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# Leading by Example: Crime Reduction and Techniques in the City of New York

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Abstract

My thesis will center on our nations largest city, New York City, and how they have managed to claim the title of the "Safest Big City in the United States". Cities all around the United States and the World have been looking to New York, for ways to improve their crime reduction techniques. Many areas have tried similar methods; however, have failed in the end. What is New York doing differently? According to the official UCR and city statistics, in 1993 New York City had 1,927 homicides. In 2003, that number was reduced to just 572. The reduction continues to move in the right direction year after year. This decrease in crime is not just occurring in the category of homicides, but with nearly every recordable crime. This paper is concentrating on the programs that the city is using to reduce crime and how this compares with certain aspects of social theory. Is the crime decrease actually a result of specific crime reduction techniques? Should the NYPD and the city government be credited with the reduction, or do other social and program factors play a part in this crime reduction? This paper and presentation will explore the issue in great detail.

## Leading by Example
## Crime Reduction and Techniques in the City of New York

The phrase "to lead by example" is referred to in many situations as someone or something that is a key player or looked upon to do the right thing, according to the values of the majority in society. Most others view this subject in a positive light and try to follow the example set, in order to achieve similar results. During the last decade, New York City has been leading by example, in terms of crime reduction. The betterment of society through this reduction has not come without costs on a benefit analysis scale; however, it has brought far more positives than negatives.

**Subject and Topic Context**

New York City is a major urban center with more than eight million people. It is at the center of international finance, politics, communications, music, fashion and culture. New York City is primarily considered a global city, and is home to an astounding collection of museums, galleries, theatre productions, corporations, and hundreds of international consulates in association with the United Nations. New York is comprised of five boroughs. The boroughs include Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens and Staten Island. These five populated areas, which make up the largest city in North America, consist of only 309 square miles. Immigrants from more than 180 countries call New York City home, making it one of the most diverse and cosmopolitan places on earth.

With one of the most ethnically diverse populations exceeding eight million, living in an area just seven times the size of Walt Disney World in Florida, what issues

would you expect to plague the area? Crime is certainly an issue that would most likely fall on the minds of many. In fact, crime is an issue in urban areas around the world. People often worry about being around people different from themselves and often things that are customary to individuals of different ethnicities, are often found as threatening to others. Many people choose to move out of urban areas and relocate to suburban or rural areas, in a vivid attempt to reduce the amount of crime they come in contact with on a daily basis. Some unspecified studies have suggested, but not proven, that most urban areas report a net loss of one resident for every one crime reported.

New York City is defining opposites when it comes to urban trends and crime patterns. First, the population of New York is actually increasing rather than decreasing. Second, New York City has earned a coveted title within recent years. Currently, they hold the award (City of New York 2004) for the 'Safest Big City in the United States'. That appears to be a very strong phrase, and it certainly deserves distinct recognition. Critics would point out the fact that the title of that award uses the statement 'big city'. In no sense of the phrase, does the city government deny that part of the award. However, New York City has a population in excess of eight million people, and it is the largest city within the United States. A 'big city' is defined as any city over one million. This fact proves that this metropolitan area far exceeds safety standards within crime rates than most other cities. Without doubt, it would be unfair to group New York City within the same category of cities with populations below one million people. However, in reality, New York City is much safer than many cities and towns with medium and small populations. This may not be true when using raw crime statistics. It certainly

does ring true when using crime percentages. For example, Elizabethtown is a small college town approximately 45 minutes from Messiah College. This town is considered a picturesque area with a small town feel and good community standards. The latest federal crime statistics (which were updated in 2003) show us that you have a greater chance (Sperling 2004) of being a victim of homicide in Elizabethtown than you do in New York City. In 2003, 9.4 of every 100,000 Elizabethtown residents fell victim to murder. In comparison, 9.0 of every 100,000 New York City residents were homicide victims during the same time period. The statistics even show a less desirable trend (Sperling 2004) in Harrisburg. The homicide rate jumped to 10.1 within the city limits during 2003. As a matter of fact, using Harrisburg as an example, they had a higher rate of crime in every felony category with the exception of automotive theft. One of the most noticeable differences when comparing these two cities fell into the category of rape. In 2003, 22.9 of every 100,000 New York City residents reported being a victim of rape. In Harrisburg, that rate was nearly 350% higher. In 2003, 74.8 of every 100,000 residents reported a rape. These are just two examples of tens of thousands following this trend throughout the United States. This shows you that some people move to suburban and rural areas with a false sense of security for a better lifestyle and less crime.

New York City was not always a safe city. Today, many non-residents still have negative views of this metropolis because of what it once was. Many officials are amazed at the number of people who assume that New York City is still one of the deadliest places on earth. The media loves to play up this image, reporting every outrageous crime they can get information on. In fact, New York City is almost as safe

as it once was in the early 1960's. Throughout the late 60's, 70's, and 80's, crime continued to climb to record levels year after year. Neighborhoods were absolutely declining in quality of life, people were afraid to leave there homes at night, and most people were even afraid to go outside without someone else in broad daylight. As the early 1990's came around, crime seemed to be out of control. Homicides were at an all-time high. People began to run to the city government with desperate pleas that something had to be accomplished in order to reduce this insanely high crime rate. It was not simply homicides that were at an all time high. Every category of felonies and misdemeanors were at record inducing levels with no signs of an emergence into a more positive arena.

In 1993, which most residents call the year of hope, residents envisioned hope in the reduction of crime. The city government finally took command into the issue and provided an agenda that they believed would be the beginning of a positive tunnel into the issue of city crime. Within the category of homicides (City of New York 2005), the city documented 1,927 homicides in 1993, 767 in 1997 and 572 in 2003. Those statistics show a huge decrease in the most violent of felonies over a relatively short ten-year period. It is important to note that, although we were predominantly be referring to felonies when talking about raw numbered statistics; every crime in every category has had significant decreases. 85,892 robberies were reported in the city in 1993, 44,335 in 1997 and 24,106 in 2003. Over a ten-year period, that is a reduction of 71.9%. Grand Larceny Automotive was always the most prevalent felony committed in the city.

