

Innovation in Policing and Criminal Justice: A Butterfly's Tour of Questions and Evidence



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Question

How much can we generalize about criminal justice innovation? Do all innovations behave the same way?

Types of police innovation

- Programmatic
 - New ways to use resources
 - DARE, Neighborhood Watch
- Administrative/legal
 - Recruitment, promotion, discipline, training, performance evaluation
 - Agency accreditation
- Technological
 - Soft: Data mining analytics
 - Hard: Drones
- Strategic
 - Fundamental reorientation of goals, relationships , methods
 - Community policing, Compstat, problem-oriented policing

Source: Moore et al. (1997)

Question

Where do innovations originate?

Sources of police innovation

- Outside of policing
 - Military, national security complex
 - Hard technologies: coercion, surveillance, forensics, IT
 - Academics, researchers, outside reformers
 - Community policing, POP, pulling levers
 - Crises magnify external pressures for change
- Top of police organizations
 - CEOs and upper management
 - 911 response, Compstat
- Street-level employees
 - Resistant to reform or untapped resource?

“The prospect of innovation is enhanced when employees participate in decision making and when their experience informs practice.”

Gail Christopher

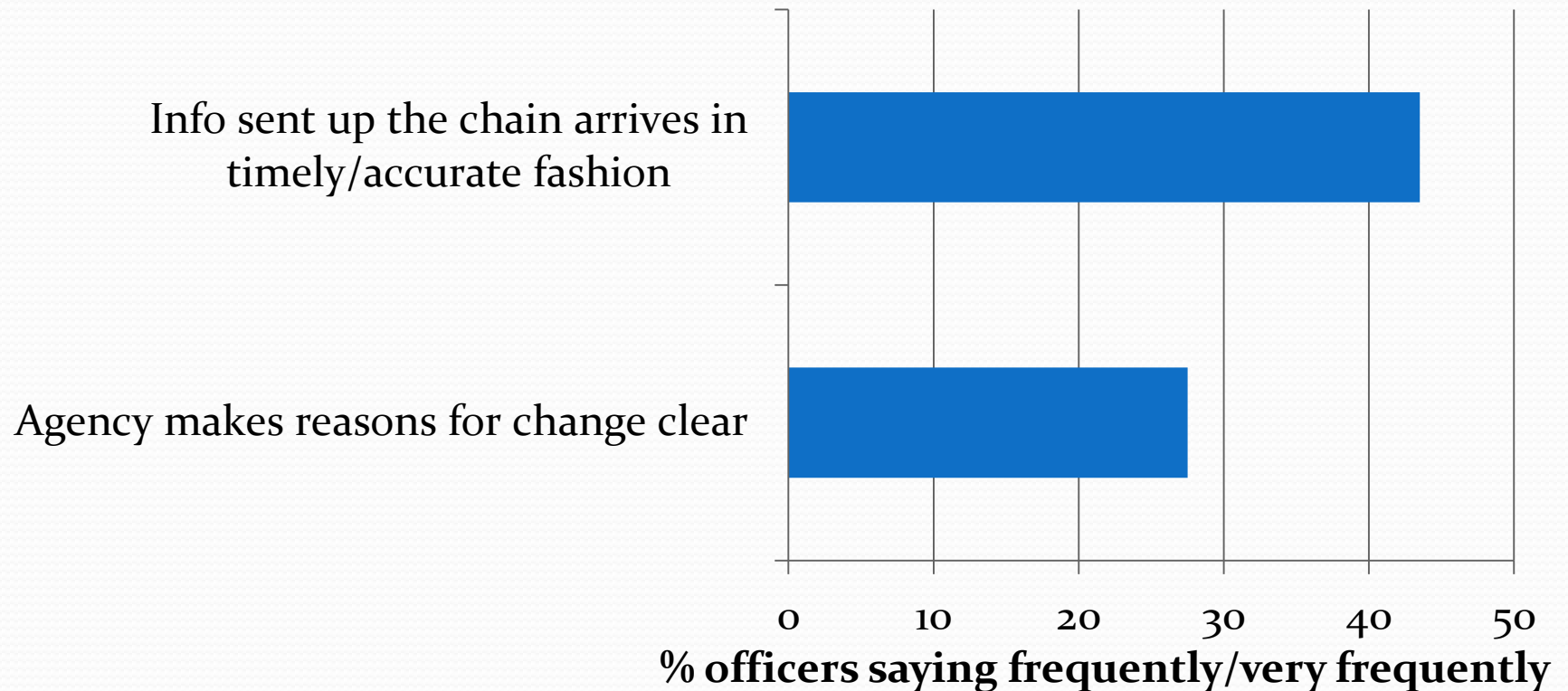
American Government Awards Program, Harvard U.

Question

What is the “bubble-up” environment for innovations originating at the bottom of the organization?

Environment for rank-&-file involvement in 86 agencies, 100-3,000 sworn

How often :



Source: National Police Research Platform:
CEO Survey, 2013 (NIJ-funded)

N= approximately 10,500

Question

What are the attributes of innovation popularity?

