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POLICE PURSUITS AND OFFICER ATTITUDES: MYTHS AND REALITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Studies of police vehicle pursuits by various researchers, both academic and nonacademic, have proliferated over the past two decades. As a result, a complex mosaic has emerged providing a tentative but useful understanding of this inherently dargerous phenomenon (Fennessy, and Joscelyn, 1972; Patinkin and Bingham, 1986; Alpert, 1987; Beckman, 1987; Nugent, Connors, McEwen, and Mayo, 1989; Alpert and Dunham, 1990; Auten, 1991; Brune and Nelson, 1991; Falcone, Wells, and Charles, 1992). Because of this emerging body of knowledge, heightened public awareness, and the inherent dangers of police pursuits, a sizable number of America's police agencies have begun to reassess the utility of police vehicle pursuits. However, despite their reasoned response to this problematic, risky, and highly invasive policing practice, much of what has actually guided pursuit policy development appears to have been less than reasoned. That is, many of the attitudes, values, and beliefs that underpin the articles of central faith to which police officers and their organizations cling are rooted not in empirically based data but, rather, in commonly held articles of faith that have not been studied and empirically evaluated.

It is unsettling that many of America's largest policing agencies have developed pursuit policies, and the means for effectively pursuing and apprehending violators, based on the assumption that disallowing pursuits would encourage offenders to

elude police officers thereby causing a breakdown in the
deterrence value of the law. Further, some agencies have
determined that pursuits are worth the inherent risk they pose to
public safety (California Highway Patrol, 1983). This paper
examines some of those attitudes, values, and beliefs in an
attempt to evaluate them.

PURPOSE

This study is the result of a University research grant that
was conducted during the spring and summer of 1992. The agenda
of this research was heavily influenced by a larger research
project, funded by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, that
probed the relationships between police agency policies and
officer pursuit behaviors (Falcone, Wells, and Charles, 1992).
It is the express intent of this project to explore some commonly
held police assumptions and attitudes which appear to underpin
many present police pursuit policies and practices.

Because the AAA Foundation sponsored study supported the
notion that officer pursuit behaviors are largely influenced by
organizational culture and attendant value systems, including
articles of central faith, a number of research questions were
formulated which guided this research; they are:

- Do officers generally believe that a no-pursuit policy would
   result in increased numbers of chases and encourage
   offenders to attempt to evade or elude?

- Do officers hold their pursuit attitudes independently or
   are there discernable patterns within departments and across

departments?

- Is there evidence that departments with discouraging/highly restrictive policies have a greater number of offenders who attempt to elude?

- Do departments with discouraging policies actually experience fewer pursuits?

METHODOLOGY

During the conceptual stages of the project, it was decided that, given the limited budget and subtleties of the research effort, a qualitative research approach would best serve the needs of the researcher. Therefore, the data analyzed in this paper were collected through a seventeen question, semi-structured but open-ended field interview form which was developed in order to enable the researcher to "look behind" the simple numbers given as responses to various questions included in the questionnaire.

Interviews were conducted with officers from five departments in a single county in the Chicago metropolitan area; they lasted approximately twenty to forty minutes each. In addition to the five civilian departments, a sixth police agency was also studied--a large Army Military Police Command (MPC) responsible for providing general police services to an Army garrison located in the Midwestern part of United States. It was selected specifically because it had a discouraging/highly restrictive pursuit policy and was an "open base." That is to say, both civilian and military traffic travel freely through the

base on arterial state highways. The MPC provides a convenient comparison and contrast to the civilian agencies studied, and comparisons between the lone civilian department which has discouraging policy could be made against the MPC.