111,622 GLA's were reported in 1993, 51,312 in 1997 and 20,290 in 2003. Those numbers show an almost unbelievable reduction of 81.8%.

This significant reduction is not only important because of the raw decrease in violent crime; however, it is also recognized because of the time period in which it occurred. Crime typically never makes such a dramatic increase or decrease within a period of ten years. Ten years, in terms of governmental change, is considered a very fast turnaround time for an issue that is so complex and complicated. Many cities have worked decades in their fight to reduce crime, and it is has been recognized by many reputable police chiefs, that many cities will work centuries and still will never come close to achieving the decrease in crime in which New York City has already achieved in just one decade.

Within this paper, the research will explore the reasoning behind the reduction of crime in New York City. What is the reasoning behind this dramatic drop that no one had ever imagined? Some people give credit to the police department and the many operations and programs that they have created and enforced. Others, without a doubt, credit the current and former mayor of the city and his cabinet. Still others say that the reasoning lies behind other social factors that have nothing to do with the city government. The predominant underlying basis for this research will be to conduct in-depth exploration of why this reduction has occurred and continues to occur. Another issue that is detailed in this text relates to other major U.S. cities. The success of New York City has been recognized by other major cities who are attempting to reduce crime. Many cities have attempted to use similar techniques used by the largest U.S. city in

order to improve crime in their locale. Has the trend continued into these other cities, or have roadblocks occurred? We will associate these findings into sociological theories that fit well into the reductions that have occurred. Ultimately, the sociological imagination should lead me to a quality analysis of this crime trend that has kept New York City under the microscope.

**Working Hypotheses/ Methodology**

The methodology related to the analysis and findings of this research, will predominantly be based on programs and reasoning as to why crime reduction in New York City has occurred on such a significant scale. Although there is no guaranteed and sound way to assure the validity of the findings of crime reduction, evidence and a fair argument can be made to support or deny the hypotheses. The data used for this research will predominantly come from the New York City Police Department, city governments and other reputable sources that have conducted in-depth study and analysis on this topic. I believe it is also important to note the difference between a hypothesis and a theory. A hypothesis is a tentative statement that proposes a possible explanation to some event. It is simply described as a *testable* statement that may include a prediction. Theories are general explanations based on a large amount of data. The topic under study in this paper, can be difficult to differentiate between a theory and a hypothesis. In order to make sense of crime reduction, research must be based on existing programs and data. This would generally be described as theory research. However, in this case, we will attempt to make sound conclusions on explanations to this crime reduction. Although

these conclusions cannot possibly be tested to guaranteed accuracy, we can make sound judgments appropriate to uphold or deny the hypotheses.

The dependent variable within this research is the reduction of crime and the independent variable is the reasoning, program or initiative behind the reduction. Credit has been given to many different independent variables; however, my hypothesis states that *Crime reduction in New York City has been directly affected by police initiatives and city neighborhood restoration.* Prior to investigating this on a more in depth level, I do not believe that the crime reduction can be linked only to police initiatives or neighborhood restoration. On the same note, I believe they both play a vital role and therefore cannot be reduced from the scenario. I believe these two factors are the sole contributors to the reduction of crime, and other scenarios can be eliminated from the equation.

**Findings, General Analysis and Theoretical Analysis**

The first thing we will look at in this amazing wave of crime reduction, are direct police initiatives and programs. In 1993, when New York City was at the breaking point, and felony crime was 72% higher than most other major cities, now former mayor Rudolph Giuliani stepped in. He decided it was time to reform the police department, so they could reform the city. His initial quote before his commando-like instructions (State of the City 1993) to the police department began was, "We will fight for every street. We will fight for every borough." That is exactly what Mayor Giuliani and the police department accomplished. Every precinct in New York City experienced a significant crime reduction. However, typically when crime falls, it is a temporary solution. Twelve

years later, even after city government completely changed, the crime is still falling to new lower levels every year. Some citizens called the tactics of former mayor Giuliani over powering (Unknown 2000); however, was it truly needed to force a permanent change on the largest city in the United States?

One of the major problems with the NYPD prior to the crime reduction was the attitude of the commissioned officers and other personnel who were employed within the department. They often felt like the job they performed was just part of a daily process, and the morale of the department was at an all-time low. The attitude of the organization was simply to complete the daily tasks at hand, with no plan to actually make a difference. The organization had a hierarchal structure that was not conducive to appropriate communication for the field. Communication between the headquarters and borough commanders, and then the borough commanders and precinct commanders was not accomplished via a reliable means. The limited communication was a major factor because the NYPD had so much information to communicate, resulting in an information overload. Additionally, up-to-date information was difficult to obtain which made analysis of crime patterns nearly impossible. Without the appropriate analysis of what is occurring in your specific precinct, crime reduction is not a viable choice.

In 1994, one of the initiatives was to integrate a new system into the department called Compstat. This department-wide term was short for computerized comparison statistics (Government Innovators Network 1996). This system was integrated into service in response to the complaints of employees who were frustrated with out-of-date and unreliable crime collection data procedures. Compstat initially relates to the concept

of theoretical rationality. Weber conceived the rationalization of society and was a very complex thinker who made many contributions to the field of social thought (Ritzer 2003). Theoretical rationality is described as an effort to master reality cognitively through the development of increasingly abstract concepts. The goal is to obtain a rational understanding of the area in question, rather than simply taking rational action within it. Prior to the unveiling of Compstat, the NYPD simply took rational action in response to crimes in progress. However, with the integration of this efficient program, the police department can now more easily research patterns and issues within a specific community, and create a plan of attack in response to trends.

Compstat is not only used to compile general crime numbers. It also collects information on victims, times of day that crime occurs and other details that allow officials to spot emerging crime patterns. This system also uses an old police tactic and transforms it into a modern technological miracle. A smart pin-point mapping system is used to electronically identify crime patterns and relationships. In return, the department can effectively use resources to target these patterns. Compstat is also used as a tool to hold top NYPD officials accountable for crime in their specific precinct. Regular bi-weekly meetings bring top executives together to compile new information and discuss problem areas. This information is promptly relayed to commanding officers in the precincts in need of immediate reform. The commanders of the problem precinct must return to the panel every five weeks to report the results of the latest crime fighting initiative to reduce the previously discussed issue. If the issue is not resolved, the commanding officers can often face a high amount of criticism and often even face

relocation to a different area of the city. If the issue has been resolved, the precinct is often rewarded for the effort.