Attributes of diffused innovations

(+) positive effect
(-) negative effect

- Relative advantage (+)
 - Expected to perform better than what it replaces
- Compatibility (+)
 - With existing structures/practices.
- Complexity (-)
 - Difficult to understand & use
- Trialability (+)
 - Can test it on a limited basis
- Observability (+)
 - Visibility of results encourages adoption
- Cost (-)
 - Financial investment and ongoing costs
- Centrality (-)
 - Relevance to the core work of the organization.
- Risk (-)
 - Degree of liability to which adopter is exposed

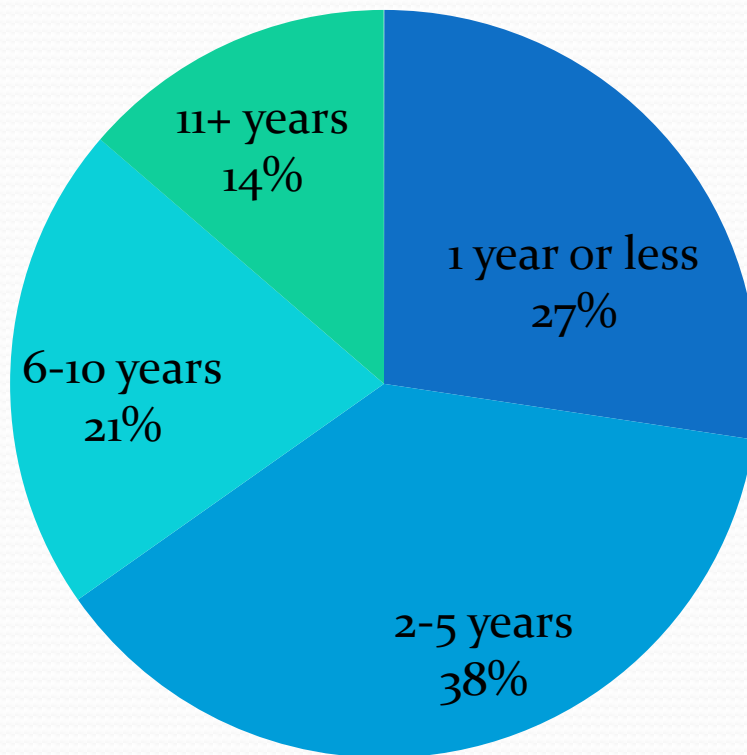
Question

What are the key features of the innovation diffusion process?

Key features of the innovation diffusion process

- Adoption v. implementation
 - Adoption decision made by CEO
 - Implementation decisions made throughout the agency
 - Decentralized, specialized, and less formal orgs more readily adopt, but have more difficulty implementing.
 - Centralized, unspecialized, and formal organizations are slower to adopt, but have less difficulty implementing
- Sustaining innovation
 - Challenging with frequent turnover in top organization leadership

Number of years CEO has headed this police agency, 2013

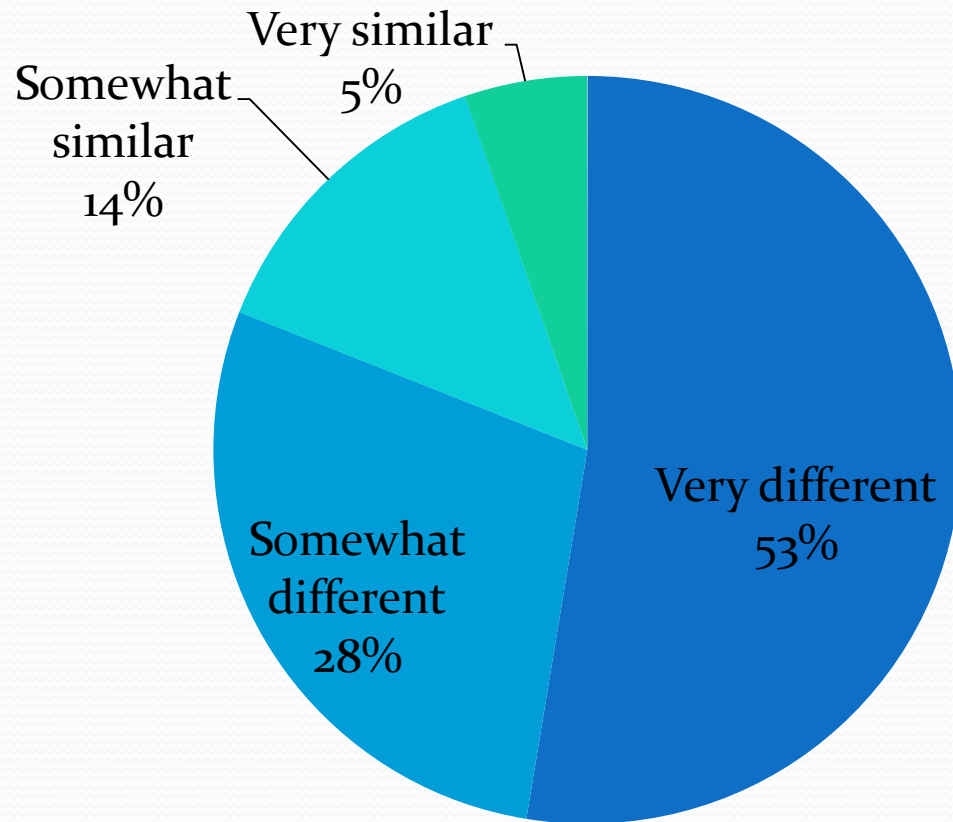


Median = 4 years

CEO Survey, National Police Research
Platform (2013) – NIJ funded

N=95 CEOs of municipal &
county agencies, 100-3,000 sworn

Direction new chief took compared to predecessor: the new broom effect



N=95 CEOs of city/county law enforcement agencies, 100-3,000 sworn

Source: National Police Research Platform: CEO Survey, 2013 (NIJ-funded)

