Solidarity, Isolation, and Cynicism: An Attitudinal Analysis of the Police Culture in the South African Police Service

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Abstract

Numerous scholars have contributed to the police culture body of knowledge (Cockcroft 2013; O'Neill, Marks & Singh 2007; Sklansky 2005). They submit that the traditional understanding of police culture is no longer relevant due to the new developments that have transpired in policing, which have consequently changed the police culture. More specifically, they suggest that the South African Police Service (SAPS) too has witnessed changes in the traits of its police culture that accentuate the cynicism of and isolation from the public. This article is an attempt to challenge this narrative by comparing the police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism attitudes of two different cohorts of new South African Police Service (SAPS) recruits separated by ten years. By making use of the 30-item police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism questionnaire, designed by Steyn (2005), the article establishes that a representative sample (138 out of a population of 140) of new SAPS recruits from the SAPS Chatsworth Basic Training Institute (August 2015), have remarkably similar attitudes in support of police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism, compared to a representative sample of all new SAPS recruits that started their basic training in January 2005 (Steyn, 2005). Although small in representation, the study refutes the claims that traditional understandings of police culture are no longer relevant and that the traits of the police culture in the South African

Police Service (SAPS) has so changed that it accentuates the cynicism of and isolation from the public.

Keywords: Policing, police culture, isolation, solidarity, South Africa

1. Introduction

The motivation of police agencies worldwide - both in the developed and developing world - to change coincides with disillusionment with the military and paramilitary model of traditional policing (O'Neil, Marks and Singh 2007; Chan 1997; Manning 1997; Bayley and Shearing 1994). Where traditional policing emphasizes arrests, speedy vehicles and haphazard perambulation, the new vision of policing is one of being accountable to the community and establishing a nexus of partnerships with the community in policing (Cockcroft 2013; O'Neil, Marks and Singh 2007). It recognizes the ineffectiveness of traditional policing methods as well as the resourcefulness of the community in matters of crime deterrence and social control (Chan 1997, 49). The 'blueprint for the future' in policing is not one of piecemeal tinkering with police practices or the police image, but a dramatic departure from traditional policing: "Police, in order to be competitive and to attract the resources necessary to fulfil their role of the future, must become outward-looking, increasingly sensitive to developments and trends in their environment, responsive and resilient to change, innovative and creative in their approach to problem solving and idea generation, and more open and accountable to the community and Government" (Bayley and Shearing 1994, 143). To this endeavour, the former South African Minister of Safety and Security, Dr. Sidney Mufamadi, stated at the time of transforming South Africa into democracy as follows: "The philosophy of community policing must inform and pervade the entire organisation. Changing the police culture is perhaps the most significant challenge facing the new government" (Department of Safety and Security 1994).

For such change to be actual and durable, the creed of democratic policing must essentially be adopted as part of the new police organisational culture by altering the fundamental suppositions of each police official pertaining to the establishment and its setting. In advancing this makeover, the SAPS applied a national policy of guaranteeing gender and race compatibility in the composition of the service to the conclusion of befitting representation of the greater South African populace. Alpert, Dunham and Stroshine (2006) contend that an upsurge in variety in police establishments might succeed to splinter, and even perhaps extinguish, the notion of a homogeneous police culture. Particularly, service of women in the police could weaken certain characteristics

of the hyper-masculine makings of police culture and as an alternative, spawn an empathetic and gentler manner of policing (Miller 2003). Contemporary ethnographers (Cockcroft 2013; O'Neill, Marks and Singh 2007; Sklansky 2005) contend that these new developments in policing have changed the police, and that traditional understanding of police culture, as a consequence, are no longer relevant. More specifically that the SAPS has changed many of the traits of police culture that accentuate the cynicism of and isolation from the public. This paper is an attempt to challenge this narrative by comparing the police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism attitudes of two different cohorts of new SAPS recruits separated over a ten period (2005-2015).

The primary objective of the current study that this article arises from is to establish whether changes in the SAPS have made traditional understandings of police culture obsolete; whether the new developments in the SAPS counteract the traits of police culture that accentuate the cynicism of and isolation from the public. The study sought to address this by assessing whether a representative sample of new SAPS recruits that started their basic training in July 2015 at the SAPS Chatsworth Basic Training Institute have similar or different attitudes to police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism, compared to a study conducted by Steyn (2006) ten years ago (2005) on a representative sample of all new recruits in the SAPS that commenced their basic training in January 2005.

The paper hypothesises that a representative sample of all SAPS recruits that commenced their basic police training at the SAPS Chatsworth Basic Training Institute in July 2015 have indicators demonstrating police culture theme solidarity, isolation, cynicism. Secondly, it hypothesised that a representative sample of all SAPS recruits that commenced their basic police training at the SAPS Chatsworth Basic Training Institute in July 2015 have weaker attitudes in support of police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism, compared to a study conducted by Steyn (2006) study referred above.