In summary, Compstat was introduced as a way to motivate a police department without high morale. It gives authority to local commanders to create local solutions to local problems, with a much higher rate of accountability. Local control, in comparison to corporate control, often leads to a much more positive outlook in the eyes of your employees. Although the concept of Compstat uses theoretical rationality, the results of the system can lead to Weber's concept of practical rationality. If a police department is making a difference in the community, practical rationality is an extremely valuable daily tool. This concept allows the department to deal with day-to-day issues in the most efficient way possible. Although I feel that Compstat and Weber's theories of rationality played a positive role in the reduction of crime, I do not believe that it was one of the most vital factors in the analysis of the reduction of crime.

Shortly after introducing Compstat, the mayor and police commissioner went on what some call a "rampage". Together, they came up with a plan that would target small and very miniscule practices. In return, the city believed that this would help reduce the overall rate of felony and misdemeanor activity (Heritage Foundation 1996). William Bratton, the New York City police commissioner during the early 1990's, described policing in the United States as an 'after-the-fact' occupation. He wanted to change the beat of policing in the United States. Bratton wanted to make sure it was more of a preventive police force, than a serving police force. Bratton and Giuliani thought that if they restored order and reduced chaos in everyday activities, residents would see an

improvement in the quality of life. They believed that a life improvement would bring up morale and reduce crime. The issue with New York at the time, and so many other cities currently, lies in the fact that the laws are in place; however, the resources are lacking to enforce these laws. Also, it was extremely difficult for the government to successfully interact and be in good standing with city agencies (Meese 1996). This time, elected officials were out to change all of this. The following are some of the initiatives that were taken in this so-called 'rampage clean-up' of New York City.

The first initiative dealt with the city transportation system. The subway was clearly the fastest and most efficient way to get around; however, most people were afraid to enter the underground facilities. Criminals multiplied like ants in this underground maze of tunnels, and most normal citizens were scared to go at anytime of the day. Immediate police patrols were dispatched to nearly every subway station and twenty-four hour patrols were in effect. Police not only swarmed the platforms, but they also were clearly visible in the subway cars themselves. Taxis were as bad, if not worse, than the city subway system. If you exited the train station or an airport in search of a taxi, it was similar to entering a boxing ring. Literally hundreds of different cab companies, in taxis of all different colors, with drivers speaking all different languages and begging you to take their cab. You did not know what to think as you got into a taxi that looked like it wasn't going to make it more than a few feet. The fare structure was different for nearly every driver and some did not even have a set rate. You would simply end up paying what the driver told you was appropriate. That was immediately changed. Now, all taxis are owned and operated by the city of New York, under the

jurisdiction of the Taxi and Limousine Commission and the NYPD Transit Police Division. All taxis are the standard yellow color with medallions on the hood to ensure authenticity. Inside, a meter is regulated by the city which keeps accurate track of the exact amount you owe, in configuration with the posted rate schedule on the outside of every single cab. The driver identification and contact and complaint information is posted on the inside of every vehicle. 'Ghost cabs' or unlicensed cabs are not tolerated anywhere in the city. These programs restored order to a system plagued by chaos and promoted one less way for a criminal to live freely in this major metropolis.

The next issue, which was also a problem for motorists, was the infamous squeegee brigades. At nearly every intersection of the city, groups of people with squeegees would approach your vehicle wanting to wash your windshields. If you would stop, they would approach your vehicle and clean the glass, no matter if it was in need of it or not. Sometimes groups of 5, 10, 15, or even 20 squeegee mongers would approach your vehicle. The squeegee could have been the official symbol of New York. In return for the sub par service, these men and women would expect a prompt payment in exchange for the service. Sometimes, if they did not get what they felt was deserved, some of the individuals would get violent or even inflict damage upon your vehicle.

Another serious issue was the 'eye candy' or the vision of the city. No matter where you walked, most streets looked disastrous and some described most streets as 'cardboard city'. Every neighborhood, including prestigious Fifth Avenue, was littered with illegal peddlers, panhandlers, beggars, filth, graffiti, and absolutely no sign of police. The only police around were those in patrol vehicles that looked worse than most

taxis at the time. Another issue was about to be resolved. Police went on a five day arrest power spree. Although it was met with some harsh criticism, police took all peddlers, panhandlers, beggars and homeless individuals into custody under laws that dated back hundreds of years. They used little known laws to take all of these individuals into custody without lawsuits or much public criticism. Quickly, laws regarding these individuals were reformed. Peddlers were only allowed back on the street if they were selling a service of interest to the public. Examples include paintings, winter gear, t-shirts, and other public interest items. Fake merchandise such as movies, watches, and jewelry were no longer tolerated. Panhandlers, beggars and homeless individuals were quickly arrested if they were harassing a pedestrian or citizen in any way. In order to reduce the number that went back to the streets, shelters and outreach programs were started in abundance in order to discourage taking residency on the street or subway.

Other small crimes were dealt with appropriately using a quick and efficient method. Situations such as prostitution, public urination, jaywalking and other small offenses were served immediately with arrest or severe fines. Another highly targeted minor offense was fare evasion at subway station locations. It was extremely easy to duck under a turnstile or jump over a turnstile. Why was it important for the police department to spend so much manpower and effort on catching subway fare evaders? Statistics from the 1990's show that on average that one out of every seven people arrested for fare evasion had a felony warrant for their arrest. Also, one out of very twenty-one people were carrying a weapon. This is further proof that targeting small crime leads to the reduction of major crime.

