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**THE PROGRESS OF DEMOCRATIC POLICING IN
POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA**

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Abstract

Since the end of apartheid in South Africa the country has been forced to democratize. A major part of that democratization is the new police organization that was implemented post-apartheid. This article looks at the policy changes in the police department and the effects these policies have had on making the South African police a democratic police force. Using data from the Afrobarometer, the public's opinion of the new police over a three year span is analyzed to see if the police have succeeded in their new role in South Africa. Major changes were required to assist the South African police in becoming a democratic organization. These changes can be made quickly by passing new legislation, but the assimilation of these policy changes are not as fast. The South African police have made important strides to achieving democratic policing and the South African people have acknowledged such progress through their acceptance of the new South African Police Service.

Introduction

Post apartheid South Africa is emerging as a new country from years of rule based solely on the color of one's skin. An important component of the new South Africa is the transformed South African Police Service (SAPS). From a history of brutal and indiscriminate violence, the new police system is attempting to transition into a respectable democratic police organization. Initial transformation began in 1994, soon after the fall of apartheid government and has continued until the present.

This work will look at how progress has been accomplished over the past thirteen years. First, a brief history of the South African government and police force will set the

scene for the changes made. Then there will be an examination of the cosmetic and policy changes that affected the South African Police Force (SAP) most dramatically. Next will be an examination of how successful these changes have been to the respectability and acceptability of the new SAPS. Data from the Afrobarometer will detail how the new SAPS is viewed by South Africans. Finally, the future of the SAPS will be looked at and also what questions need to be answered for full acceptance as a democratic police organization.

History

Division among the races in South Africa can be traced back to the Dutch who colonized the area in the 1600's (Clark & Worger 2004). The racial segregation increased throughout the years ultimately resulting in apartheid rule beginning in the 1940's. Apartheid was a system of government that separated the people of South Africa based on race and controlled major functions of a person's life (Clark & Worger 2004). During this period the police were expected to maintain order and neutralize any hostility. In essence the police were responsible for keeping apartheid rule dominant for nearly fifty years (Gastrow & Shaw 2001).

During the height of apartheid rule the police were divided into several separate, locally controlled units. The country was essentially broken down into eleven "homelands" where the ethnic majority in that region was promised self-determination (Brewer 1994). The homeland divisions further divided the country among "coloureds," Indians, and whites. Policing became decentralized and homeland police forces began to take prominence in the execution of police powers (Brewer 1994).

Part of the South African police during apartheid was composed of what was known locally as *kitskonstabels*. This translates literally to "instant constable" in Afrikaans (Cawthra 1993). The *kitskonstabels* were black officers trained in six weeks and then allowed to police the townships (Leggett 2005, Cawthra 1993). While granted full police powers, the *kitskonstabels* were not granted full police membership (Leggett 2005). For example,

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kitskonstabels were not allowed to wear the same uniform as white officers, they could not give any order to a white officer, and they could not deal with cases that involved white suspects (Brogden 1996). Estimates place the number of *kitskonstabels* at ten percent of the South African Police Force (SAP).¹

Unfortunately, the quick training and lack of oversight led to terrible abuse at the hands of the *kitskonstabels* for most South Africans. The “training” they received had to be done orally because most of the candidates were illiterate (Cawthra 1993). After completing training, the *kitskonstabels* were given shotguns, batons, whips, and handcuffs to perform their duty, which was mainly to suppress any revolutionary actions (Cawthra 1993). These “officers” were known to be drunkards, corrupt, and especially brutal, even more so than their white counterparts (Leggett 2005).

The system of developing and using *kitskonstabels* arose during the British reign over South Africa. Great Britain had imported a system of policing where locals were to be used to police their “own kind” because the “lower race” was more content with a legal process to which it was accustomed (Brogden 1996). This process was known as retribalization. It was an attempt to resurrect tribal customs among the South African people. But instead of offering black South Africans power over their own police and legal system, it served to further divide the races.