2. The origins of police culture

Police culture was derived from conspicuous qualities of two interdependent but paradoxical surroundings within which police officials perform their duties. These are the police occupational setting and the police organisational setting (Paoline III 2003). The occupational setting relates to the police officials

connection to the community of people living in a particular country or region. The most referenced components of this setting is physical harm/risk, and the distinctive forcible authorization police officials have over the public (Paoline III 2003). Police officials tend to be fixated with believing that their work setting is loaded with hazards (real or perceived), and expect such most of the time (Steyn and De Vries 2007). The component of physical harm/risk is so central to the police official's world view that being confronted could potentially prompt affective impediments to performing police work (Paoline III 2003). Physical harm/risk creates formidable solidarity amongst police officials whilst at the same time it produces isolation from the general public whom they may see as the primary source of physical harm/risk (Crank 2004). The police occupation is distinct in that police officials have the legislative right to use force if chosen to do so. This very license and the accompanying need to demonstrate control underscores the acuity of physical harm/risk. Irrespective of the circumstances; police officials are compelled to initiate, demonstrate and uphold – control (Paoline III 2003).

The second setting that police officials work in is the organisation, which consists of one's connection with the establishment (i.e. overseers) (Paoline III 2003). The two most salient components of this setting are the erratic and disciplinary overseeing, and the abstruseness of the police role (Paoline III 2003). The connection between police officials and their managers has been depicted as ambiguous. It is expected of the police to impose laws, yet they are obliged to keep to the correct bureaucratic rubrics and conventions (Paoline III 2003). Technical infringements from the inappropriate use of the law can end in punitive proceedings. Novice police officials soon realise that when they become noticed it is usually for mistakes, instead of being commended for behaving admirably (Steyn and De Vries 2007). Enthusiastic behaviour amongst police officials is not encouraged as it increases the likelihood of blunders and its accompanying detection and reprimand. As such, police officials are constricted, employed by an establishment that commands that all challenges on the 'front line' be controlled with competent inevitability (Paoline III 2003). This institutional ambiguity is the corresponding element to the apparent corporal risks within the police work setting. Supplementary to the erratic and disciplinary overseeing, police officials also work within an institutional setting that supports vague task affinity. Empirical enquiries have ascertained no less than three foremost

roles that police officials are anticipated to perform: preservation of the peace, execution of the law and the provision of public assistance, yet police institutions have traditionally more often than not formally recognised execution of the law. This is reinforced through police institutional tuition, formation of expert sections, emphasis on crime numbers and notably, assessment of performance and advancement (Meyer, Steyn and Gopal 2013).

3. Police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism

A number of themes have been identified and discussed extensively within the police culture literature however, three loose-coupling themes appear most prominent in relation to the traits of police culture that accentuate the cynicism of and isolation from the public. These themes are solidarity, isolation, and police cynicism. Contemporary research on police culture has been focusing on themes that are termed as 'coping mechanism themes' (Steyn 2015). What is meant by coping mechanism themes is that these police cultural themes emerge when line police officials think that particular groups interfere with their ability to do their day-to-day work (Steyn 2008). Such themes (solidarity, isolation and cynicism) represent general attitudinal positions line-police-officials take to protect themselves from external oversight. Each police cultural theme is discussed below.

Solidarity refers to the powerful bond between police officials that can be described as the glue that holds the police culture together (Crank 2004; Chan 2003; Skolnick and Fyfe 1993; Christopher 1991; Manning 1978). The primary use of solidarity is to sustain police group identity, mark group boundaries and protect police officials from external oversight (Crank 2004; Chan 2003). Police solidarity emerges from a variety of contexts police officials are exposed to such as conflicts and animosities with diverse out-groups that perceivably challenge police authority on how they do their day-to-day work such as the public, courts, the media, politicians and police commanders themselves (Crank 2004 and Coser 1956). Moreover, the sheer danger of police work encourages strong loyalties in an 'all for one and one for all' sense of camaraderie, and a military sense of combat-readiness and general spiritedness. Powerful loyalties emerge in the commonly shared and perilous effort to control dangerous crimes. Central to the police cultural theme of solidarity is the sense of high-minded morality amongst its members. High-minded morality requires the elementary

logic that the enemy (out-groups in conflict with the police such as the public, courts, criminals, politicians, administrative brass) is totally evil and the police members are totally good. The intense focus on officer safety that characterises police-college training today reinforces the 'we-them' attitude where the 'them' is the public. Police officials are expected to watch out for their colleagues before all others (Reuss-Ianni 1983). The entire outside world is dangerous, and only officers can identify the dangers out there (Crank 2004, 247).