Question

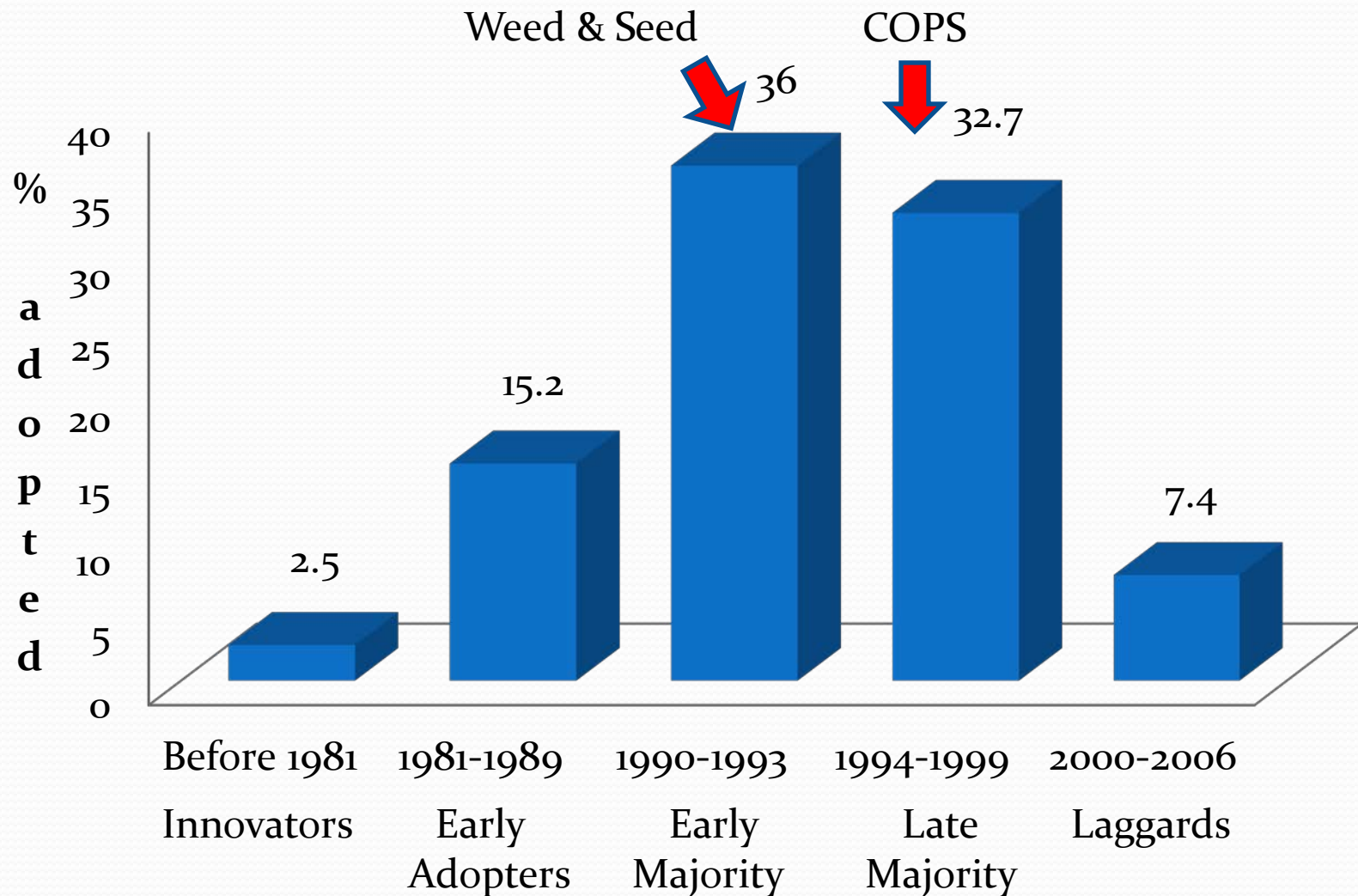
How are innovations diffused?

Networks for the diffusion of police innovations

- Peer networks
 - Professional associations (PERF, CALEA)
 - High-visibility agencies/leaders
- Government programs/funding
 - Knowledge (CrimeSolutions.gov)
 - Implementation
- Cosmopolitan links
 - Scientific community
 - Management and business
 - Interest groups/organizations
 - For profit & not-for-profit (civil rights, consultants, corporations)