The county in which the study focused was chosen because within it exists a "natural experiment" making it an ideal study site. This natural experiment exists by virtue of the fact that one department (referred to fictitiously hereafter as Oatville in order to protect its anonymity) has a well-developed and comprehensive pursuit policy which severely discourages vehicle pursuits, while both the immediately adjacent departments, as well as the others sampled in the study, have pursuit policies that range from restrictive to discretionary, allowing their officers far greater latitude regarding whether or not to engage in pursuits and, once engaged, how to proceed. By determining the actual number of pursuits and attempts to elude (the dark figure of pursuits) in each agency, it is demonstrable (within the parameters of the study) whether a discouraging pursuit policy negatively affects the number of pursuits and attempts to elude police officers who are essentially disallowed pursuit authority.

Not counting special district, federal, or state police agencies, the county contains thirty six separate and independent police departments. (Some of the departments have concurrent jurisdiction in more than one county because their corporate limits extend into two venues.) This figure includes all

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municipal departments and the county sheriff's police.

The Sample

Departments in the sample were chosen in order to establish a reasonably representative sample of departments across the study county. First, departments were chosen to represent each pursuit policy category, i.e., discouraging/highly restrictive, restrictive, and discretionary. Second, they were chosen because of their pursuit policy's comprehensiveness; that is, how well-developed or under-developed the written pursuit policy might be. Third, departments were chosen because of their size in terms of sworn, full-time officers. Fourth, agencies were selected to reflect both urban and rural settings. Lastly, departments were selected to reflect the span of organizational height and stratification.

The individual officers who were interviewed were chosen by an administrative officer on each agency. Prior to the scheduled interview date, the researcher requested that the sample of officers be representative of the department, i.e., to be as near a cross section of the agency as possible. All of the sample officers were assigned to the day shift. However, this did not present a methodological problem, in that each shift rotated once each month to the next eight hour time slot. Therefore, all sample officers had experienced patrolling at all hours of the day and night.

Pursuit Policy Types

Virtually every department studied had written policy

concerning vehicle pursuits. The discouraging departments truly

had "highly restrictive" pursuit policies. Oatville required its

officers to slow down to "5 miles per hour or less and be

prepared to stop entirely if necessary" when entering an

intersection. The Military Police Command also had a speed

restriction when entering an intersection of 10 miles per hour,

and was the only department to require supervisory permission to

engage in a chase. The various departmental pursuit policies

were: (A) Discouraging (Oatville and the MPC), (B) Restrictive

(3 departments), and (C) Discretionary (1 department).

The three aforementioned pursuit policy types are as

follows:

(A) **Discouraging pursuit policies** disallow vehicle pursuits by

officers except under exceptional circumstances clearly outlined

by formally promulgated department policy. (B) **Restrictive**

pursuit policies allow vehicle pursuits under a greater number of

circumstances than does a discouraging pursuit policy type but

closely regulates when and under what specific conditions a chase

will ensue and terminate. (C) **Discretionary pursuit policies**

allow individual officers to determine under what conditions and

circumstances a vehicle pursuit is justified and will ensue

unincumbered by formal, written departmental policy. This

category allows for the greatest of discretionary latitude for

the individual officer.

Policy Comprehensiveness

The comprehensiveness of the various policies, however,

ranged widely. For example, the smallest and only rural department had simply a brief department memo alerting its officers to the hazards of the ABS braking systems in their new patrol cars. However, all of the remaining departments had well developed and comprehensive policies covering pursuit activities.

Department Size

Full-time sworn officers, in the agencies selected to be evaluated for the study, ranged from a low of five to a high of eighty for the participating civilian departments. The MPC had 167 full-time police personnel under its command. Combined, the sample of 36 officers from the six participating departments totaled 361 years of policing experience.

Urban-Rural Settings

Naturally, the sheriff's police department patrols the unincorporated areas of the county and by its very nature has a rural element to it. But, in reality it has an Oatville mailing address, and for all practical purposes lies in that municipality. All of the other departments, with the exception of the one small rural department, find themselves in either urban or suburban settings. The MPC is located immediately adjacent to a civilian municipality, although it is essentially located in a rural area. But, because of the sheer size and composition of the post, it could be considered an urban setting.