All of these minor crime and public disturbance issues were related to a major theory within the context of sociology and criminology. It is most often referred to as the broken window theory (Siegel 2004). This theory originally comes from an experiment conducted in Palo Alto, California and has been proven repeatedly in communities across the world. The experiment originally started when researchers placed a car on a public street. It remained untouched and undamaged for a lengthy period. However, as soon as a window was broken out of the vehicle or a tire was slashed, within just a short period of time vandals would swarm and do more damage to the vehicle. The broken window theory shows that if minor crimes go unchecked and are tolerated by the police, then these small crimes will progress and eventually turn into offenses that are much more serious in nature. This theory is proof and reasoning behind why New York City decided to start by cracking down on minor offenses (Ward 1997). I feel confident in crediting this theory and this police initiative with the major crime reduction in the City of New York during the 1990's. You can make a case for this cause because this theory and similar programs have proven effective in areas all around the world. However, in no sense, do I believe the broken window theory was the sole contributor to the solution. Other factors come into play later in this research. In addition, the broken window theory can only reduce crime for a specific period of time and is not intended to be a long-term initiative. Once you have fixed all of the 'broken windows', then you need to focus on programs that will stabilize, continue to reduce and control crime. This is where further theories and police initiatives of the early 21st century come into play.

New York City has been aggressive in its techniques to rid the city of serious crime. Most cities can only dream about making such a great accomplishment a reality in just ten years. However, once the broken window theory has been applied to the situation in question and successful results have been obtained, you cannot simply stop your crime prevention techniques. Eventually, because of the nature of our society, incidents will begin to occur again if effective programs are not implemented. Although parts of the broken window theory will continue to be played out in years to come as warranted, this theory tended to expire in New York City during the late 1990's. It was at this time, the city government claimed the 'broken windows' were fixed, and a new supplement plan needed to be put in place to obtain peace, harmony, friendship, and orderly conduct in neighborhoods throughout all five boroughs. Some programs have come and passed by the wayside due to the ineffectiveness of the results it was supposed to have accomplished. However, some programs have shown tremendous leaps and bounds and have conquered far greater results than were ever expected. Some of the programs that have remained active in the city for the past few years include Operation Impact, Anti-Gun Initiatives, Bank Robberies Initiative, Operation Spotlight, Sexual Assault Initiatives, Operation Safe Housing, Trademark Counterfeit, Operation Clean Sweep and Operation Silent Night. (City of New York 2005) The most successful program of all has been Operation Impact. Let us deconstruct these programs to see how they have assisted the city in maintaining and even further reducing the already low crime levels.

After years of declines, shootings started to slightly increase in the year 2002. New York immediately began an anti-gun initiative to prevent these spikes from

escalating into trends.  One of the most successful programs has been called 'Operation Gun Stop'.  This program is an anonymous tip program that can allow anyone to claim a $500.00 reward for direct information leading to an arrest of an individual with an illegal firearm (OJJDP 1999).  The program was extremely successful right after the start of the initiative.  The NYPD was so happy with the results, which they decided to increase the reward to $1,000.00 in an attempt to increase the arrests even more so.  The reward did not have many strings attached as do so many incentives today.  For an anonymous tip to lead to an arrest, a NYPD detective had to investigate the tip and build a case.  The only drawback is that if the detective cannot build a case strong enough, a search warrant can sometimes be difficult to obtain.  To encourage people to use this service and lead to more arrests, a unique system was in place to guarantee anonymity.  The program was administered through certain bank branches citywide.  The person who calls is given a code phrase.  They are encouraged to call the bank back at any time and give the code phrase to see whether or not an arrest has been made.  When an arrest is made, the tipster can go to the bank branch with the code phrase.  In turn, the teller will pay the reward in cash.

Talcott Parsons was a highly regarded structural functionalist.  He introduced the AGIL scheme.  This was a set of four functional imperatives that are necessary for all systems to operate (Ritzer 2003).  These include adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency.  This program is so successful because it followed the AGIL scheme.  After adapting this program, the NYPD set up a simple goal attainment plan.  The goal was to remove as many illegal guns from the street as possible.  The department realized that the

best way to do so was to obtain tips from the public. After integration of the program into the community, latency comes into play. The best way to motivate individuals to provide tips through this program is to offer a reward or incentive. The general public works best in providing information through a reward-based system. However, sometimes even more important, is that even though you may have a reward program, people cannot participate if they do not know that it exists. New York City started a widespread advertising campaign through many sources, including the public transit system. Lower and middle class city residents predominantly use the transit system. This demographic is believed to hold most of the knowledge to the locations of a major portion of the illegal weapons in the city. This program has been a success thanks in part to the AGIL scheme. In the year 2004, Operation Gun Stop had 251 arrests with a net count of 204 illegal gun seizures (City of New York 2004). In addition, a similar program, Operation Cash for Guns brought in another 2,704 illegal weapons.

Another anti-gun initiative is the Firearms Investigation Unit. The goal of this organization is to reduce the number of guns that enter the streets of the city, by identifying individuals who traffic guns (BJA 2000). The program starts by recruiting select individuals who are known to deal illegal firearms as informants, in exchange for freedom from any criminal charges related to this investigation and a monetary reward. The informants introduce the undercover officers to people who may be willing to sell illegal firearms. The under covers attempt to build the trust of the illegal sellers, and then tries to purchase firearms from them at the rate of $300 to $500 per gun. The officer also pays the informant $300 for good information. Once the illegal dealer has sold the gun to

the officer, and the officer hands the money to the dealer, an arrest can be made based on gun possession and sale. This program has proven successful predominantly because of sociological status and role positions. When the police are low on ideas on how to catch criminals, it is best to evaluate the social system in which you are targeting. By determining status and roles, it is deemed more appropriate to give freedom to one criminal if he/she is willing to help with the capture of several. In addition, a staff of 65 is solely dedicated to this program, and the commanding officer has his choice of the staff that he wants on his team.