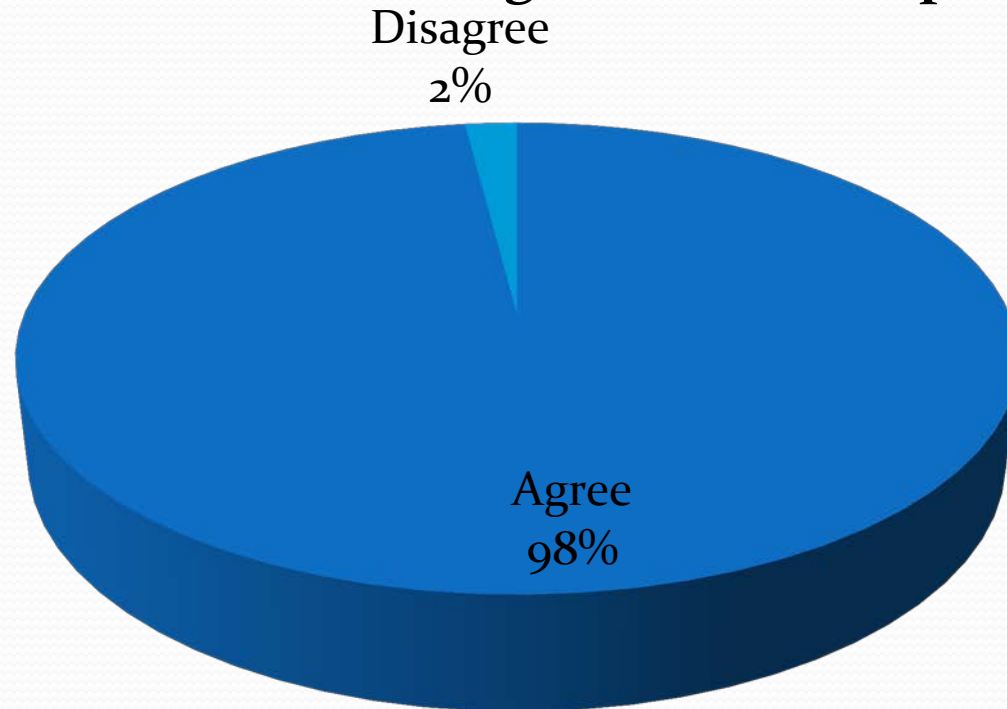
USDOJ: Making the wave or riding it?

Adoption of community policing in 322 local police agencies \geq 100 sworn



Police CEO acceptance of community policing, 1993

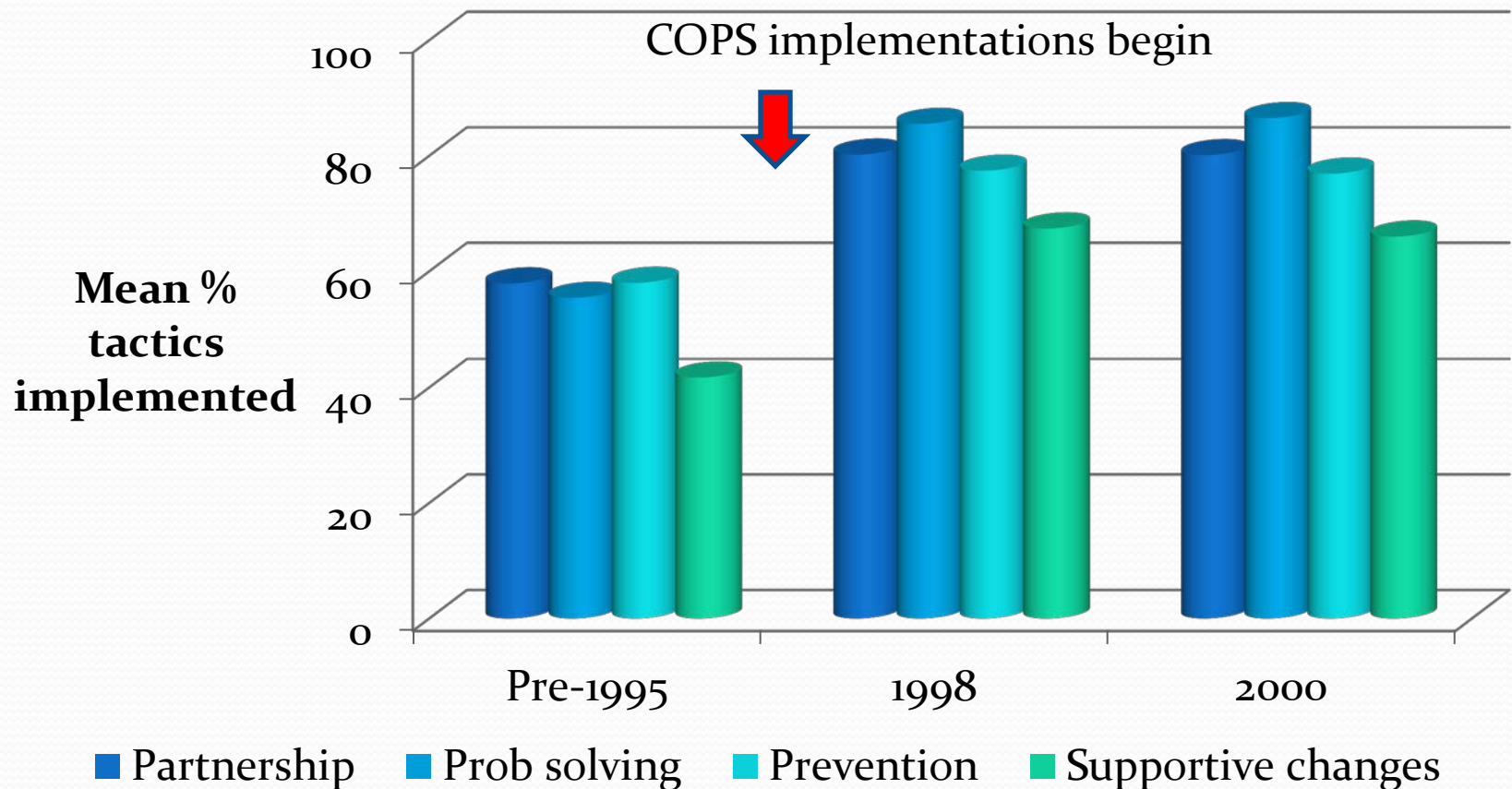
"The concept of community policing is something that law enforcement agencies should pursue."