Organizational Height

Organizational height was assigned as a function of the respective organization's division of labor, as reflected in the

number of separate bureaus or divisions, e.g., patrol, communications, and so forth. The level of differentiation also varied widely and was somewhat correlated to the agency's size in terms of full-time sworn officers. In all, organizational height ranged from a low of one to a high of seven bureaus or divisions. The sheriff's police department was found to have the highest number of strata with seven bureaus; the department with the lowest was, naturally, the single small rural department. Interesting, Oatville's organizational height, despite its relatively large size (in relation to others in the study population), is surprisingly low, i.e., only three levels of organizational differentiation exist. This was a result of a decision by Oatville's administration some years ago to both demilitarize and flatten its organizational structure.

In the study county of over 700,000 people, twenty six police officers were interviewed from five purposively selected departments, including one administrator (lieutenant), four supervisors (sergeants), and twenty one patrol officers. (The lieutenant/administrator was interviewed because the agency was so small that he alone provided patrol services on the day shift; he also held the rank of assistant chief.) The five civilian departments totaled 207 full-time sworn officers, making the sample of interviewed officers just under 13 percent. Ten military policemen from the MPC, with its complement of 167 people, were also interviewed; the interviewed sample was just under 6 percent. The combined total of police personnel, then,

from the six police agencies consisted of 374 full-time sworn

personnel; the sample of 36 individuals constituted just slightly

under 10 percent of the participating agencies.

It proved difficult to provide either gender or racial

contrasts in the study sample. For example, it was difficult to

find female officers to interview since only a very small number

of females have found their way into these historically male

fraternities; this was true for both civilian and military

departments. The racial distribution was also very skewed,

although not so clearly in the MPC. It was also difficult to

find minorities on the civilian departments because of the

demographic composition of the study county; it is 94.9 percent

white (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1988).

The racial and gender distribution of officers studied was as

follows: For civilian departments, one hispanic officer, no

females officers, and twenty five white officers and for the MPC

one hispanic military policeman, no females, and nine white

military policemen. Given the demographics characteristics of

the research county, a reasonably representative sample of

officers was constructed.

Data Collection

Employing a data collection technique utilized during the

AAA pursuit study (Falcone, Wells, and Charles, 1992), officers

who were assured of anonymity were asked to report every pursuit

in which they had been involved, over a specified twelve-month

period, as either the primary chase vehicle or in a backup

capacity. Further, to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding a common definition of a police vehicular pursuit was agreed upon; it was:

> An active attempt by a law enforcement officer on
> duty in a patrol car to apprehend one or more occupants
> of a moving motor vehicle, providing the driver of such
> vehicle is aware of the attempt and is resisting
> apprehension by maintaining or increasing his [her]
> speed or by ignoring the law officer's attempt to stop
> him [her] (Fennessy, et al, 1970: 5).

Interviews, in every instance, were conducted in the station house conference room or a secured office and were done in private as to provide complete secrecy for each officer and his responses. It must be kept in mind that officers were potentially placing themselves in jeopardy by being forthright. Interestingly, in none of the face-to-face interviews did the researcher detect any attempt at deception. In some interviews, the notion that policing is a very low visibility occupation became patently evident. Officers were encouraged to expand on their responses to questions and to add any comments they felt important. The purpose of doing so was to eliminate as much ambiguity and misunderstanding as possible regarding survey questions and to make communication between the researcher and the respondent very clear. After all, that was the fundamental reason for conducting this research in a qualitative modality.