Any serious offense was to be transferred away from the *kitskonstabels* and the local legal system (Brogden 1996). These cases went to the dominant system which was controlled and staffed by whites. Any dispute between black and white citizens was settled by state law rather than tribal law. The process was built to be deliberately humiliating by offering some local control while

¹ There is an important difference between the acronym SAP and SAPS. The South African Police force will be referred to as SAP. This was the dominant force during apartheid rule. The new South African Police Service will be referred to as SAPS. This is the post-apartheid police organization in the country.

reinforcing apartheid where ultimate power was invested to the white population (Brogden 1996).

Allowing local police control also served to divide the police quality and service that white and black South Africans received. The SAP saved manpower by utilizing *kitskonstabels*. Then "real" policing, done by white police officers, was at the disposal of the white South Africans (Brogden 1996). Thereby only whites got "real" police services and protection making black South Africans feel like less than full citizens in their own country. The tribal police chief was also a paid officer of the state making it difficult to complain about the system because it benefited the black local *kitskonstabels* to maintain the division of police power (Brogden 1996).

This was the state of policing in South Africa for many decades. As the grip of apartheid began to falter though, the police would experience drastic changes. While apartheid was the law of the land the police were used more as a control device than a crime fighting organization (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). The SAP was not conceived of or viewed as a democratic police force. South Africa's new constitution in 1994 marked a huge overhaul for the police with its ultimate goal being to bring democratic policing to the country.

Police Changes in Post Apartheid South Africa *Ideological Changes*

With the election of Nelson Mandela, South Africa entered a new stage of its history. The country was experiencing democracy for the first time in many decades and the police had to adapt to this situation. In 1995 the South African legislature passed the South African Police Service Act 68. This Act established community policing as a new goal for the reorganized South African Police Service (SAPS Act 1995). As part of the new community based policing, each community was to have a SAPS officer stationed in the area to be residents' main contact with the police and to allow residents to express problems or concerns directly to the police (SAPS Act 1995, Leggett 2005).

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The community policing model was adopted for three main reasons. First, community policing was seen as a new corporate strategy for the police (Steyn 2006). This was meant to replace the former strategy of maintaining the status quo at whatever cost. Second, community policing was an instrument of change for the new SAPS (Steyn 2006). A new form of policing in South Africa would have to be different and would have to change from what it had been; community policing was the bridge to the new policing format. Finally, community policing was a method of providing proactive policing (Steyn 2006). Much of apartheid era policing was reactive to protests and demonstrations. It became crucial for SAPS to be able to act proactively in a new democratic government. Building a relationship with the communities in which the officers worked was seen as the first step toward becoming proactive.

Structural Changes

Aside from community policing, the South African police underwent major reforms. These changes were both cosmetic and substantive. The first reform was the joining of eleven separate police units into one organization. Each homeland police unit was brought together under one main police agency (Morna 1995, Leggett 2005). This included adopting the *kitskonstabels* from each different state into the system. While this inclusion increased the racial diversity of the SAPS it also lowered the overall level of competency (Leggett 2005). The six week training *kitskonstabels* received was rudimentary on proper police tactics, but further affecting competency was the fact that many of the *kitskonstabels* were illiterate and could not drive an automobile, essential attributes to proper policing (Leggett 2005).

In response to the varying levels of ability that the *kitskonstabels* brought with them, new recruits were to be supervised for six months in the field after they had completed their initial training (Morna 1995). This is a superficial solution to an endemic problem in South Africa. However, if these *kitskonstabels* can be successfully incorporated into the SAPS it will go a long way to increasing the representative nature of the police. Systemic

discrimination in the hiring and promotion of officers during apartheid resulted in ninety-five percent of the senior officer corps being white (Morna 1995). Incorporation and being a representative body may also serve to legitimize the SAPS to a distrusting public.

Another aspect of the changing police was a buy-out package for those officers who felt that they could not serve under the new Mandela administration (Leggett 2005). Many of the officers who took this offer were able to find jobs in the growing private security field (Leggett 2005). Those who remained were faced with a new goal for the police. In addition, the police had to adapt to new cosmetic changes aimed at bringing it closer to a democratic force. Prior to 1994 the homeland police units used military ranks and titles for their officers (Morna 1995). With the new SAPS, those titles were discarded in favor of more civilianized titles (*Rank Structure of the South African Police Service* 2007). Former titles based on military titles included soldier and general, but the new titles, including constable, inspector, and captain, were equivalent to other police agencies titles (*Rank Structure of the South African Police Service* 2007). Further cosmetic changes included new uniforms and new colors for the police vehicles (Leggett 2005).