Finally, another successful program within the anti-gun initiative was the creation of the gun court. New York City has always had a one-year minimum sentence for people convicted of illegal gun possession. Despite this fact, offenders often did not even receive the minimum sentence. The new gun court was created with the sole purpose of adjudicating felony gun possession cases. Originally this program, named the Brooklyn gun court, only heard cases from within the borough of Brooklyn. This was quickly expanded to include the Bronx and Queens. One judge and three prosecutors are dedicated to this court, allowing them to become experts in this sole area of the New York City criminal system. The goal is to process gun cases more quickly and have more criminals serve the minimum sentence or greater. Officers in the precincts covered by the gun court, also go through a training session provided by the court. The city believes this also helps in prosecuting a larger number of offenders through the gun court. Officers attend a three-day training session about recognizing illegal gun possession, safely apprehending people with illegal firearms and testifying against the individuals in

court. Since the introduction of this court, jail time has nearly quadrupled for cases that have been prosecuted within this court and the percentage of individuals who receive greater than one-year imprisonment has increased 95%.

Moving on to other crime prevention programs, one of the frequent issues that burdens the officers who are attempting to protect our streets, is the problem and issue of chronic and repeat offenders. After the huge 'broken window' cleanup in the 1990's, small annoyances began to reappear in the city. Drug dealers began to show up on the West side, prostitutes began to visibly reappear in Times Square and graffiti was etched into retail windows in Midtown. Repeat criminals typically commit these quality-of-life crimes. These individuals are often called 'career misdemeanor offenders'. The city estimates that approximately 10,000 of these repeat low-key offenders are living in the city. Mayor Bloomberg and the police department initiated a program called Operation Spotlight (GothamGazette 2002). This program was meant to target these offenders who commit these small offenses and then receive just a few days of imprisonment or community service. When this initiative was kicked off recently, Mayor Michaél Bloomberg said: "These are the people who deal drugs, deface storefronts and steal from our retail establishments. They drive away tourists. They discourage shoppers. They devalue our neighborhoods. The time has come for us to cast a spotlight on them."

The police officers who often made these quality-of-life arrests were discouraged; because despite following proper procedures and collecting pertinent evidence, these criminals were often let go without any form of punishment. Similar to the gun court, Operation Spotlight is associated with specific judges at special courts in each borough.

These judges are now authorized to sentence a repeat misdemeanor offender up to one-year at Riker's Island.  These judges may also sentence a person to mandatory drug counseling and treatment.  Operation spotlight began in 2002 and has resulted in excess of 40,000 arrests under the terms of this program.  It has also been successful on the basis of prison sentences.  Operation Spotlight arrests have resulted in more than 74% of all cases containing more than 30 days of jail time.

Sexual assault and rape is another crime that is a very serious problem.  Although the number of rapes has also declined within the period discussed in this paper, critics believe that this is quite possibly the most under reported crime.  New York City and police agree with that statement.  Rape seems to be such a personal issue and one that people do not want to discuss with law enforcement officials.  However, the lower rape rate in New York City has been stabilized in due part to some of the efforts now in place.

The John Doe Indictment project was initiated in part to freeze the statute of limitations (New York News Network 2003).  Currently, under law, rape and sexual assault cases cannot be tried after the ten-year statue of limitations expires.  This project uses the DNA databank to force away the limitations, even thought the identity of the suspect remains at large.  By obtaining an appropriate DNA profile, the statute can be stopped and the case can remain open.  After that begins, the suspect hopefully can be tracked down and once caught, can be prosecuted to the letter of the law.  Once DNA is matched to an individual, it is primarily an open-and-shut case, because this evidence is so strong that it really cannot be appealed or questioned.  The hope of this program is to increase the number of convictions in open rape cases; therefore, reducing the number

initially. Although nearly every New York City crime initiative has proven effective to this point, rape is the only category that has consistently increased during the past three to five years.

Another program that has been formalized for rape cases, does not decrease the chances of the crime occurring; however, the purpose is to make rape victims feel more at ease about reporting the crime. The NYPD hopes that by being more gentle in the way they handle rape cases, more people will report the crime and therefore they can get a more realistic grasp on the actual number that occur. This new program is called S.A.R.T. This stands for Sexual Assault Response Team (City of New York 2004). This is the city's first mobile response team and victims all over the city have praised it. The initiative began just one year ago in April of 2004. The team consists of a group of health care professionals that are dedicated to quality treatment of rape victims. This team identifies, collects and packages forensic evidence, accurately documents injuries, and attends to the emotional needs of the victim. These team members respond to every rape case within one hour of the victim being admitted to the hospital. The S.A.R.T team has met the one-hour goal more than 90% of the time since the program inception, and cooperation among rape victims and law enforcement officials has increased dramatically. This is an extremely important program because often rape victims don't want to share information with law enforcement officials because of their lack of training (specifically emotional) in this rather private and personal matter.

Prior to proceeding to the final and most widely respected crime stabilization initiative, I would like to take a moment to refer to a popular sociological term and how it

relates to the some of the above initiatives. Anthony Giddens is a modern social theorist who believes that we are operating in an advanced modern world, rather than a postmodern world. He coined a popular term affectionately called juggernaut (Ritzer 2003). The term is a metaphor for the modern world and is described as a massive force that moves forward inexorably riding roughshod over everything in its path. People steer the juggernaut, but it always has the possibility of careening out of control. During the past decade, some people have associated the NYPD as the juggernaut of the community. Many have described the zero-tolerance policing techniques as harsh and over-the-top. Respectively, this is a city with a population near ten million citizens; therefore, the proportion of people who have issues with the system is rather small. Some citizens believe it is a violation to be appointing judges to specific tasks and training officers on how to testify in certain court cases. However, you could argue that without the NYPD acting as a juggernaut, efficiency in crime reduction would be nearly impossible. This is the first time in history that New York has come back to moderately low crime levels, from such a disastrous high in violent crime. Therefore, it could be said that these programs have actually helped and in no way detrimentally affected the community. Even if the NYPD was a juggernaut, it has not careened out of control, possibly because of good leadership. It will continue to remain in control, as long as the majority of the population believes in the quality of policing within the department.