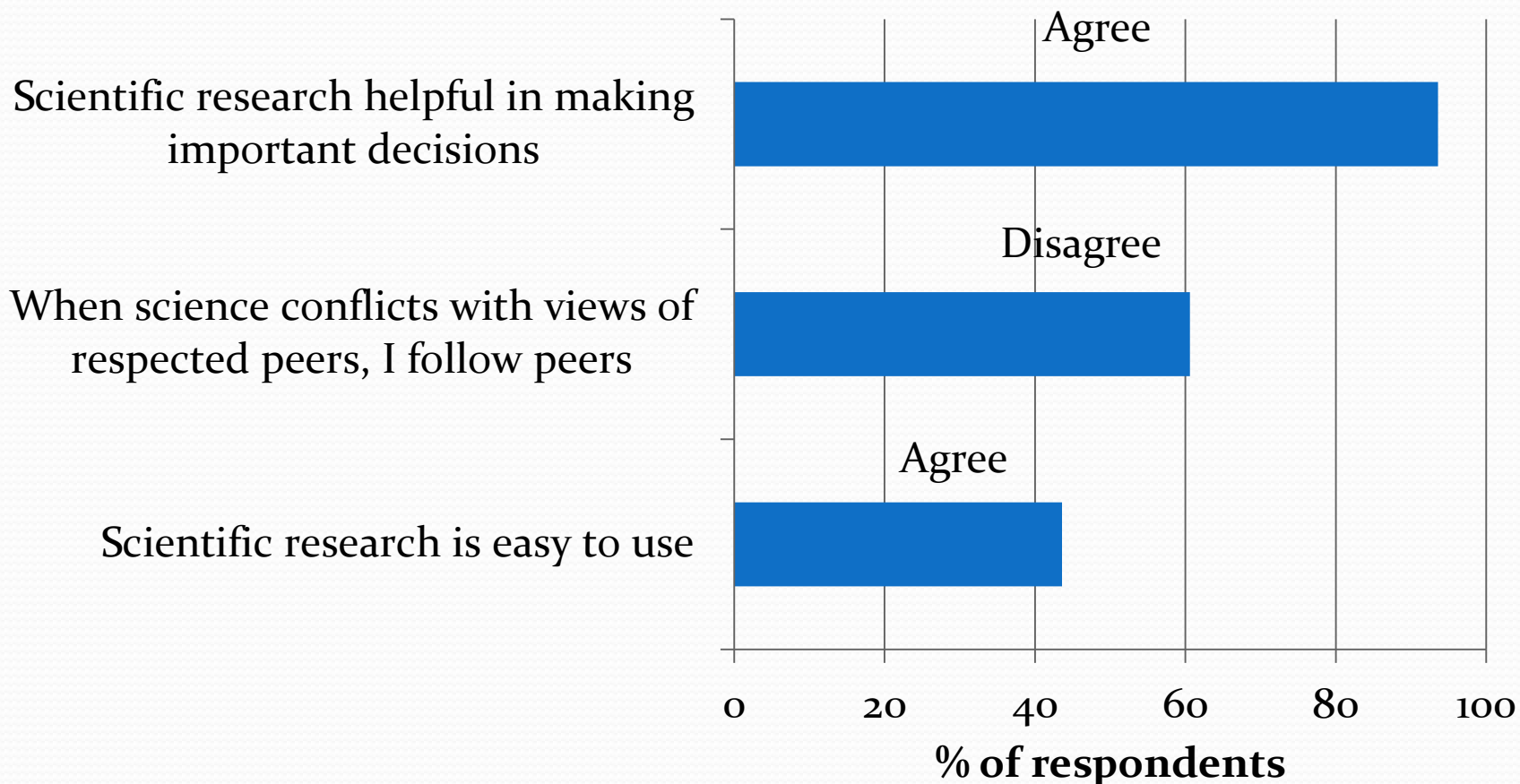
Police Foundation survey of nationally representative sample of municipal/county police agencies (Wycoff, 1994)

USDOJ as innovation facilitator?

Community policing tactics **implemented** in local agencies serving jurisdictions >50,000 pop.



CEO views on the value of scientific research in making decisions



Source: National Police Research Platform:
CEO Survey, 2013 (NIJ-funded)