Possibly the biggest change in the police was the smallest. During the reign of apartheid the police were formally known as the South African Police Force (Morna 1995). Following the fall of apartheid, the police were christened the South African Police Service. This change was meant to highlight the fact that the police are present to provide a service to the public and not act as a force upon them. President Mandela and most other new government officials urged the South African people to accept the new police as their protectors (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). The new name for the police was designed to increase that acceptance and encourage the new goal of community policing.

Legal Changes

Alongside all of these changes, the police have had to adapt to many new statutes and regulations that are designed to

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increase democratic policing. The most important regulatory changes have to do with the use of deadly force. As an example, the Internal Security Act allowed the police to use firearms to disperse an unlawful gathering during the apartheid regime (Brogden 1994). Further there was no requirement of a prior warning or to use minimum force when applicable (Brogden 1994). This statute was enacted and utilized of course to suppress any anti-apartheid demonstrations. During apartheid, the Human Rights Commission said that South Africa was “notorious for granting largely unlimited powers to the police to use deadly force when effecting arrests and [this force] was widely used as an instrument of oppression by the police” (Singh 2004).

The apartheid law on the use of deadly force stated that it was acceptable to kill a fleeing suspect if they could not be apprehended in another way (Leggett 2005). This position was abused by the police. The amended law now requires that there be a threat of death or serious injury to the police officer or a citizen before deadly force can be used (Singh 2004). The new deadly force regulations were designed to bring South Africa in line with fellow democratic police organizations, such as the United States. Now that the law of South Africa is democratic it is important to see if the police have been able to follow suit and make the necessary changes to become a democratic organization.

Police Progress in Post Apartheid South Africa
Accountability

Not only did the police in South Africa change in 1994, the entire country was awakened to democracy. This was a troubling time for the nation and the police were expected to take on their new role quickly in order to maintain order in radically new times. Measuring progress of the SAPS during this transition period is difficult. The police were so accustomed to their non-democratic policing routine that any change toward community policing and democratic standards could be seen as a success.

Now that thirteen years have passed, it is anticipated that the police would be steps ahead of where they were. The information coming from the SAPS and others who have

studied them is that they have changed and for the better. Ultimately, the ideal is for the SAPS to become a democratic police organization. In order for that to happen, there is an important issue of accountability. The new constitution of South Africa calls for the appointment of a director of public prosecutions (Stone & Ward 2000). The powers of this position include control over police when they have violated their own standards.

To further increase accountability, the government appointed a respected officer as the new director of the police service. He was chosen based upon the fact that he did not have a tainted record (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). Officers were now trained in human rights and local communities were encouraged to get involved in the new system (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). Police unions have also taken an aggressive approach to assist SAPS in demonstrating its desire to be legitimate. The unions secured the same rights for all police employees that all other South African workers enjoy thereby making working conditions fairer and more tolerable (Marks & Fleming 2006). In addition, the unions have advocated for building police professionalism and fully supported the idea of community policing (Marks & Fleming 2006).

In order to reach out to the community, each police station is divided into sectors. Each sector is assigned a police officer whose duty it is to consult with the community to identify problems and solutions (Leggett 2005). However, studies have shown that most South Africans do not even know that these community officers exist (Leggett 2005). Therefore the presence of and ability to bring the police to the community has been limited in its success.

Another barrier to full accountability is the mass incorporation of officers following apartheid. During apartheid the top positions in the police organization were staffed mostly by whites. Of the fifty-two positions of General (senior officers), all but four were filled by whites (Brogden 1994). These officers were stationed at the headquarters in Pretoria and had little contact with the street level officers. This created an air of superiority with the Generals having limited knowledge of the actions taken by the majority of police officers (Brogden 1994).

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This problem was not fixed by the new SAPS but instead intensified. The SAPS desired to make the police organization representative of the country, but to do so meant fast tracking promotions. Through traditional methods of promotion and affirmative action, it would have taken many generations for the police to reflect the population of South Africa (Brogden 1996). But rapid promotions meant that by 2003 there were five times as many inspectors as there were constables (Leggett 2005). The rank inflation resulted in reduced accountability in the field because no officer was senior to any other officer (Leggett 2005). So while the intentions were good by promoting officers quickly to increase representivity in the organization, accountability suffered.