Lastly, an important aspect of the methodology used in this

project focused around the collection of unofficial data only.
That is why the numbers collected under this research effort came
from individual police officers and not from department files or
records. For example, Falcone, Wells, and Charles (1992) found
an alarming disparity between the official record of pursuits
within departments and those reported unofficially by individual
officers. They state: ". . .vehicle pursuit data from police
records or reports are gross underestimations--not by a matter of
percentage points but by a multiplicative factor of 5 to 15
times" (p. 95). Thus, data from individual officers (unofficial
data) underpinned the survey methodology and its validity.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The answer to research question one (Do officers generally
believe that a no-pursuit policy would result in increased
numbers of pursuits and encourage offenders to attempt to evade
or elude?) was, on the surface, clearly answered. Officers
overwhelmingly responded that they believed a no-pursuit would
result in a higher number of pursuits and attempts to elude.
This would be especially true, according to the officers, if it
became public knowledge that a given police agency proscribed
pursuits. Overall, the combined civilian and military response
resulted in thirty four policemen indicating "yes," that such a
situation would lead to a greater number of pursuits and attempts
to elude, while only two (both civilian policemen) responded
"no." The collective net result was approximately a 94 percent
"yes" response to the question. Interestingly, the only

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dissenters to the question were civilian police officers, making the civilian "yes" response roughly 92 percent. The MPC policemen all agreed that a no-pursuit policy would result in more pursuits, more attempts to elude, and a general breakdown in the deterrent capacity of the law.

In a related issue, sworn members of the Oatville force and the MPC both reported high levels of under-reporting pursuit activities, and a clearly discernable proclivity toward under-reporting became evident. As the restrictiveness of the pursuit policy increased, the amount of "official" reporting of pursuit activity decreased.

The second research question (Do officers hold their pursuit attitudes independently, or are there discernable patterns within departments or across departments?) resulted in some interesting findings. This research question was best answered by looking at the responses to two important opinion questions found on the interview form. They are: (1) Do you feel that a no-pursuit policy would result in greater numbers of pursuits and encourage offenders to attempt to evade or elude? and (2) Do you feel that having greater departmentally sanctioned authority to pursue (a discretionary policy) would result in a reduction in the numbers of pursuits and attempts to evade or elude?

The responses to opinion question number one are cited above. Question number two broke down like this. The combined military and civilian responses resulted in fifteen "yes" responses out of thirty six, or about 42 percent, and twenty one

"no" responses, or approximately 58 percent. When separated, the

MPC's response was eight "yes" responses out of ten, or 80

percent, and two "no" responses or 20 percent. The five civilian

departments had seven "yes" responses out of twenty six or about

27 percent and nineteen "no" responses or about 73 percent. When

broken down by agency, intra-departmental patterns emerge while

inter-departmental patterns are more ambiguous (see table number

1). Intra-department pursuit attitudes (articles of central

faith) demonstrate a strong measure of central tendency, while

across department patterns are weaker, supporting the idea that

departmental culture exerts a strong influence on pursuit

attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Table 1
OFFICER OPINIONS REGARDING THE IMPACT OF POLICY AND DISCRETION ON PURSUITS AND ATTEMPTS TO ELUDE

		NO-PURSUIT POLICY INCREASES CHASES AND ATTEMPTS TO ELUDE		GREATER DISCRETION DECREASES CHASES AND ATTEMPTS TO ELUDE	
Dept	FTE*	YES	NO	YES	NO
No. 1	40	4	1	4	1
No. 2	80	6	0	0	6
No. 3	5	1	0	1	0
No. 4	24	5	0	0	5
Oatvil	58	8	1	2	7
MPC	167	10	0	8	2
Totals	374	34	2	15	21

* FTE = Number of officers by department as a ratio of full-time
equivalents

Research question number three (Is there evidence that departments with discouraging/highly restrictive policies have a greater number of offenders who attempt to elude?) was addressed by officers' responses to a series of five questions on the field interview form which probed that issue in-depth. Two questions on the field interview form asked about the number of chases each officer experienced during the same specified twelve-month period and were converted into department totals. They were, (1) In how many vehicle pursuits have you been the primary chase vehicle within the past twelve months, and (2) In how many pursuits have you been involved, within the past twelve months, in a backup capacity, i.e., not as the primary unit? The combined military and civilian rates were: nine pursuits as the primary chase vehicle and twelve pursuits in a backup capacity. When separated, the MPC's rates were: four as the primary unit and seven in a backup capacity. The combined civilian rates were: five as the primary unit and five in a backup capacity. It is only when the numbers are examined by department and pursuit policy type that a clearer picture appears (see table number 2).