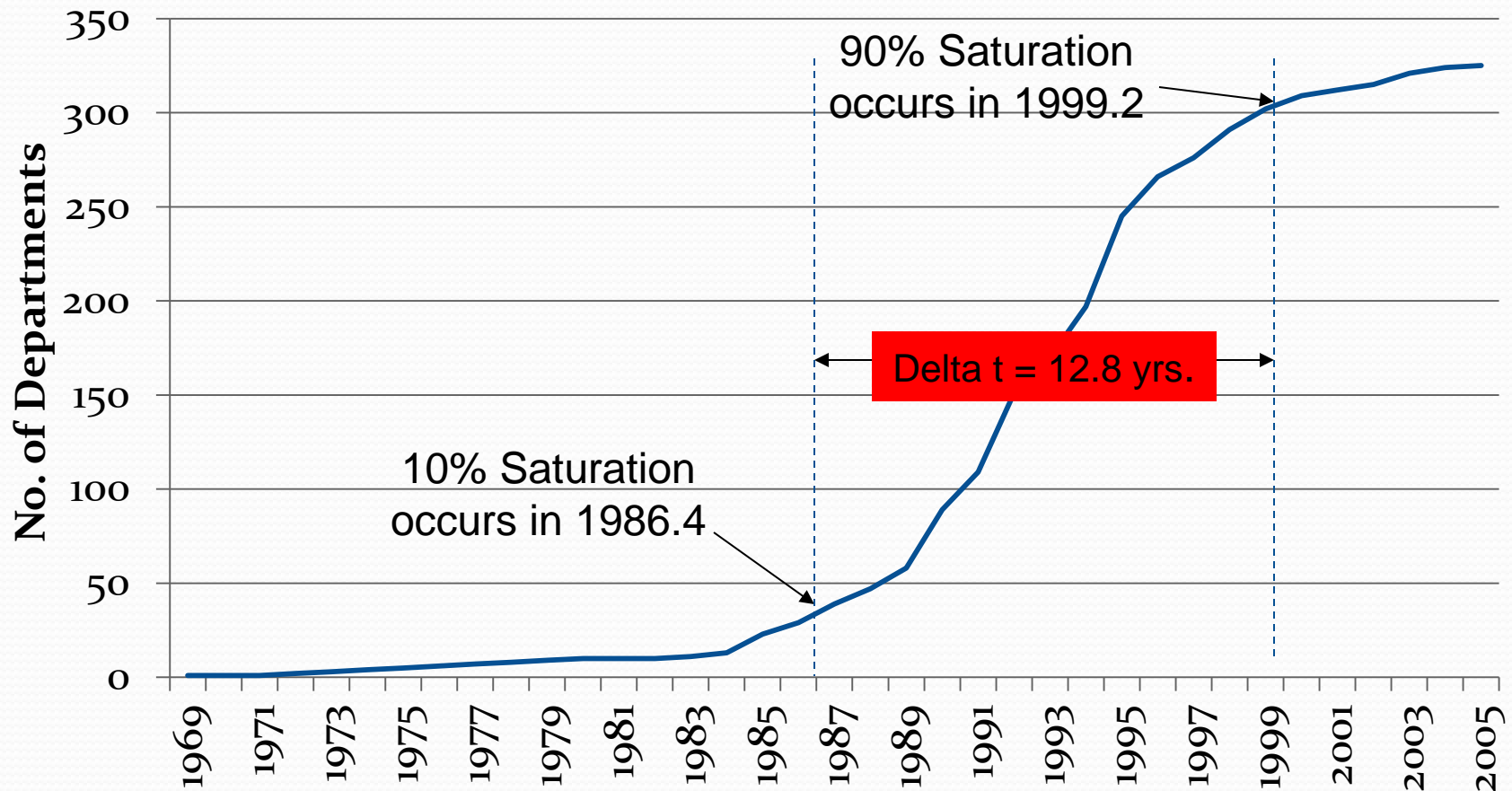
N=94 CEOs

Question

How rapidly are innovations diffused?

Community policing cumulative adoption curve based on survey findings

N=337 departments \geq 100 sworn



Willis & Mastrofski (2005); COPS-funded data set

Speed of diffusion of other policing innovations

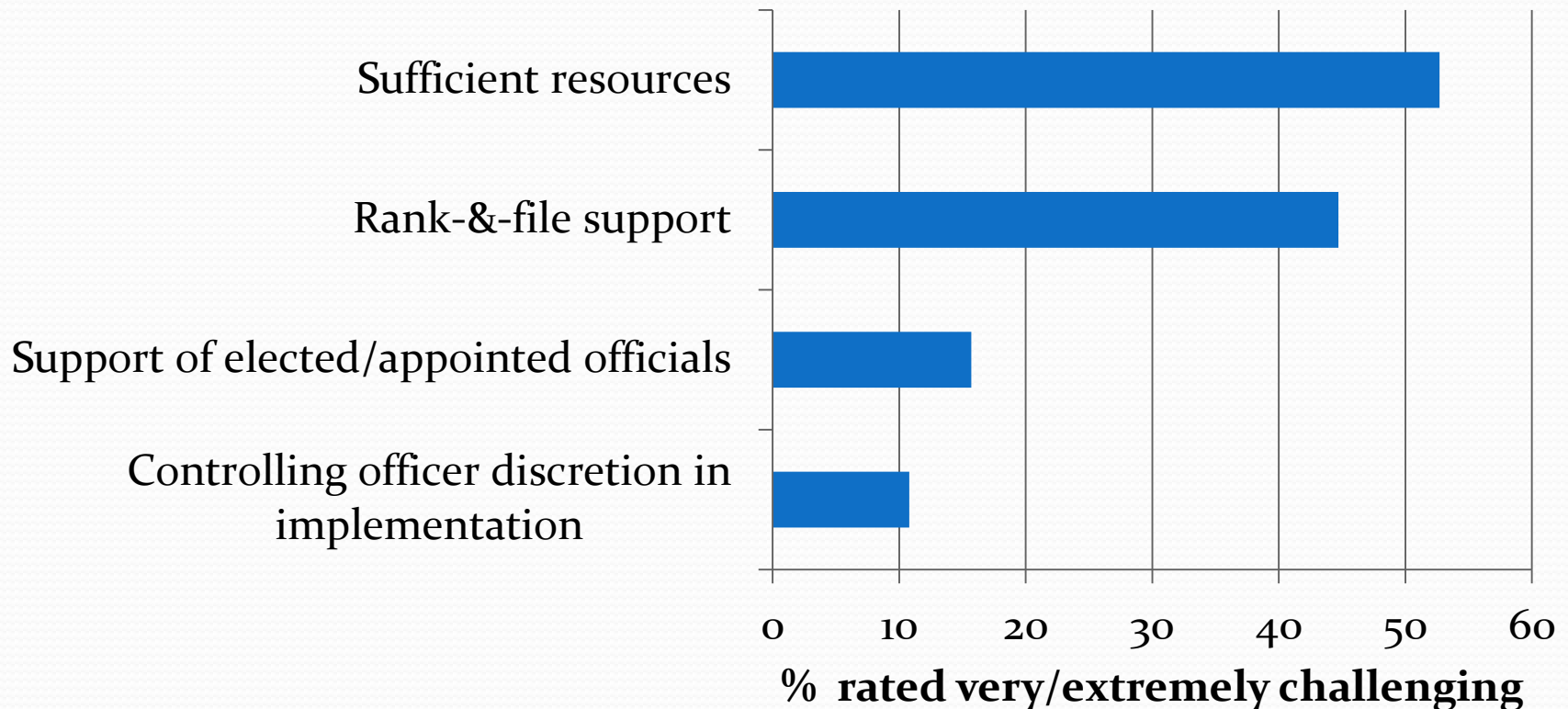
- Grübler
 - Fast: $\Delta t = 15$ years Slow: $\Delta t = 30$ years
 - Example: shipping canal network in U.S. took 31 years
- Weisburd and colleagues (national samples)
 - Compstat (early projection): 10 years
 - Crime mapping (projection): 15 years
- Kraska & Kappeler (national sample)
 - SWAT teams: 25 years
- Skogan & Hartnett (regional samples – NE Illinois)
 - Information technology: 1.5 years