As part of the new laws governing the post apartheid police, a Police Complaints board was created to be staffed by civilians (Brogden 1994). New regulations also allowed every civilian to have access to any information held by the police (Singh 2004). The complaint bureau has been relatively successful in its goal. Having the police under civilian authority has subjected the police to political and constitutional accountability (Singh 2004). Moreover, the SAPS has become much more representative of the population of South Africa. The annual report of the SAPS indicates the increasing number of blacks and women (Human Resources Management 2007).

Accountability is the most important aspect of the SAPS that has been altered and there is a continuing process to achieve full accountability. It has not been a smooth process for the SAPS to learn and adapt to the new situation in South Africa. Over the past several years of democratic rule in South Africa problems have developed for the SAPS (see Current Troubles section below). Their reaction to these problems will serve as an indicator of how far the organization has come to a democratic police force.

Crime Solving Difficulties

Early in the transition toward democracy, the police force was widely uneven in its capacity to deal with crime. The joining of eleven separate police forces with different training and different standards resulted in a unified force

where there was no base ground to assess the officers. The *kitskonstabels* were known to be under-trained, but they were nonetheless incorporated in the new SAPS. Quality of the new police force was low and it could not be guaranteed that the entire country was receiving the same level of protection.

A mere four years after apartheid ended many black regions in South Africa were in a state of virtual collapse (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). During this same time period—roughly around 1998—the new police force was having trouble solving criminal cases and bringing criminals to justice (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). South Africans who could afford it—mostly white South Africans—turned instead to private security to assure their safety (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). Black South Africans had been used to vigilante groups exercising law and order because they had acted as a counter to the SAP during apartheid. These vigilante groups once again rose in prominence after apartheid because the SAPS could not provide the protection South African citizens needed (Gastrow & Shaw 2001).

In 1999 the government decided to scale back its oversight of the SAPS (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). The hope was that with less governmental interaction the police could focus on solving crimes. In fact, this served only to increase the questions South Africans had about the new police and whether they were any different from the previous brutal regime of the SAP.

The South African Police Service tried to better its crime solving record by accepting a variety of offers of assistance. The group Business Against Crime, formed by white business owners, and a vigilante group known as the People Against Gangsterism and Drugs both offered to assist the police (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). Unfortunately, these offers of assistance rarely helped the SAPS because they were defined more by the donors than by the police (Gastrow & Shaw 2001). Therefore, the priorities of the SAPS took a back seat to the priorities of the moneyed in South Africa. This was not how the public needed to see the new police, bowing to outside pressure, and this track was soon abandoned in an effort to build support for the SAPS in the community.

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During the early transition period, the police were subjected to much political pressure to improve their crime solving abilities. This pressure was put upon a police service that was still trying to come to terms with varying degrees of professionalism and training. When political pressure increased, the police were forced to work with what they had. With such limited and rudimentary skills, the SAPS resorted to pre-democratic tactics (Leggett 2005).

Police as Law Enforcers

An interesting aspect of the South African police is the interrelation between the police and prosecutions. The police have the power of both arrest and prosecution with little intervention from other agencies (Brogden 1994). Since democratization, the government has granted the police greater permission to detain suspects longer, broader search and seizure rules, and the ability to conduct undercover surveillance as an attempt to increase crime solving (Stone & Ward 2000). Most interrogations are done without oversight by superiors and police tend to resort to violence when they feel it is needed (Brogden 1994). Research has found that there is still a belief that says respecting human rights is an impediment to crime prevention (Leggett 2005). This belief will lead some police officers to resort to pre-democratic policing techniques to solve crimes despite the expanded legal powers bestowed by the government.

Taken together these problems contribute to the dismal success of the police at crime prevention and crime solving. In addition to the lack of success in criminal investigations, there is an effect on the speed through the system. Lack of well-trained officers and the resort to pre-democratic tactics has slowed the progress through the criminal justice system (Singh 2004). The courts are obligated to dismiss any evidence obtained using cruel or degrading techniques (Singh 2004). When the courts apply this new law they are forced to dismiss cases, thereby adding to the record of the police as inept crime solvers.