VEHICLE PURSUITS BY DEPARTMENT AND POLICY TYPE

Table 2

Dept/Policy Type	Primary Unit	Backup Unit
DISCRETIONARY POLICY		
Dept. No. 3	3	0
RESTRICTIVE POLICY		
Dept. No. 1	0	3
Dept. No. 2	0	1
Dept. No. 4	2	1
DISCOURAGING POLICY		
Oatville	0	0
MPC	4	7

Lastly, research question number four (Do departments with discouraging/highly restrictive policies actually experience fewer pursuits?) is also addressed by table number 2. Within the study, county the civilian departments have a clear and unmistakable pattern. The only small rural department with a clearly discretionary and permissive pursuit policy has the greatest number of chases, both by department and as a ratio per officer. This finding echoes the finding in Falcone, Wells, and Charles (1992) that small departments have the highest per-officer pursuit ratios (p. 111). Departments with restrictive policies have the next lowest numbers of pursuits, while Oatville, the only civilian department with a discouraging/highly

restrictive pursuit policy, has virtually no pursuits for the specified twelve-month period. The MPC with a discouraging/highly restrictive policy has the highest number of pursuits.

DISCUSSION

First, it is important to make clear that a "no-pursuit" policy is seldom a blanket prohibition against police vehicle pursuits; rather, it represents a strong restriction on pursuits. For example, few departments would disallow pursuits in cases where the offense is extremely serious, and where failure to pursue and ultimately apprehend, would place the public in greater danger than not pursuing. A no-pursuit policy is, then, a strong prohibition against vehicle chases for minor criminal and traffic-related offenses. It is toward pursuits for minor criminal and traffic-related offenses that this study focuses.

Second, given that most no-pursuit policies are essentially restrictions against unwarranted pursuits, they are virtually nothing more than discouraging/highly restrictive vehicle pursuit policies. And, although approximately 94 percent of all officers responded that they believed a no-pursuit policy (especially if it were public knowledge) would result in more pursuits and attempts to elude officers, they qualified their responses. When asked to expand on this commonly held belief, most officers indicated that they did not think the majority of citizens would be encouraged to elude even if a no-pursuit policy were common knowledge. Actually, officers thought that somewhere between

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five to fifteen percent of the population would be so encouraged.
That percentage roughly fits officers' assumptions concerning the
"criminal element" in society. Therefore, while they
overwhelmingly indicated, in a strictly numerical context, that a
no-pursuit policy would result in an increased number of
pursuits, attempts to elude, and a general breakdown in the
deterrent effect of the law, it was generally in reference to a
small percentage of society. Most officers also mentioned that
many of the would-be offenders would probably attempt to elude
them despite the presence of a no-pursuit policy. Thus, the
negative influence of a no-pursuit policy on potential offenders'
behavior would be further reduced.

While participating officers, in the aggregate, did believe
that enforcing and promulgating a no-pursuit policy would have a
negative impact on law enforcement as discussed above (N=34 out
of 36 or 94 percent), Oatville's officers reported no pursuits or
attempts to elude among participating officers during the study's
time-frame, and Oatville has a discouraging (no-pursuit) policy.
(This finding must be taken with some caution in that the project
was a qualitative endeavor with no attempt at sample
randomization.) This finding points to the discrepancies between
commonly held beliefs and empirical data. Policy based on such a
priori assumptions can be fundamentally flawed.