Question

What are the most and least common challenges to innovation implementation?

Most and least challenging obstacles to implementation of community policing

352 police agencies \geq 100 sworn, 2006

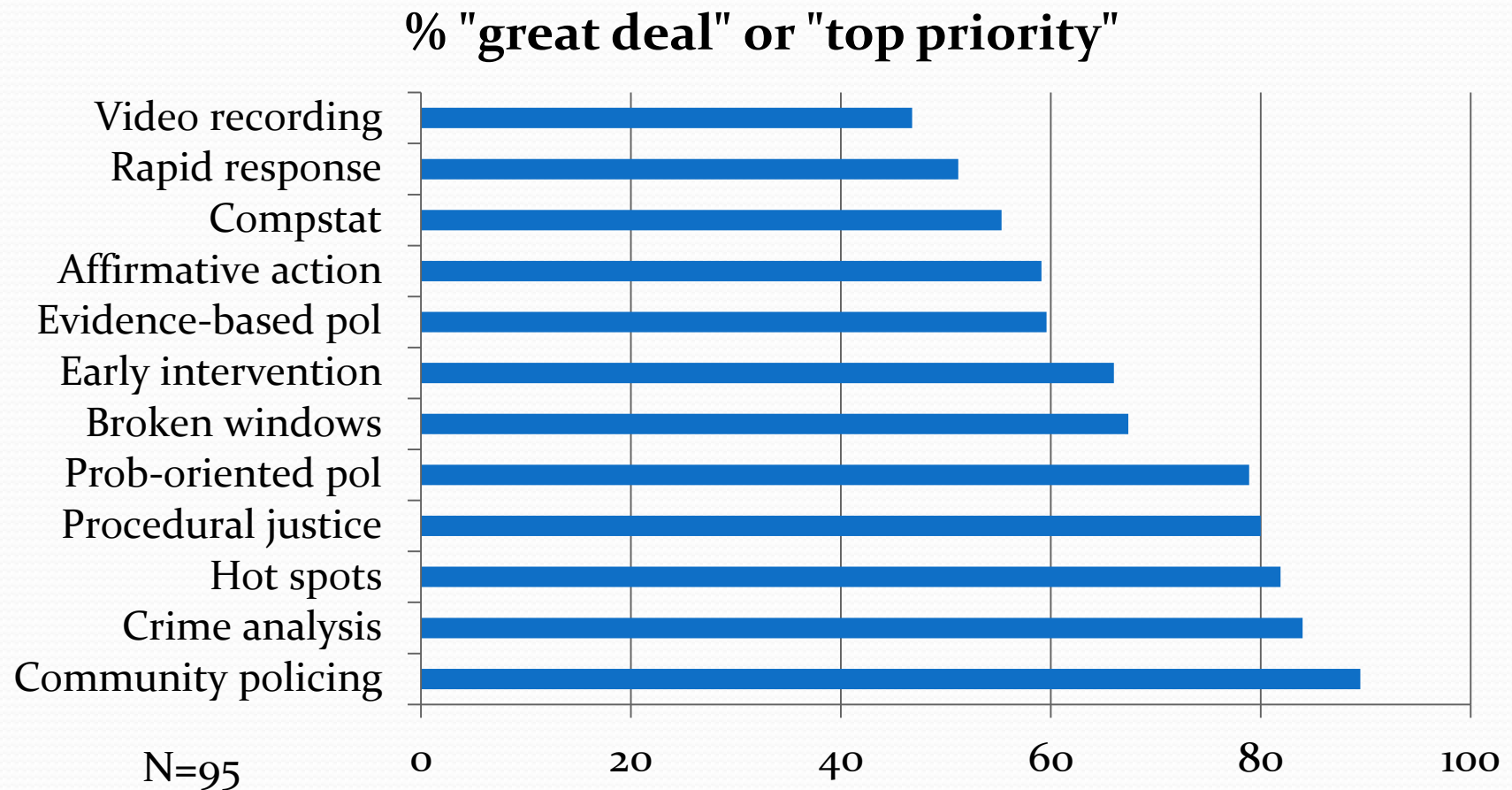


Question

Current innovation fashions: what's hot and what's not?