The final, and most effective aspect, of the current crime stabilization and reduction initiatives is a program called Operation Impact. This program began in January of 2003 and has been the most successful of programs currently in-use by the

NYPD (City of New York 2004). Operation Impact assignments are tied in very closely with Compstat figures. You can read more about Compstat earlier in this research paper. Generally, impact floods certain zones and areas of the city with police officers, of which a high proportion of them are recent academy graduates. The department uses recent data to identify high-crime areas of the city. In immediate response to these statistics, police executives analyze all crimes in this zone. Once completing this step, officers assigned to a specific impact area are held accountable for change and reduction of that specific offense in the coordinating precinct. Operation Impact also can analyze policing patterns, and district chiefs can determine the need for future policing patterns and deployment in their area.

On average, 1,000 police officers each day are assigned to this program. Highly visible field command posts are placed in specific zones and nearly all officers are on foot to promote community policing and healing. Operation Impact targets gangs and narcotics and also searches for people with outstanding arrest warrants. Four main strategies are used for areas that receive police resources under the impact team. The first one is to increase police presence, in the form of foot patrol, during the times of the day when it is needed most. Compstat keeps track of particular figures such as which crimes occur most often and during what time of day. A second strategy used is that officers frequently issue summons and citations for simple quality-of-life crimes. These crimes include drinking alcohol in public and littering. Police also stop and question people suspected of committing crimes in the area and if necessary search the individual. The third point of Operation Impact is to identify individuals who are wanted for committing

crimes in the zone or are wanted by other areas who may live in the impact zone. Finally, the officers identify particular areas of concern and bring in specialized NYPD units based on the findings. Operation Impact serves as an excellent example of operant conditioning. This term is the learning process by which the consequences of behavior serve to modify that behavior. When criminals notice that a certain area will be highly patrolled and looked upon as a high-crime area they are more likely to cease committing offenses completely or at least in that area. Only one Operation Impact zone in 2003, came back on the list as zone in 2004. That means that the process of operant conditioning was effective in most of the impact zones. The question that cannot be answered at this time is to attest to how long these now 'clean' impact zones will remain at the reduced crime level. Will the zones reappear within a few years, or will the combination of other programs be enough to keep that zone off of the Operation Impact list permanently?

Throughout several regional and national newspapers and other media sources, critics have expressed some criticism regarding the Operation Impact program. They have brought up such issues as a waste of resources, including manpower and financial. Upon careful analysis of this program, I strictly disagree with that criticism and believe that this program is only creating positive results. Most of the officers who are placed in Operation Impact zones are new officers that have just graduated from the academy. These officers are not yet assigned to permanent precincts; therefore, they are not being taken from other regular precinct duties. This also leads to a financial savings, rather than a financial burden which the critics are pointing to. By placing these new recruits in

Operation Impact areas, you are also freeing up the permanent officers of that precinct to attend to other community issues and concentrate more on improving community police relations in other areas of the precinct. One initial concern of Operation Impact pointed out that criminals may just move from the impact area and being committing crimes in another area of the city. The NYPD reports that as of this point, this has not been a problem; however, it is definitely something that they will continue to follow through Compstat.

According to official NYPD 2004 statistics, Operation Impact in this year alone has resulted in more than 125,000 citations and 11,000 arrests. Crime within the impact zones decreased nearly 30% from the prior year, and homicides were down 52% within the impact zones. One of the precincts that has noticed the greatest decrease in crime, due to Operation Impact is the city's 75th precinct. Although impact zones are determined on a citywide level, the local precinct commanding officer has control over the specific tactics used within his boundaries. During a 2004 end of the year press conference he shared insight into how to make Operation Impact work better. "Involving the community and gaining residents' cooperation is critical to impact's success. If the police do not communicate with the community about the increased presence and the increased enforcement of low-level crime, they risk alienating residents and may lose them as a resource regarding information about crimes. For example, poor relations could develop if police start issuing summons for drinking beer on the sidewalk, without first informing the community that this is an activity that they will be cracking down on."

Prior communication regarding potential initiatives will further support within the impact zone and cause a greater success rate to exist in that area.

Will the tactics of the NYPD become a nationwide trend? Will police departments world-wide copy the programs of this department and succeed with a crime reduction proportionate to the City of New York? The answer to this question has a very clear answer. The answer is no. Predominantly, these tactics are not working in other cities. After it was clear that the City of New York was moving in the right direction in the late 1990's, many major cities all around the United States copied some of the same programs the NYPD used and attempted to make a significant reduction in crime. According to a citywide press conference held in mid-2004, many major cities took the crime initiatives of New York City and attempted to place them into their own communities. In most cases, similar programs showed only a minimal crime reduction in other major cities. Only the City of Los Angeles, had a drop close to the significance of New York. Some credit that to the fact that the current Chief of Police with the LAPD, is actually a former NYPD Police Commissioner. The question that remains is why would these programs work in the City of New York and not in other major metropolitan areas around the United States?

The other major contributing factor in the reduction of crime in New York City, is neighborhood restoration. In the early 1990's, 1980's and prior years, nearly all of the cities middle and lower-class neighborhoods were in a state of disrepair. It was quite a sight that one would rather forget. Several major steps were taken that would clean up neighborhoods around the entire city. The first issue was to remove unsightly graffiti

completely or restore it with graffiti as artwork. This was a daunting task; however, it was accomplished very quickly. Task number two involved removing or restoring vacant housing, businesses and warehouses. The city believed that these vacant buildings were swarms for illegal activities and drug distribution. Most of this was accomplished without much hassle and to the pleasure of the residents of each community. The two steps outlined above were serious issues that improved each community greatly.

The next two steps involved processes that were much more complicated and had to pass through many stages in order to get financial approval. The first step was to create public schools that were equally treated citywide, rather than having inequality among schools within the same system. Schools were updated and the Department of Education was restructured so that local decisions could me made under a citywide flow chart. It was also very important for each of the public schools to provide equal access to after school programs and activities. School safety officers were also placed at each school, and the number of officers at each location was determined by the number of incidents that occurred at each location. Another major initiative to clean-up neighborhoods was to add parks and green space. Prior to Giuliani's neighborhood cleanup initiative, New York City only had 945 parks, of which many were in a state of disrepair. Where vacant housing, businesses, and buildings once stood, parks were created. New York City now has more than 1,700 parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities that are owned by the city. According to a quality-of-life survey in 1990, more than 75% of residents said that open, tranquil places to relax outside of the home, were very important to them (State of the City 2002).