It bears mention that many officers on the Oatville
department, with its discouraging pursuit policy, resented the
limitations placed on their "professional discretion" by the

implementation of their discouraging pursuit policy. However, they comply with the policy because discretionary pursuit behaviors are not institutionally rewarded, not given clear support by the majority of their peers, not in keeping with the best interest of their career objectives, and not part of their public safety mandate inherent in their departmental mission. Further, officers from virtually all three policy categories generally indicated that despite the low visibility of police work, blatant pursuit activities and behaviors not congruent with departmental values (and in some instances formal written pursuit policy) would be difficult to hide from peers whose disapproval they did not want to incur.

In-depth interviews revealed some of the causal factors leading to under-reporting in departments with discouraging/highly restrictive pursuit policies. Interestingly, virtually all of the under-reporting by interviewed officers did not constitute blatant acts of outright deception, where officers did not report protracted or full-blown, high-speed pursuits. Rather, officers who were members of either restrictive or discouraging departments simply did not report what by strict definition according to the Fennessy, et al (1970) study amounts to a pursuit. Under-reporting was done in an attempt to avoid supervisory and administrative scrutiny as well as unwelcome paper work. Most violators who, according to officers, had "flirted" with avoiding apprehension were eventually stopped, usually within a fourth of a mile or so, and issued a ticket for

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the precipitating offense. The matter was left at that, and no "official" record of a pursuit was logged into the official department record. As is so often the case in policing, the situation was handled informally through the application of officer discretion. Both supervisors and administrators seldom have knowledge of these "near pursuits" or the discretionary calls by their officers. In those anomalous cases where supervisors become aware of this practice, no official record is made.

When officers felt assured that their anonymity was certain, and they were encouraged to be forthright, they reported virtually all chases according to the Fennessy definition, causing an alarming disparity between the official (departmental record) and unofficial (officer reported) tally of vehicle pursuits. Under normal operating conditions only unavoidably obvious, full-blown pursuits, often those that result in a negative outcome (an accident, death, or injury) become part of the official record. This, at least in part, explains the discrepant figures encountered by Falcone, Wells, and Charles (1992).

Findings regarding research question number two (Do officers hold their pursuit attitudes independently, or are there discernable patterns within departments or across departments?) are especially informative when examined by organizational type, i.e., the civilian-military dichotomy. For example, it could be argued that the MPC also has a discouraging (no-pursuit) policy

and yet experienced eleven pursuits (four as the primary chase vehicles and seven in a backup capacity to other MPs or law enforcement agencies) during the same time-frame. While not entirely explainable, the following factors shed some light on this phenomenon. First, there are nearly three times as many MPs as there are Oatville officers, making the numerical probability greater. Second, Oatville officers are generally older than the MPC policemen and have made the commitment to make a career of policing--something that is not generally the case with Army enlisted personnel. Third, Oatville's force enjoys a much more stable attrition rate, unlike the MPC. Because of Oatville's relatively stable work force and its officers' career orientation, the attitudes and values of the department, as expressed in policy, have time to jell and become part of the organizations' value system and operational mode.

In the MPC, personnel are transferred in and out frequently. In fact, during the field study period the MPC commander was given an extra company of MPs for which he had no specific duties or personnel slots as a result of a base closure in Europe. Therefore, officers on the Oatville department have had time to accept the discouraging pursuit policy, as a reflection of their overarching organizational mission as made clear by policy, and to act on that mission in concrete terms. By comparison, MPs are constantly transferred from one military police command to another, and, as such, they are subjected to a different commander, a different operational philosophy, and attendant

pursuit policy (or lack thereof). Under such circumstances, it is understandable that an informal pursuit policy largely guides these individuals in their work. This informal policy is largely a product of commonly held attitudes and beliefs.