Innovation efforts of police CEOs:

How much has CEO tried to get employees to follow this approach?

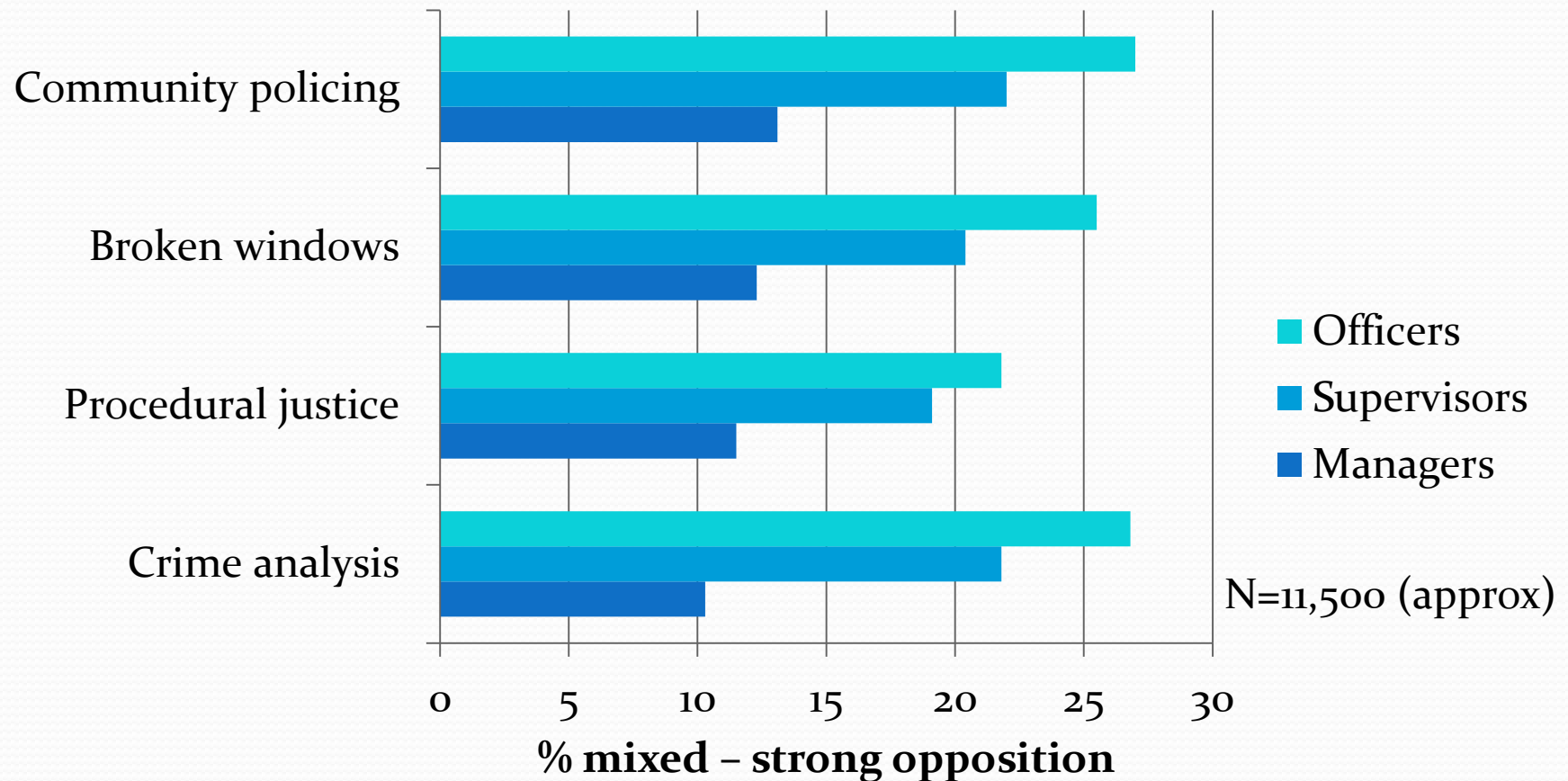


Source: National Police Research Platform: CEO Survey, 2013 (NIJ-funded)

Question

How extensive is rank-and-file resistance to current innovation efforts?

Opposition to innovative police approaches in 86 police agencies of size 100-3,000 sworn



Source: Law Enforcement Officer Survey,
National Police Research Platform (2013);NIJ-funded

Question

How well do different innovations “play”
with each other?

The compatibility of community policing and Compstat

- 2006 national survey of 355 departments ≥ 100 sworn
- 59% implemented both community policing & Compstat
- 91% of co-implementers reported both innovations as completely compatible
- Skepticism by some scholars that they could thrive together
- How did they do it?

Willis et al., *The Co-Implementation of Compstat and Community Policing: A National Assessment* (COPS, 2010)

Co-implementation of Compstat and community policing: stove piping reforms

Reform element	Level of Compstat-community Policing integration
Mission clarification	Not at all
Internal accountability	Not at all
Decentralization of decision-making	Low
Organizational flexibility	Low
Data-driven problem identification & assessment	Not at all
Innovative problem-solving tactics	Not at all
External accountability	Not at all

Based on in-depth field work at 7 departments

Willis et al., *The Co-Implementation of Compstat and Community Policing: A National Assessment* (COPS, 2010)