Isolation refers to the segregations of police officials from previous friends, the community, the legal system, and even spouses and families (Drummond 1976; Skolnick 1966). Police impose social isolation upon themselves as a means of protection against real and perceived dangers, loss of personal and professional autonomy, and social rejection (Skolnick 1966, 18). Skolnick (1966) submits that in an attempt to be attentive to any possible violence, the officer becomes generally suspicious of everyone. Likewise, many officers begin to distance themselves from previous friends as they do not seem to understand and appreciate the rigors of being a cop.

Various other factors that tend to impact on the isolation of police officers may be attributed to the nature of their occupation such as unique shift work, days-off during the week and court. Police also become isolated due to their authority. They are required to enforce many laws representing puritanical morality, such as those prohibiting drunkenness. Many police officials get drunk themselves and become sensitive to the charge of hypocrisy. In order to protect themselves they tend to socialise with other police or spend time alone, again leading to social isolation (Kingshott and Prinsloo 2004).

Niederhoffer (1967, 98) describes police cynicism as diffuse feelings of hate, envy, impotent hostility and a sour-grapes pattern, which are reflected as a state of mind in the individual police official. Niederhoffer states further that police cynicism is directed towards life, the world, people in general, and the police system itself. Cynicism emerges early on from language and attitude modelling in college training, partly because of a desire among newcomers to emulate experienced police officials in an effort to shed their status as novices (Wilt and Bannon 1976, 40), and partly because new recruits have the motivational desire to quickly learn how to cover their 'butts', like more experienced police officials do (Crank 2004, 325).

4. Research methodology

The researchers selected a quantitative research approach. The research problem required a measuring instrument that would translate the research hypotheses into numerical variables that would represent data that could be collected in a standardised way and that could then be analysed via statistical procedures. Such a measuring instrument is the Thirty-Item Police Culture Questionnaire, developed by Steyn (2006) whose permission was sought and received. Response choices on the individual items were structured and close-ended with a five-point Likert-type option, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The level of measurement on scales of the 30-item self-report questionnaire was of an ordinal nature, meaning that the scales (categories) were mutually exclusive, mutually exhaustive and rank-ordered. Each scale was assigned a numerical value to identify differences (magnitude) in participants' responses. Only items 22, 25 and 28 were assigned differently due to the direction of the statements. Although the item scales were of an ordinal nature the numerical data were analysed on an interval scale for the purpose of determining the category order of participants' responses.

The Thirty-Item Police Culture Questionnaire was piloted in December 2004 amongst 100 SAPS functional police officials stationed within the city of Durban, Republic of South Africa, and the factor analysis (VARIMAX technique) identified nine factors of which four met the latent root criterion (also known as the eighenvalue-one criterion or the Kaiser criterion) of eighenvalue greater than 1.0 (as indicated in Table 2), the rationale being that each observed variable contributes one unit of variance in the data set. Any factor that displays an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 accounts for a greater amount of variance than was contributed by one variable. Williams, Hollan, and Stevens (1983) noted that the latent root criterion has shown to produce the correct number of factors when the number of variables included in the analysis is small (10 to 15) or moderate (20 to 30). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of 0.77 for the Thirty-Item Police Culture Questionnaire is also within the 0.7 acceptable indicator level.

Table 1

Study measuring instrument Factor Loadings

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
3.4625324	2.1932821	1.7459078	1.5539314

The factor analysis discovered statistically significant loadings (with >0.70 communality) for items (measures/questions) 30, 24, 21, 29, 27 and 30, on Factor 1. More specifically, items 21, 23, and 24 can be grouped into respondents' viewpoints apropos truthfulness and fidelity in the populace, whilst items 27, 29, and 30, gauges participants' beliefs about the corollaries of these traits for police community interactions. The relational direction between the Factor 1 loadings signify that partakers who deemed the public as commonly deceitful and untrustworthy, correspondingly did not imagine that the police and the public can work well together, and vice-versa.

Questions that loaded with statistical significance on Factor 2, were items 29 and 30 (which was the case on Factor 1), as well as 25. The latter is a determinant of respondents' creeds pertaining veneration for the police by the civic, and the former (29 and 30) measure contributors' attitudes vis-à-vis the upshots of these features for police public dealings. Participants' that thought that people do not respect the police were also of the opinion that the police and the public do not trust each other, and vice-versa.

Factor 3 is constituted by high loadings (with >0.70 communality) from measures 12, 11, 2, 5, and 6. These items largely elucidate why respondents believe that police officials have to look out for each other. Participants' who consider a collective purpose (rid the country of it's bad elements) and view outsiders as hasty criticizers of the police, likewise believe that police officials have to look after each other, and as a result prefer to mingle more with police peers and less with folks distanced of the police, and vice-versa.

Measures 23, 16, 28, 24, and 14, loaded statistically significantly on Factor 4. These items appear to measure the extent to which respondents socialise with others outside of the police and justifications thereof. Respondents' that indicated that they were socialising less with those outside of the police since becoming trainee police officials were also of the opinion that this was due to uncooperative and non-supportive courts, shift work and special duties, and

the belief that even though members of the public are open to the opinions and suggestions of police officials – they are not to be trusted and are generally dishonest, and vice-versa.