Police Morale

A decade after the fall of apartheid, the police morale was found to be entirely questionable (Singh 2004). The police faced death on a daily basis, saw human misery each day, and worked under the threat of violence (Singh 2004). These working conditions were troublesome and the new regulations of the SAPS added to that situation. The salary of the police was inadequate in comparison to the private security industry. There continued a view of discrimination against some officers that led to those officers not feeling the desire to fulfill their responsibilities. These conditions meant that most police officers were not encouraged to report to duty and engage the community as they had been instructed.

The greatest effect on the low morale was the danger that the South African police faced on a daily basis. Prior to democratization, the SAP suffered from over three hundred police officer deaths each year (Brogden 1994). South Africa has ranked as the highest death rate for police officers for many years. Ten years after apartheid, the annual death rate had fallen to two hundred, still the highest rate of police deaths in the world (Singh 2004). Many of these murders are never solved because of other problems within the police organization.

These deaths are a blow to the morale of the police and show that for many South Africans, the police are still fair game for violence. Most deaths during apartheid were based on political motivations (Singh 2004). Nowadays, most of these deaths are simply because crime rates in South Africa are rising dramatically. Singh (2004) also attributes these deaths to the fact that illegal weapons are entering the country at an alarming rate and South Africans still do not respect their police regardless of the numerous changes.

Resort to Pre-democratic Techniques

Studies have found the police resorting to pre-democratic policing at times. Leggett (2005) found police inundating high crime areas and conducting extensive searches of people and their property without probable cause. These

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raids were commonplace during apartheid. They were known as “cordon and search” operations when the police would isolate entire city blocks and search every person without any warning or cause (Leggett 2005). While not nearly as wide spread as they had been, these “cordon and search” tactics have been conducted by the SAPS.

Monique Marks has visited the South African Police Service on several occasions. Her work there is a prime source of information on the new SAPS and its continuing growth. In one conversation, it was clear that the officers held a certain nostalgia for the past.

Sergeant Pillay: We have just become glorified security guards now. It is pathetic.

Me [Marks]: What would you like to be doing?

Sergeant Pillay: Well, we shouldn't be saying this, but we have been trained over the years to act, not just to sit around. We are used to the old way of being. This is very frustrating for us. (Marks 2003, p. 254)

Later in the same conversation, Marks directly asks what the officers miss about the “old days” in policing. Their response is enlightening in many ways.

Inspector Moonsamy: Our best days were during the time of the red and green bands—the war between Inkatha and the ANC [African National Congress]. We would go into areas that were on fire that time. We would beat the living daylights out of those youngsters. They were just like barbarians. For example, you would be in the townships and you would see a sea of Inkatha members heavily armed coming up the hill. We would move in and finish them off. Things were hectic then . . . We really worked in those days and we had excellent commanders.

Monique: It seems like you really preferred to work in the unit in the old days. Is that correct?

Sergeant Pillay: That is true. We felt productive in those days. *Maybe what we were doing was not right*, but we were doing something. (Marks 2003, p. 254) (Emphasis added)

The days of apartheid meant “real” police work for the SAP. They were given the responsibility to maintain order in an increasingly hostile environment. Now, the SAPS is reorganized to provide community policing. While it is clear that for some officers the days of easy violence was better policing, Sergeant Pillay recognizes that it was not right. In this sense the police have come a long way toward democracy by recognizing their previous faults.

Marks (2003) found that for the most part the police were trying to follow the new rules and regulations. If they resorted to pre-democratic techniques it was mostly when officers were asked to use their individual discretion. Townships far removed from a central city were the most likely targets of pre-democratic tactics. On one trip Marks (2003) witnessed the use of force and violations of due process and basic human rights of residents. When she inquired about the procedure, she was informed that “these people” (township residents) only understood force and that hard hitting tactics were required to be effective (Marks 2003).

