned RespectStat program. We also participated in the rollout to other cities. I can report that surveying persons with a recent police contact is a labor-intensive, but important, effort.

I commend the many chiefs and sheriffs who participated in the PCI survey. In one sense, it was a risky proposition because they did not know in advance how well their agencies would perform relative to other agencies. (For every agency "above the mean," there is another agency "below the mean.") However, the findings can motivate action; we used the survey findings as an impetus to introduce new training at roll calls and to communicate to our command staff that the Oak Park Police Department values respectful encounters with the public. Feedback can provide an

incentive to improve performance, and, when your agency performs well or shows improvement, this is a tangible reward and an opportunity to say, "Keep up the good work."

A program like RespectStat would be implemented differently in cities of different sizes. Regardless of the frequency of reports or the size of the area being depicted, the agency should provide a breakdown by citizen demographics to determine whether officers are listening to and respecting all segments of the community.

Finally, I will end with a suggestion. One criticism of CompStat is that it is a centralized structure that may have little impact on the frontline officers who do not attend CompStat meetings. RespectStat may suffer the same problem unless departments begin to collect data and provide feedback to individual officers as part of their performance evaluations. Most police agencies already keep performance data on citizen complaints, arrests, citations, and so forth for individual officers. Why not add one more indicator, namely their scores on respectfulness and demeanor during encounters with the public, averaged across all of their public contacts? Granted, this will not be popular among the rank and file at first, but it will send the message that we, as police leaders, value respectful and constitutional policing. ❖

Ricky C. Tanksley is a 31-year veteran of the Oak Park Police Department and was appointed as chief in 2001. Chief Tanksley holds a master of social work from the Jane Addams School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago and a master of science in management and organizational behavior at Benedictine University. Chief Tanksley is a graduate of the Northwestern School of Staff and Command, FBI National Academy, and the Senior Management Institute for Police. In 2012, Chief Tanksley was inducted into the Center for Evidenced-Based Crime Policy Hall of Fame at George Mason University, and also received the Community Leadership Award from Concordia University.