In general (factor analysis), several of the study measuring instrument questions did not load on any of the four factors (with eighenvalues >1.0), and some of the items loaded (statistically significant) on more than one factor; thus indicating a composite of a more generalised multi-dimensional and categorical (behavioural and attitudinal) measure.

A challenge for operationalising the constructs of police culture solidarity, police culture isolation and police culture cynicism, is the amorphous nature as the constructs are multi-dimensional. As a consequence it was originally decided (pre-test, first post-test and second post-test) to create a composite measure of each scale (scale of solidarity [items 1-10]; scale of isolation [items 11-20]; scale of cynicism [items 21-30]) as the literature does not clearly indicate how each item relates. The longitudinal makes the argument that each individual item measures perceived solidarity, isolation and cynicism. The same procedure is followed for the third post-test (September 2013 – June 2014). The critical question regarding the measurement of the constructs is whether each item, based on the literature, is valid on its face as a measure of a dimension of the constructs of solidarity, isolation and cynicism.

5. Findings

5.2 Frequency comparison of participants' responses

Overall, Table 2 below indicates that both samples (2005 and 2015) tended towards answering *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*, notable with 24 out of the 30 items (80%). However, the 2015 sample inclined to answer *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* more (by 13.34%) when compared to the 2005 sample.

In general, on the solidarity items (1-10), both sets of participants (2005 and 2015) either strongly agreed or agreed with all of the items. In other words, there were no differences of kind but rather of degree. More specifically, the difference of degree can be noted on item 7, where the 2005 sample mostly answered *Agree* followed by *Strongly Agree*, whereas the 2015 sample answered primarily *Strongly Agree* followed by *Agree*. The 2005 sample tended to agree with the statement

that difficult challenges only makes one stronger (item 7), whilst the 2015 sample strongly agreed. In terms of the isolation items (11-20), broadly, both samples tended to agree or strongly agree with most of the items (2005 [7 items], 2015 sample [9 items]), however the 2015 sample more so. Differences of kind can be discerned on items 14, 16, and 20, differences of degree on item 13.

With regards to the former, the 2005 sample either disagreed or strongly disagreed about the uncooperative and unsupportive statement about courts, whilst the 2015 participants mostly (50%) indicated that they had no opinion on the matter (item 14). Most of the 2005 new SAPS recruits strongly disagreed or disagreed that shift work and special duties influence their socialising with friends external to SAPS (item 16), whilst 2015 cadets held the opposite opinion. The 2015 cohort agreed or strongly agreed that generals do not really know what is happening at grass roots level; whereas the 2005 group felt that they did (item 20).

Commonly, one can spot differences of kind between the two sets of samples, in relation to the cynicism items (21-30). The 2005 group had middle ground between agreeing and disagreeing (5/5), whilst the 2015 group mostly agreed (7 items). More specifically, the differences in kind can be noted for items 25 and 28. The 2005 new SAPS recruits were of the opinion that most people respect the authority of police officials, whilst the 2015 new SAPS recruits disagreed or strongly disagreed that most people respect the authority of police officials. The 2005 cadets also had a more optimistic perception about the openness of the community with regards to police opinions and suggestions, compared to the 2015 student constables. The 2015 sample disagreed or strongly disagreed that members of the community are open to the opinions and suggestions of police officials.

Table 2

Frequency comparison of participants' responses between the 2005 sample (SAPS Basic Training Institute participants conducted by Steyn [2005]) and the 2015 sample (SAPS Chatsworth Basic Training Institute participants conducted by Maweni [2015]) to the 30-item classical police culture themes questionnaire