After the general facets of neighborhood clean-up were in place, groups were formed to create unity and bonding among residents who lived close together. Neighborhood block associations, care groups, watch groups and neighborhood facilitators were all put in place as an outlet where people could express the views they had about concerns in there neighborhood. This would streamline the way that incidents that needed city attention were handled. The city felt that it would be better to have an organized way of reporting problems, and it was better for a few people from each community to complain to city government in an organized fashion, than it was for multiple people to be swarming government officials for repeated issues. Another extremely important part of neighborhood pride was a project called Business Improvement Districts, or BID's for short (Robinson 2004). Currently, 44 BID's exist in New York City and most are very lively and well respected. BID areas have increased sanitation support, security and marketing programs. More trashcans are placed around town, police presence is greater and with that comes more business and consumers. In addition, typically a BID district has full-time personnel that will be employees within the BID. They spend the day outside cleaning up trash and other areas that need attention.

Being a BID employee is not an easy job; however, it is much appreciated by business owners and residents who live within the confines of the improvement district. Many of the BID employees are participating in 'The Doe Fund – Ready, Willing and Able' program. These employees are predominantly homeless people and former prison convicts who are now ready to get to work. They are typically paid between $5.50 and $6.50 per hour, tax-free. New York City has improved over the years. In 2003,

according to an official city census, 89% of city streets were rated as acceptably clean. BID exist all over the city, some within communities and other within high profile business districts. For example, within the high profile Manhattan business area, more than 15 BID's are currently in existence. They include the Central Park West BID, Times Square BID, Eight Avenue Partnership, Fifth Avenue BID, Grand Central Partnership, Fashion District Improvement, Bryant Park BID, Rockefeller Center Clean Team, 34th Street Partnership and several others. All of these teams care for the streets of New York, hoping that residents and visitors will appreciate the fact and contribute to the cleanliness of the area.

Ultimately, neighborhood restoration and police initiatives are the two factors that most likely had the most direct impact on crime reduction in New York City. In conclusion, the basis of the crime cleanup began with the Broken Window Theory and continued to decrease with the present day programs that the NYPD has in place, including Operation Impact. However, neighborhood restoration has a direct link to the efforts of the NYPD. When you restore, clean-up and make a neighborhood look better, the residents who call that place 'home' have a much greater respect for the area. The lack of graffiti, the minimal trash, the beautiful parks, abundant trees, families at school programs and neighbors who spend an afternoon or evening on the front porch all directly have a link to the overall feel of the area. Criminals do not want to flourish in areas that are nice. Why? People who have respect for the neighborhoods in which they live, are typically considered vigilant and aware citizens. These citizens are careful and proud as to what occurs in the community. They are likely to spot and immediately report any
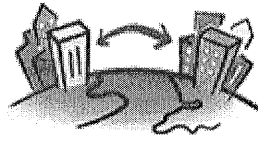
illegal activity to the police. Therefore, criminals flee and go somewhere where they will more at home. New York has proven to cities all around the United States that significant crime reduction is no longer a fantasy. It involves a rather simple process, that can be easily accomplished through a three-step program. These three steps are concerned and aware citizens, an excellent police department and a willing government. These three team leaders can come together to create a community that will never diminish, and a community that will come together to free itself from the burden of major crime. If the largest city in the United States can unite, any city can produce equal results and come together for a better quality of life.

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# Compare Cities

**FROM** State: [ New York ] City: [ New York ]

**TO** State: [ Pennsylvania ] City: [ Elizabethtown ]

General                Housing                Climate

People                  Health                 Education

Economy           Crime                   Transportation

| CRIME | New York, New York | Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania | National Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Violent Crime | 1063.1 | 103.7 | 446.1 |
| Property Crime | 2968.5 | 1526.6 | 4162.2 |
| CATEGORIES crimes per 100,000 pop. | | | |
| Murder | 9 | 9.4 | 3.9 |
| Rape | 22.9 | 9.4 | 32.8 |
| Robbery | 485.9 | 47.1 | 116.3 |
| Assault | 545.3 | 37.7 | 293 |
| Burglary | 544.7 | 235.6 | 761.4 |
| Larceny | 1889.5 | 1243.9 | 3037.8 |
| Auto Theft | 534.3 | 47.1 | 361.8 |

# Compare Cities
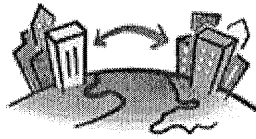
**FROM** State: | New York | ▾ | City: | New York | ▾ |

**TO** State: | Pennsylvania | ▾ | City: | Harrisburg | ▾ |

General    Housing    Climate

People     Health     Education

Economy    Crime     Transportation

| CRIME | New York, New York | Harrisburg, Pennsylvania | National Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Violent Crime | 1063.1 | 1162.3 | 446.1 |
| Property Crime | 2968.5 | 4827.1 | 4162.2 |
| CATEGORIES crimes per 100,000 pop. | | | |
| Murder | 9 | 10.1 | 3.9 |
| Rape | 22.9 | 74.8 | 32.8 |
| Robbery | 485.9 | 505.3 | 116.3 |
| Assault | 545.3 | 572.1 | 293 |
| Burglary | 544.7 | 1026.9 | 761.4 |
| Larceny | 1889.5 | 3347.4 | 3037.8 |
| Auto Theft | 534.3 | 452.8 | 361.8 |

# Police Department
# City of New York

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Raymond W. Kelly
Police Commissioner