While officers on the five civilian departments demonstrated attitudes, values, and beliefs about pursuits that reflect a collective organizational culture that is a product of a relatively stable and closely knit work force, MPC personnel appear to exhibit attitudes, values, and beliefs that are largely a product of individuals. This appears to be a function of the transitory and unstable work assignments experienced by Army personnel. Despite the fact that MPs can claim that they have worked for the same agency, i.e., the Military Police Corp, for a given number of years, the truth of the matter is that the Corp is a large, diverse, and amorphous organization unlike its small, cohesive, stable civilian counterparts involved in the study. These factors largely account for the military policemen's discrepant pursuit behaviors and values. It is altogether reasonable to assume that the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the members of the MPC are more closely linked to the images provided by the popular culture than those developed by an occupational in-group.

Research question number three (Is there evidence that departments with discouraging/highly restrictive policies have a greater number of offenders who attempt to elude?) and research question number four (Do departments with discouraging policies

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actually experience fewer pursuits) are not fully appreciated when approached solely by quantitative measures or simple descriptive statistics (see table number 2). Yet, a reasonably clear pattern does emerge as discussed earlier in the findings section of this report.

It is clear that the creation of a discouraging pursuit policy in and of itself will have little impact on either officer attitudes or behavior. What is central to compliance with a discouraging pursuit policy is its acceptance within and throughout the organization's cultural value system. This can more easily be accomplished in small cohesive departments, where strong informal controls exerted through social pressure induce individuals to accept its imposition, if that the organization is ready for the change and the change is made palatable by the administration.

This was evident in the Oatville Police Department, while quite the contrary was experienced by the MPC. The Military Police Corp, by the nature of its mission, is an internationally based organization with a myriad of separate units each under the command of individuals with no centrally mandated pursuit policy. Further, as suggested earlier, the transitory nature of individuals in and out of MPC leads to identification with the larger amorphous group as opposed to the immediate unit. This obviously creates special problems for individual Military Police Commanders, when attempting to create and enforce discouraging pursuit policies for their personnel, which are not present for

civilian chiefs of police.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates the difficulties encountered in relying entirely on quantitative survey analysis when investigating the pursuit phenomenon. Getting behind the numbers reported on survey instruments often reveals a greatly different impression concerning officer attitudes, beliefs, and values which lay the foundation for articles of faith that are central to their policies (both formal and informal) and behaviors. Although officers, by simple numerical count, overwhelmingly support the notion that a no-pursuit policy would result in an increase in the number of pursuits and attempts to elude, they are referring only to five to fifteen percent of the population and not society in general.

Officers on small, cohesive, and stable civilian departments appear to hold attitudes, values, and beliefs that are largely the products of an organizational culture and its attendant value system. Officers who are members of large amorphous police organizations, with no strong links to the local unit as in the Military Police Corp, tend to exhibit attitudes, values, and beliefs that are individually held and more strongly influenced by the images of and attitudes promulgated by the forces of popular culture than the immediate organizational unit. Intra-departmental patterns are stronger than inter-departmental patterns regarding pursuit attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Officers' pursuit attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors

correlated closely to the three pursuit policy categories, i.e., discouraging/highly restrictive, restrictive, and discretionary. Both pursuits and attempts to elude appear to increase in number as the restrictiveness of the policy decreases. However, officer under-reporting also decreases.

While not conclusive, this study suggests, within its delimited parameters, that specific pursuit policy types can have a noticeable impact on officer behaviors, especially when embraced by the organizational culture of the agency. Officers on both discouraging/highly restrictive and restrictive departments suppress the number of technical pursuits by using their inherent discretionary authority. Officers accomplish this by not defining many near pursuit situations as pursuits, thereby, not triggering many pursuits. This redefinition is a reaction to pressure exerted by the police organization's culture, upon its members, when that organization's culture has embraced, for one reason or another, a discouraging pursuit policy. Further, the culture of a specific police department can and often does hold attitudes, values, beliefs and articles of central faith that are considerably different than those held by either police officers as a larger sociological group or those of the parent culture in American society as expressed in the popular culture.

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