While Marks relates these events of pre-democratic policing she does not project that image onto the entire police organization, these are the words of individual officers. She sees the occasional police brutality as a sign that transformation is incomplete, not failing. Later work conducted by Marks and Shearing (2005) found that the SAPS were using tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets to dispel crowds. Ironically, these crowds were protesting the slow pace of service delivery from the SAPS. Once again this was not seen as a failure of democratic policing but as growing pains for the SAPS. It is not realistic for the SAPS to change overnight when their mission and purpose has radically changed. Eventually though they will be expected to attain the goal of reform.

Resorting to pre-democratic police tactics is more of a safety net than anything else. The police know that their pre-democratic techniques get results and when they are feeling threatened it is easy and reliable to resort to those tactics. Most of the new SAPS recognize that those tactics are inappropriate and the use of those tactics has fallen greatly. But when the police sense danger and disrespect it is almost understandable that they resort to previous

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effective tactics. As the SAPS continues to incorporate new members and struggle to achieve reform, the use of these techniques will most likely end. Democratic policing is being used in South Africa at a much greater rate than ever before and hopefully, as the police see its effectiveness, the desire to resort to pre-democratic techniques will wane.

Afrobarometer Data

The Afrobarometer is an independent organization interested in measuring the social, political, and economic climate in Africa. The main objectives of the Afrobarometer are to produce scientifically reliable data on public opinion in sub-Saharan Africa, to strengthen institutional capacity for survey research in Africa, and to broadly disseminate and apply survey results (Afrobarometer Objectives 2009). The Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews based on a national probability sample of the voting age population (Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey Manual 2007). The surveys are conducted in the language of the respondent and respondents are given the opportunity to clarify their responses (Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey Manual 2007).

Response rate is generally higher than the universally accepted range. At ninety-five percent confidence level, there is a sampling error of plus or minus 2.8 percent (Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey Manual 2007). These are very strong results permitting researchers to confidently rely on the Afrobarometer findings. Reliability is important to the Afrobarometer because they intend their results to be used by policy makers, investors, and scholars (Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey Manual 2007).

In 2002, Afrobarometer conducted an expansive survey of South Africa. The goal was to measure the attitude of South Africans on a variety of issues (Afrobarometer Online Data Analysis 2007). Residents were asked for their opinions on areas such as the role of the government, corruption in the local and national government, and trustworthiness of government officials, police, courts and the criminal justice system as a whole (Afrobarometer Online Data Analysis 2007).

Roughly eight years after the end of apartheid and the regime of the SAP, the 2002 Afrobarometer shows that the South African Police Service has made some positive strides. When asked if they trusted the police, only 22.2% said “not at all” (Table 1). Over one third (35%) said that they trusted the police “a lot” or “a very great deal” (Afrobarometer Online Data Analysis 2007). Three years later, the 2005 Afrobarometer reports that 22.8% of respondents said they did not trust the police at all (Table 2).

Table 1

How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The Police? (2002)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	533	22.2	22.2	22.2
A little bit	979	40.8	40.8	63.0
A lot	659	27.5	27.5	90.5
A very great deal	179	7.5	7.5	98.0
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	50	2.1	2.1	100
Total	2400	100	100	

Table 2

How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The Police? (2005)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	548	22.8	22.8	22.8
Just a little	651	27.1	27.1	50.0
Somewhat	700	29.2	29.2	79.1
A lot	451	18.8	18.8	97.9
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	50	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	2400	100.0	100.0	

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Corruption was rampant in the police during apartheid. One of the main goals of the newly formed SAPS is to change that image. A majority of the respondents, in 2002, nearly 56%, when asked if they believed the police to be corrupt answered either “none” or “some of them” (Table 3) (Afrobarometer Online Data Analysis 2007). In the 2005 Afrobarometer, the percentage of people answering either “none” or “some of them” had dropped to 47.5% (Table 4). While this represents a ten point decrease, 5.5% of interviewees chose “don’t know.” This shows a slight deterioration in the public image of the SAPS. But still approximately half of South Africans believe that their police are either not corrupt at all or that only some of them are corrupt. Prior to the end of apartheid, the South African police were seen as corrupt not only by their own people, but by most democratic nations.