Volume 12   Number 14   *CompStat*   *Citywide*

## Report Covering the Week of 04/04/2005 Through 04/10/2005

### Crime Complaints

| | Week to Date | | | 28 Day | | | Year to Date* | | | 2 Year | 4 Year | 12 Yea |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2005 | 2004 | % Change | 2005 | 2004 | % Change | 2005 | 2004 | % Chg | % Chg | % Chg | % Chg |
| Murder | 13 | 2 | 550.0 | 34 | 24 | 41.6 | 126 | 134 | -5.9 | -20.2 | -25.8 | -76.2 |
| Rape | 34 | 30 | 13.3 | 133 | 141 | -5.6 | 482 | 470 | 2.5 | -5.8 | -2.6 | -41.1 |
| Robbery | 396 | 389 | 1.8 | 1,657 | 1,527 | 8.5 | 5,929 | 5,963 | -0.5 | -6.3 | -16.2 | -74.2 |
| Fel. Assault | 347 | 334 | 3.8 | 1,317 | 1,310 | 0.5 | 4,204 | 4,372 | -3.8 | -7.5 | -27.4 | -57.5 |
| Burglary | 435 | 425 | 2.3 | 1,726 | 1,881 | -8.2 | 6,059 | 7,151 | -15.2 | -14.0 | -28.5 | -77.3 |
| Gr. Larceny | 855 | 817 | 4.6 | 3,344 | 3,381 | -1.0 | 11,511 | 11,788 | -2.3 | 3.9 | -3.2 | -45.7 |
| G.L.A. | 329 | 364 | -9.6 | 1,419 | 1,490 | -4.7 | 4,754 | 5,369 | -11.4 | -19.5 | -38.5 | -84.5 |
| **TOTAL** | **2,409** | **2,361** | **2.03** | **9,630** | **9,754** | **-1.27** | **33,065** | **35,247** | **-6.19** | **-7.08** | **-20.61** | **-70.7:** |

### Historical Perspective

(Historical perspective is a complete calendar year of data.)

| | 1993 | 1997 | % Chg vs. '93 | 2003 | % Chg vs. '93 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Murder | 1,927 | 767 | -60.2 | 572 | -70.3 | Murder |
| Rape | 3,225 | 2,783 | -13.7 | 1,738 | -46.1 | Rape |
| Robbery | 85,892 | 44,335 | -48.3 | 24,111 | -71.9 | Robbery |
| Fel. Assault | 41,121 | 30,259 | -26.4 | 18,167 | -55.8 | Fel. Assault |
| Burglary | 100,936 | 54,866 | -45.6 | 26,782 | -73.4 | Burglary |
| Gr. Larceny | 85,737 | 55,686 | -35.0 | 48,288 | -43.6 | Gr. Larceny |
| G.L.A. | 111,622 | 51,312 | -54.0 | 20,291 | -81.8 | G.L.A. |
| **TOTAL** | **430,460** | **240,008** | **-44.24** | **139,949** | **-67.49** | **TOTAL** |

*The above CompStat figures are posted on Monday, one week after the closing date.*

CompStat figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law definitions and differ from the crime categories reported to the F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reporting System. All degrees of rape are included in the rape category.

Prepared by
NYPD CompStat Unit

*CompStat*
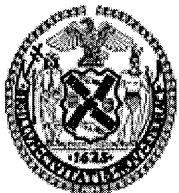
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
**PR- 345-04**
**December 13, 2004**

**MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES HISTORIC CRIME REDUCTION IN 2004**

*Most Recent Crime Stats Show Overall Crime Down 5% From Last Year; City on Course to Have Fewer than 600 Homicides by Year's End for Third Year in a Row*

*FBI Report for First Half of 2004 Once Again Shows New York City as Safest Big City In America*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly today announced that New York City's crime rate reached new historic lows in 2004 and that based on today's FBI Uniform Crime Index Report, the City remains the safest large city in America. With reductions in every borough, New York City experienced another dramatic decrease this year in overall crime Citywide of almost 5% from last year, 9% from two years ago, and 15% from three years ago. In addition, the City is on course to have fewer than 600 homicides by year's end for the third consecutive year in a row. The Mayor announced the new crime statistics with Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt at the 77th Precinct in Crown Heights, Brooklyn - an area that has experienced a 26% drop in overall crime over the last three years.

"We've had another successful year providing safety and security to New Yorkers by driving down crime another 5% Citywide and once again we are ranked the safest big city in America." said Mayor Bloomberg. "The remarkable drop in crime shows that our strategy of focusing on problem people and problem places is working. This achievement is even more noteworthy given that we have 3,000 fewer officers on the street today than we did in January 2002, and that in that time the NYPD has also taken on the additional responsibilities related to counter-terrorism. Our quality of life is strong, our schools are improving, and businesses are growing every day - thanks, in large part, to our efforts to reduce crime."

Working with the City's Criminal Justice Coordinator, the District Attorneys and other City agencies, the NYPD has been able to drive crime to record lows in 2004. Grand Larceny Auto and Burglary are down by over 11.5% and 8.6% respectively. The NYPD has also reduced Robberies by 6.7%, Rapes by 5.1%, Assaults by 3.6%, and Murders by 4.4%. Grand Larceny has increased only slightly by 2.1%. Crime in the subway system has dropped 13.5% over the last three years. The NYPD has reduced crime in every borough this year as well. To date overall crime is down 7.5% in Queens, 4.7% in Brooklyn, 4.3% in Staten Island 3.3% in the Bronx and 2.9% in Manhattan. Total crime in the City has declined 4.6% from last year.

The City is on course to have fewer than 600 homicides by year's end for the third year in a row, with the largest declines this year in the Bronx. In the Bronx, homicides are down 4.7% this year, 25.3% over two years and 34.5% over three years. In the 40th precinct, homicides are down 46.6% this year, 46.6% over two years and down 69.2% over three years. In the 52nd precinct, homicides are down 33.3% year to date, down 50% over two years and down 63.6% over three years. Citywide, homicides are down 4.4% this year, 2.7% over the last two years and 14.1% over the last three years.

According to FBI crime figures released today for the first 6 months of 2004, New York City remains the safest big City in the United States. The FBI reports that New York City's violent crime rate is down 3.6% this year compared to a nationwide reduction of 2%. Property crime decreased 1.4% in New York during the first six months of the years, and fell by 1.9% nationally. Of the 25 largest cities reporting to the FBI, New York City had the lowest crime rate during the first six months of 2004. This is the second time the last three years, New York City was 25 out of 25 for crime among big cities for the six-month reporting period. Of the 217 cities reporting with populations greater than 100,000, New York City was ranked 203rd, between Alexandria, Virginia and Ann Arbor, Michigan.