See overleaf

Item	Sample Category	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Did Not Complete
Police culture theme of solidarity							
1 I think that aPolice officialshould be one ofthe highest paid careers	2005 sample N	871	479	21	71	13	0
	2005 sample %	59.86%	32.92%	01.44%	04.88%	00.89%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	100	32	2	2	0	0
	2015 sample %	73.52%	23.53%	01.47%	01.47%	00.00%	00.00%
2 I feel it is my duty to rid the country of its bad elements.	2005 sample N	839	554	14	33	9	0
	2005 sample %	57.90%	38.23%	00.97%	02.28%	00.62%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	80	52	1	3	0	2
	2015 sample %	58.82%	38.25%	00.74%	2.20%	00.00%	1.44%
3 Police officials arecareful of how they behave in public.	2005 sample N	502	734	11	186	27	0
	2005 sample %	34.38%	50.27%	00.75%	12.74%	1.85%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	37	65	15	17	1	3
	2015 sample %	26.81%	47.10%	10.86%	12.31%	00.72%	02.17
4 You don't understand what it is to be a police official until you are a police official.	2005 sample N	658	527	7	209	59	0
	2005 sample %	45.07%	36.10%	00.48%	14.32%	04.04%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	90	37	2	7	1	1
	2015 sample %	65.21%	26.81%	01.44%	05.07%	00.72%	00.72%
5 Police officials have to look out for each other.	2005 sample N	1040	382	4	21	10	0
	2005 sample %	71.38%	26.22%	00.27%	01.44%	00.69%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	103	30	3	0	0	2
	2015 sample %	74.63%	21.73%	02.17%	00.00%	00.00%	01.45%
6 Members of the public, media and politicians are quick to criticise the police but seldom recognise the good that SAPS members do	2005 sample N	805	593	20	34	2	0
	2005 sample %	55.36%	40.78%	01.38%	02.34%	00.14%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	68	58	8	3	1	0
	2015 sample %	49.27%	42.03%	05.79%	02.17%	00.72%	00.00%
7 What does not kill a police official makes him or her stronger.	2005 sample N	390	627	243	130	29	0
	2005 sample %	27.48%	44.19%	17.12%	09.16%	02.04%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	59	56	12	7	3	1
	2015 sample %	42.75%	40.58%	08.69%	12.31%	02.17%	00.72
8 Most members of the public don't really know what is going on 'out there.'	2005 sample N	559	723	15	132	28	0
	2005 sample %	38.37%	49.62%	01.03%	09.06%	01.92%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	48	65	8	16	1	0
	2015 sample %	34.78%	47.10%	05.79%	11.59%	00.72%	00.00%
9 A good police official takes nothing at face value.	2005 sample N	535	672	76	142	19	0
	2005 sample %	37.05%	46.54%	05.26%	09.83%	01.32%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	49	62	20	3	1	3
	2015 sample %	35.51%	44.93%	14.49%	02.17%	00.72%	02.17%
10 To be a police official is not just another job it is a'higher calling.'	2005 sample N	942	453	15	35	13	0
	2005 sample %	64.61%	31.07%	01.03%	02.40%	00.89%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	75	49	6	7	1	0
	2015 sample %	54.35%	35.51%	04.34%	05.07%	00.72%	00.00%

Item	Sample Category	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Did Not Complete
Police culture theme of Isolation							
11 I tend to socialise less with my friends outside of the police since I have become a police	2005 sample N	289	607	41	391	131	0
	2005 sample %	19.81%	41.60%	02.81%	26.80%	08.98%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	25	71	6	24	10	2
	2015 sample %	18.12%	51.45%	04.35%	17.39%	07.25%	01.45%
12 I prefer socialising with my colleagues to socialising with non-members.	2005 sample N	252	517	45	536	108	0
	2005 sample %	17.28%	35.46%	03.09%	36.76%	07.41%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	22	53	15	43	4	1
	2015 sample %	15.94%	38.41%	10.87%	31.16%	02.89%	00.72%
13 I don't really talking in-depth to people outside of the SAPS about my work	2005 sample N	666	634	23	100	36	0
	2005 sample %	45.65%	43.45%	01.58%	06.85%	02.47%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	56	69	1	6	5	1
	2015 sample %	40.57%	50.00%	00.72%	04.35%	03.62%	00.72%
4 Being a police official made me realise how uncooperative and non-supportive the courts are	2005 sample N	118	309	298	541	188	0
	2005 sample %	08.12%	21.25%	20.50%	37.21%	12.93%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	7	19	69	35	7	1
	2015 sample %	05.07%	13.97%	50.00%	25.36%	05.07%	00.72%
15 My husband/ wife,boyfriend/ girlfriend tends not to understand what being a police official is all about.	2005 sample N	255	611	71	394	128	0
	2005 sample %	17.48%	41.88%	04.87%	27.00%	08.77%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	19	56	12	37	13	1
	2015 sample %	13.77%	40.58%	08.69%	26.81%	09.42%	00.72%
16 Shift work and special duties influence my socialising with friends outside theSAPS.	2005 sample N	106	366	127	216	641	0
	2005 sample %	07.28%	25.14%	08.72%	14.84%	44.02%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	17	45	20	45	9	2
	2015 sample %	12.31%	32.61%	14.49%	32.61%	06.52%	01.44%
17I feel like I belong with my work colleagues more every day, and less with people that I have to police	2005 sample N	172	623	82	492	87	0
	2005 sample %	11.81%	42.79%	05.63%	33.79%	05.98%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	12	56	15	46	8	1
	2015 sample %	08.69%	40.58%	10.87%	33.33%	05.79%	00.72%
.8 As a police official, I am being watched critically bymembers of thecommunity, even in my social life.	2005 sample N	778	520	42	101	18	0
	2005 sample %	53.32%	35.64%	02.88%	06.92%	01.23%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	65	53	14	4	1	1
	2015 sample %	47.10%	38.40%	10.14%	02.89%	00.72%	00.72%