Table 3

How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: Police?
(2002)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	170	7.1	7.1	7.1
Some of them	1168	48.7	48.7	55.8
Most of them	718	29.9	29.9	85.7
All of them	182	7.6	7.6	93.3
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	162	6.8	6.8	100
Total	2400	100	100	

Table 4

How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Police?
(2005)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	181	7.5	7.5	7.5
Some of them	961	40.0	40.0	47.6
Most of them	787	32.8	32.8	80.4
All of them	338	14.1	14.1	94.5
Don't Know/Haven't heard enough	133	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	2400	100.0	100.0	

Along the same line, South Africans were asked if they had to pay a bribe in order to avoid problems with the police. An overwhelming 92.6% responded "never" in 2002 (Table 5). *Kitskonstabels* were known for their corruption and willingness to accept bribes from the people they were sworn to protect (Leggett 2005). As of 2002, those bribes were non-existent. Again in 2005, 90.4% of respondents answered "never" or the new option "no experience in the past year" to paying a bribe (Table 6). Currently, according to the Afrobarometer, the great majority of South Africans do not see the need to bribe the police in order to remain safe. Since about half of South Africans feel that a majority of the police is not corrupt and a great majority of South Africans do not see a need to bribe the police, it is important to see if these same people would turn to the police these days instead of relying on vengeance.

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Table 5

In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor to government officials in order to: Avoid a problem with the police (like passing a checkpoint or avoiding a fine or arrest)?
(2002)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	2223	92.6	92.6	92.6
Once or twice	72	3.0	3.0	95.6
A few times	27	1.1	1.1	96.7
Often	53	2.2	2.2	98.9
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	24	1.0	1.0	100
Total	2400	100	100	

Table 6

In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor to government officials in order to: Avoid a problem with the police (like passing a checkpoint or avoiding a fine or arrest)?
(2005)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	1349	56.2	56.2	56.2
Once or Twice	95	4.0	4.0	60.2
A Few Times	76	3.2	3.2	63.3
Often	40	1.7	1.7	65.0
No experience with this in past year	820	34.2	34.2	99.2
Don't Know	20	.8	.8	100.0
Total	2400	100.0	100.0	

Since the *kitskonstabels* were notoriously dangerous and ill equipped to deal with most police matters, many South Africans resorted to taking justice into their own hands. Respondents were offered two choices to measure the likelihood of turning to the police over self-administered justice. Choice A stated that respondents would seek the assistance of the police in disputes. Choice B stated that respondents would take revenge over turning to the police. Eighty-four percent of the respondents in 2002 said that they either “agreed with A” or “strongly agreed with A” (Table 7). The vast number of South Africans would turn

to the police for assistance over seeking revenge. This signals trust in the police to meet citizens' needs.

The information obtained by the Afrobarometer offers a quantitative measure of what many ethnographers have already seen. The South African police have made advances in democratic policing since the end of apartheid. Police organizations tend to avoid change and prefer stability to alteration (Manning 1997, Goldstein 2005). But the SAPS has faced this problem in a crisis setting and has responded. As the Afrobarometer suggests, many South Africans are accepting the new role of the police in their lives. Also, as the legitimacy of the SAPS grows this will in turn lead to greater trust and the ability to embrace the police.

Table 7

Once again, please tell me which of the following statements is closest to your view. Choose Statement A or Statement B. (2002)

A: If you were a victim of a violent crime, you would turn for help to the police.

B: If you were the victim of a violent crime, you would find a way to take revenge yourself.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Missing	3	0.1	0.1	0.1
Agree very strongly with A	997	41.5	41.5	41.6
Agree with A	1030	42.9	42.9	84.5
Agree with B	152	6.3	6.3	90.8
Agree very strongly with B	102	4.2	4.2	95.0
Agree with neither	87	3.6	3.6	98.6
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	29	1.2	1.2	100
Total	2400	100	100	

Current Troubles

While the advances made by the SAPS are important, the current trouble faced by the police chief must be acknowledged. In January 2008, the South African police chief stepped down amid allegations of corruption. Chief Jackie Selebi resigned shortly after an investigation revealed possible corruption. Prosecutors in South Africa

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have said they plan to charge Selebi with corruption and “defeating the ends of justice” (*The Economist*). The corruption charge alleges that Chief Selebi received money from a convicted drug trafficker who was then on trial for murder (McGreal 2008). In exchange for the money it is alleged that Selebi protected drug shipments and passed on confidential information on both the murder trial and current drug operations (McGreal 2008).

