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L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle
Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
A África e os desafios do Século XXI

إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**The Challenge of Policing: Law and Order in the
Streets of Post-Apartheid South Africa**

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Police reform is part of the debates and processes in transitional societies in the 21st century. These societies are transforming from colonialism, communism, conflict-ridden and varieties of authoritarianism towards democratic governance. Post-conflict African countries are characterised by uneven state and non-state partnerships in policing. However, there are tensions in state-civilian policing partnerships in security and development reform programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. This is partly attributed to the lack of an understanding of the context by policy makers and bureaucrats. Even though the context and priorities are different in transitional societies, the commonality is that police reform research typically focuses on crime reduction and prevention, police accountability, community policing, the law of policing, and public-police relationships. It is the police-public relations (in the context of transformation) in South Africa that is the subject of this paper. The paper argues that transforming the relationship between the police and communities in South African townships should not just be left for the formal application of democratic law. Rather we also need to understand the tensions and informalities in everyday policing (including policing migrants in South African streets) and both *the hidden and public transcripts* that are embedded in the social history and practice of policing in South Africa. These transcripts have implications for democratic policing and the post-1994 generation of police members. The re-militarisation of the South African Police Services is regressive and puts further strain on police-public relations.