19 I can be more open with my work colleagues than with members of the public.	2005 sample N	414	679	47	258	57	0
	2005 sample %	28.45%	46.67%	03.23%	17.73%	03.92%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	36	63	13	22	3	1
	2015 sample %	26.08%	45.65%	09.42%	15.94%	02.17%	00.72%
20 Generals do not really know what is happening at grass roots level.	2005 sample N	275	344	155	498	188	0
	2005 sample %	18.84%	23.56%	10.62%	34.11%	12.88%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	23	35	39	29	10	2
	2015 sample %	16.66%	25.36%	28.26%	21.01%	07.25%	01.45%

Item	Sample Category	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Did Not Complete
Police culture theme of Cynicism							
21 Most people lie when answering questions posed by police officials.	2005 sample N	357	877	73	129	22	0
	2005 sample %	24.49%	60.15%	05.01%	08.85%	01.51%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	21	74	27	14	2	0
	2015 sample %	15.22%	53.62%	19.57%	10.14%	01.45%	00.00%
22 Most people do not hesitate to go out of their way to help someone in trouble.	2005 sample N	152	648	33	538	87	0
	2005 sample %	10.43%	44.44%	02.26%	36.90%	05.97%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	11	57	12	53	4	1
	2015 sample %	07.97%	41.30%	08.69%	38.40%	02.89%	00.72%
23 Most people are untrustworthy and dishonest.	2005 sample N	313	779	29	301	38	0
	2005 sample %	21.44%	53.36%	01.99%	20.62%	02.60%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	15	61	21	39	0	2
24 Most people would steal if they knew they would not get caught.	2015 sample %	10.87%	44.20%	15.21%	28.26%	00,00%	01.44%
	2005 sample N	478	747	26	169	39	0
	2005 sample %	32.76%	51.20%	01.78%	11.58%	02.67%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	32	65	19	20	1	1
	2015 sample %	23.18%	47.10%	01.76%	14.49%	00.72%	00.72%
25 Most people respect the authority of police officials.	2005 sample N	246	798	16	358	38	0
	2005 sample %	16.90%	54.81%	01.10%	24.59%	02.61%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	6	43	6	70	12	1
	2015 sample %	04.35%	31.15%	04.35%	50.72%	08.69%	00.72%
26 Most people lackthe proper level of respect for policeofficials.	2005 sample N	249	784	24	348	51	0
	2005 sample %	17.10%	53.85%	01.85%	23.90%	03.50%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	21	66	12	37	2	0
	2015 sample %	15.21%	47.83%	08.70%	26.81%	01.44%	00.00%
27 Police officialswill never trust members of the Community enough to work together effectively.	2005 sample N	148	482	38	636	154	0
	2005 sample %	10.15%	33.06%	02.61%	43.62%	10.56%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	4	48	15	61	10	0
	2015 sample %	02.89%	34.78%	10.87%	44.20%	07.25%	00.00%

28 Most members of the community are open to the opinions and suggestions of police officials.	2005 sample N	175	841	45	363	32	0
	2005 sample %	12.02%	57.76%	03.09%	24.93%	02.20%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	4	39	21	65	9	0
	2015 sample %	02.89%	28.26%	15.22%	47.10%	06.52%	00.00%
29 Members of the community will not trust police officials enough to work together effectively.	2005 sample N	85	586	38	605	143	0
	2005 sample %	05.83%	40.22%	02.61%	41.52%	09.81%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	6	51	14	61	6	0
	2015 sample %	04.35%	36.95%	10.14%	44.20%	04.35%	00.00%
30 The community does not support the police and the police do not trust the public.	2005 sample N	94	419	55	638	248	0
	2005 sample %	06.46%	28.82%	03.78%	43.88%	17.06%	00.00%
	2015 sample N	6	28	26	55	22	1
	2015 sample %	04.35%	20.29%	18.84%	39.86%	15.94%	00.72%
Note. 'N' symbolizes number; '%' denotes percentage							

5.2 Measuring police culture solidarity, isolation and cynicism

The challenge for operationalising the constructs of police culture solidarity, police culture isolation and police culture cynicism, is the amorphous nature, as constructs are multi-dimensional. As a consequence, it was necessary to create a composite measure of each scale (scale of solidarity [items 1-10]; scale of isolation [items 11-20]; scale of cynicism [items 21-30] as the literature does not clearly indicate how each item relates. The study makes the argument that each individual item measures perceive solidarity, isolation and cynicism. The critical question regarding the measurement of the constructs is whether each item, based on the literature, is valid on its face as a measure of dimension of the constructs of solidarity, isolation and cynicism.