In addition to being the police chief in South Africa, Jackie Selebi was also president of Interpol, the international police organization. Interpol acts as a clearinghouse for information on crime and maintains a database of fingerprints, mug shots, and more (Naim 2001). He resigned this position at the same time as his position as chief of police (McGreal 2008). Selebi was elected president of the Interpol General Assembly in 2004, becoming the first African elected to the position (Interpol 2004).

For anyone to be elected to the presidency of Interpol is a great triumph. Selebi represented the new SAPS when he was elected as the first African leader of the prestigious organization. In addition, for the South African police to have risen from apartheid rule to leader of a major international police organization is quite a feat. Unfortunately, the progress that Selebi made for the SAPS is sullied by these current charges. Selebi maintains that he is innocent of the corruption charges (McGreal 2008).

In response to the chaos created in Selebi’s departure, political leaders have called for the creation of an independent body to fight corruption in the SAPS (Ensor 2008). Helen Zille, Democratic Alliance leader, fears that corruption is further enmeshed in the SAPS than the charges against Selebi imply. She has stated her belief that if police corruption goes unchecked, South Africa will become a “gangstocracy” (Ensor 2008). This incident has no doubt affected the confidence that citizens have in the police. How the government of South Africa and the SAPS respond to this crisis will indicate the success of democratic policing.

Conclusion

Transforming to a democratic police organization is no easy task. Such a dramatic shift in police ideology demands that change take place on many levels. Marks (2003) identifies three levels at which these changes need to take place for true democratic policing to be effective. First, change at the structural level includes making the SAPS representative of the South African population. If the SAPS can better represent the population it will be able to respond to local and national needs (Marks 2003). There has been some success in making the SAPS representative of the population of South Africa (Human Resources Management of the Annual Report of the South African Police Services 2007).

The next change is at the behavioral level. Behavioral change means that the police need to be proactive and not reactive. Also, the police need to be community orientated in order to show the people that they have changed from a reactive force to a proactive service (Marks 2003). Finally, change needs to occur at the attitudinal level. This is the hardest change to make because the police had been steeped in racial division and their attitudes were set by such ideology. Also, police culture tends to be conservative and the police prefer to leave things as they are and not shake things up (Marks 2003 citing Goldstein 1990). So attitudinal change will be the most difficult to achieve but will probably show the greatest effect.

More than a decade after apartheid ended the police are more representative of the South African people. Recruitment and training has increased the professional and performance level of the SAPS. As this progress continues the police will see their ranks filled with officers who did not have to suffer apartheid and are raised with democratic ideology. When this happens, the attitudinal change will become even more obvious. Changes in attitude are hard to measure but as the country continues to experience democracy the police are going to better represent the democratic nature of the country and the people.

The future of the South African Police Service appears to be strong. Democracy is not static, and the police are ever changing to meet the needs of a democratic society. As

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they adapt to these new needs the police are achieving democratic standards that were once thought impossible. There are issues left to be handled. How can the new SAPS connect with the communities they serve? Could community forums assist in educating both the police and the citizens to each other's needs? So far community officers have not been too successful. But if the police can solve that problem then they may be on their way to building stronger relationships with the people of South Africa.

Strong ties to the communities may increase acceptance and respect for the police. This could in turn lower violence against the police, thereby encouraging recruitment and morale. Another important aspect is to analyze how effective the new deadly force laws have been. Have the police changed their training and are they complying with the new standards? Have these new laws helped the image of the police?

South Africa will be scrutinized for many years to come and for many reasons. But the South African Police Service has proven that while change to democracy is neither instant nor easy, it is possible. No police organization is democratic at all times; there are always questionable actions taken that may violate due process protections. But the SAPS has adopted new standards and regulations that have guided it on its way to being a solid democratic organization. The SAPS may not always achieve the goal of democratic policing, but it has evolved into a new policing organization that recognizes the importance of being democratic. Overall the South African police are becoming one of the newest democratic police forces in the world, and they will play an important role in policing in the future.

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