



Research Article

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Transforming policing in South Africa: Towards an ideal police service

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Abstract

A complex history of colonialism, apartheid, and a transition to democracy marks the policing landscape in South Africa. This paper explores the multifaceted efforts to transform the South African Police Service (SAPS) from a force often associated with oppression and human rights abuses to one that embodies the principles of democratic policing. The study examines the challenges and reforms undertaken to enhance accountability, community engagement, and operational effectiveness within SAPS. Key focus areas include the institutional reforms aimed at depoliticizing the police service, strategies for improving police-community relations, and implementing policies designed to uphold human rights and ensure justice. A qualitative approach was adopted using forty-three participants in focus group interviews. Additionally, the paper analyzes the impact of socioeconomic factors on crime rates and police performance, addressing issues such as resource allocation, training, and technology integration in policing practices. Results show that police organizations which adopted various policing models have been effective in reducing crime levels. This paper seeks to develop strategies for ideal policing in the South African context.

Keywords: South African Police Service, Transformation, crime, crime prevention, ideal policing, accountability, Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), Professionalism.

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