A decision needs to be made whether to analyse the data at the micro level or to create composite measures of more generalised multi-dimensional constructs. The analysis begins with the macro-level questions such as whether indicators evince the presence of traditional police culture themes of solidarity, isolation and cynicism amongst a representative sample of SAPS lateral entry recruits? To be able to answer this question one must ask, how isolated or cynical, as a general proposition, must the police be in order to assess whether one is willing to conclude that the police culture themes of solidarity, isolation and cynicism are sufficiently present. The decision is somewhat unpredictable but the traits must be present in ample extent to substantiate a compelling assertion. An inclusive

mean score of twenty four (24) (60%) or more per individual participant on a particular police culture theme (for example, theme 1: Solidarity [items 1-10], on a scale of ten (10) to a possible forty (40), was selected as criteria, with the higher score demonstrating the greater presence of a particular police culture theme.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	I do not have an opinion	0	Agree	3	Strongly Agree	4

In other words, a cut-off mean score of no less than twenty- four (24) (60%), on a scale of zero (0) to a possible forty (40), with the higher score demonstrating the greater presence.

Table 3 below contains the mean scores and mean score percentages of participants' responses per police culture theme.

Overall mean score comparisons between the 2005 sample and the 2015 sample

Overall, Table 3 and Chart 1 indicate no statistically significant differences in the responses of participants between the 2005 and 2015 samples. In other words, both sets of new SAPS recruits, even though ten years apart, arrived for SAPS basic police training with predispositions in support of police culture of solidarity and isolation. However, a difference in kind, with regards to police culture cynicism can be observed.

More specifically, if one would strictly use the 60% cut-off indicator, the 2005 sample entered with cynical attitudes, whilst the 2015 cohort did not. Conversely, it would be meaningful to note that 2% shy of 60% is still a strong marker. Collaterally, more than half of the 2015 SAPS cadets had attitudes in support of police culture cynicism.

Table 3

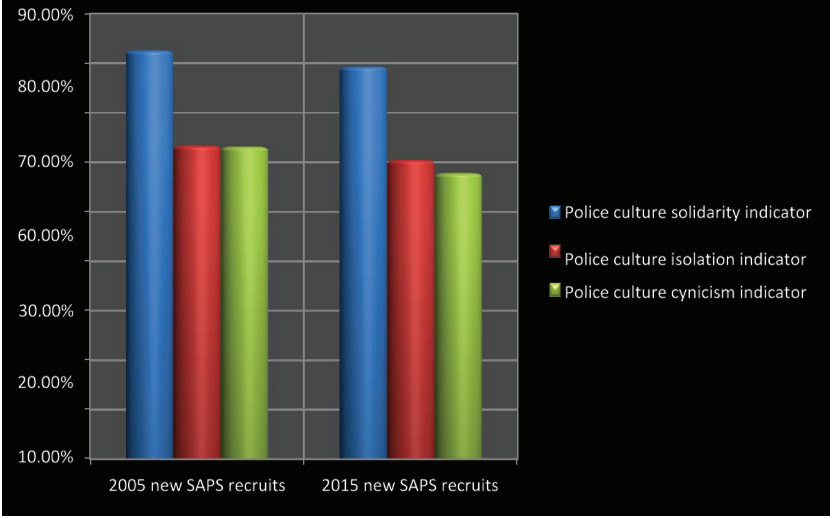
Mean score and mean score percentage comparison of 2005 SAPS participants and 2015 SAPS participants to the 30-item questionnaire measuring police culture themes of solidarity, isolation and cynicism

S	Solidarity mean score	Solidarity mean score %	Isolation mean score	Isolation mean score %	Cynicism mean Score	Cynicism mean score %	ROW TOTAL	
							M	%
2005	3.30	82.63%	2.53	63.41%	2.53	63.16%	2.80	70.07%
2015	3.17	79.35%	2.42	60.50%	2.31	57.84%	2.64	66.06%
RT	3.23	80.99%	2.47	61.95%	2.42	60.50%	2.72	68.06%

Note: 'M' reflects mean; '%' denotes percentage; 'S' signposts sample; and 'RT' represents row total.

Chart 1

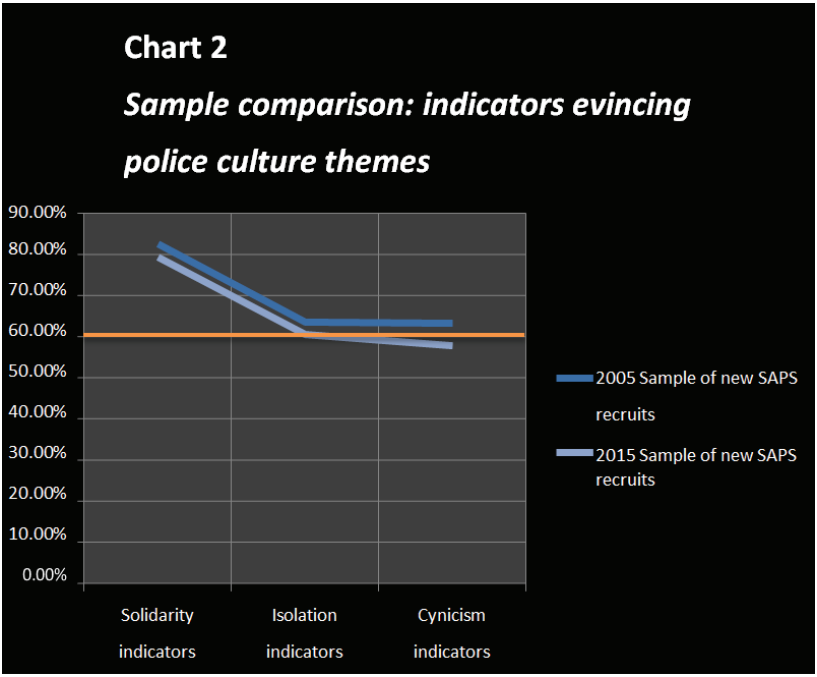
Mean score percentage comparison between the 2005 new SAPS recruits and the 2015 new SAPS recruits, on the 30-item police culture questionnaire, measuring solidarity, isolation, and cynicism



5.4 Mean score and mean score percentage comparisons on the 2005 and 2015 biographical variables

The data analysis indicated no statistically significant differences in terms of the 2015 sample's responses on the 30-item self-report police culture questionnaire (measuring police culture solidarity, isolation, and cynicism), with due consideration of the five categorical biographical independent variables of the participants. The article acknowledges that there are a myriad of other items that could have been employed to measure police culture themes of solidarity, isolation and cynicism but this should not be taken, in and of itself, as a limitation. All choices of measures are ultimately approximations of the true construct. The study furthermore does not assume a direct correlation between attitude and overt behaviour nor draw conclusions to all new recruits in the SAPS, nor to speak of the SAPS as a whole.

As indicated earlier, some contemporary ethnographers of police culture (Cockcroft 2013; O'Neill, Marks and Singh, 2007; Sklansky 2005), in support of the search for nuances, fashionably argue against presumably orthodox characterisations. The premise being novelty to the policing context will drastically change the police culture. Based on the data analyses the current study accepts both hypotheses. More specifically, a representative sample (138 out of a population of 140) of all new SAPS recruits that started their basic police training at the SAPS Chatsworth Basic Training Institute in July 2015 had moderate to strong attitudes in support of police culture themes of solidarity and isolation. Even though the study participants did not meet the predetermined cut-off mean score percentage of sixty (60), on the cynicism scale, the indicator shortfall of two percent (2%) is somewhat above the midpoint (50%), and an argument could be made, within relative terms, for attitudes in support of police culture cynicism. Thus, new SAPS cadets, recruited by the SAPS from other state departments, arrived for basic police training at the SAPS Chatsworth Basic Training Institute with traits of police culture that accentuate the cynicism of and isolation from the public. The study further found that the indicators evincing of police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism, between new SAPS recruits that started their basic police training.



Even though not statistically significant, the 2015 sample of new SAPS recruits arrived for basic police training with slightly weaker attitudes in support of police culture themes of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism, compared to the 2005 sample (Steyn 2006) of new SAPS recruits. In summary, the two sets of new SAPS recruits, while ten years apart, believe that their vocation, enacted in a dangerous and uncertain environment, is highly skilled and moral purposed, and can only be performed by unique individuals (appropriate for police work with characteristics such as toughness and suspiciousness, etc.) from broader society. Groups outside of the police (public, media and politicians) have very little regard and understanding of 'coalface' police work as reflected in unsatisfactory monetary compensation, cockeyed criticism and ill-considered prescriptions. These police officials isolate themselves from outsiders (former friends, family members/important others, community, courts, and top ranking officials), and favour mingling with their fellows. They deem that most folks lie when replying to questions tendered by police officials, would thieve if they knew they would not get netted, are untrustworthy and dishonest, not perturbed by the help cries

of others, dearth the decorous quantity of veneration for police officials, and are obtruded to the sentiments and promptings of police officials.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the above-mentioned findings of the study, it can be concluded that despite the new developments that have been introduced in an attempt to transform the SAPS, new recruits still possess traditional police culture traits such as isolating themselves from their former friends and family and favour mingling with their colleagues instead. These traits are in contrast to democratic policing, which primarily requires SAPS officials to be community orientated. Furthermore, it can be argued that the SAPS recruit individuals with characteristics in support of the organisations' culture, and therefore maintain the status quo. Lastly, the study findings reflects on the relevance of conventional police culture understandings in contemporary times.

This paper therefore recommends that the SAPS amend their recruitment criteria so that individuals with different characteristics from the organisations' culture can be employed. Furthermore, this study recommends that future research explore on this topic in order to establish the nature of other SAPS new recruits in various police training colleges within the country. As this study was confined to the Chatsworth training college, it would also be meaningful for future studies to reveal whether new recruits across the country share the same traits as the new recruits of this study.

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