BAD COP, BAD COP:
CORRUPTION IN THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE
CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This thesis comprehensively reviews literature pertaining to police corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police. In doing so, it organizes and synthesizes contemporary discourse on this topic and suggests areas for future scholarly study in order to better understand corruption in this particular case. This thesis argues that the global police corruption literature provides an analytical framework for assessing the breadth of the police corruption literature specific to the Buenos Aires Provincial Police. In this way, this thesis reviews the global police corruption literature and finds that scholars have researched four principal areas of study: the definitions and typologies of police corruption, the causes of police corruption, the nature and organization of police corruption, and preventive strategies. These areas of research and their key findings are subsequently employed as an analytical framework for organizing discussion of the case-specific literature and suggesting areas in need of further scholarly study on this particular case. This review finds that each of these main areas of study present topics that have been widely researched in the context of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police, as well as others that have received little or no attention and therefore merit further study.
This thesis is dedicated to my family and to Cristian for your unconditional love and support over these years. It truly means the world to me.

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2016 marks Argentina’s 33rd anniversary of uninterrupted democratic rule since the collapse of its most recent military dictatorship in 1983. In contrast with the country’s success in regaining civilian control over its military, Argentina’s failure to implement lasting policy reforms in its law enforcement institutions constitutes one of its most daunting contemporary challenges as it continues to consolidate democratic governance.¹ This failure is particularly surprising given that the police were actively involved alongside the military in human rights abuses under the 1976 to 1983 authoritarian regime (Eaton 2008, 6). From bribes and extortion to participation in kidnappings, organized crime rings, and narcotics trafficking, police corruption of a wide variety of forms is rampant in Argentina, particularly in the notorious Buenos Aires Provincial Police (colloquially referred to as the Bonaerense and hereinafter abbreviated PPBA for its Spanish acronym)².³ Systemic corruption of such magnitude threatens the very principles of the rule of law and government legitimacy on which democratic

¹ This failure is not limited to the police. See Spiller and Tommasi (2000) for an in-depth discussion of Argentina’s failures to achieve reforms through effective policymaking focused on the medium and long term. See also Tommasi (2010).
² Historically, among the most scandalous instances of PPBA involvement in corruption networks and organized crime have included alleged participation in the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy and the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish Center, the 1997 killing of photojournalist José Luis Cabezas, the 2004 kidnapping and murder of engineering student Axel Blumberg, and the 2011 participation in attempting to cover-up the kidnapping and murder of 12-year old Candela Sol Suárez (Seri and Estévez 2008, 4; Saín 2013). However, many forms of systemic corruption observable in the PPBA have been cited by the literature, among them the sale of illegal protection to criminals (Dewey 2011, 2012), theft of auto parts (Dewey 2011), active participation in drug trafficking organizations (Saín 2013), and collusion with corrupt politicians in sharing graft and in providing them police protection in the form of political policing (Eaton 2008, Boruchowicz and Wagner 2011). See Chapter 4 of this thesis for an in-depth discussion of the forms of corruption observed in the PPBA.
³ In addition to forms of systemic police corruption (see footnote ii), petty corruption is also rampant in Argentine police forces. A 2008 Latinobarometer poll asked respondents the probability of being able to bribe a police officer in their country. Fifty-nine percent of Argentines stated that the ability to do so was “somewhat likely” or “very likely”, nearly 20 percent higher than the average for Latin America (40.6 percent).
institutions are based, and its negative effects have empirical referents in an overall lack of confidence in Argentine police institutions. For example, in a 2015 survey conducted by Latinobarometer, nearly two-thirds of Argentines (65.9%) responded that they had either little or no confidence in the police. A similar number (65.3%) were either not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the functioning of police institutions in the country\textsuperscript{4,5}.

The significant consequences of police corruption on society and democratic governance are well documented. As with government corruption more generally, police corruption undermines the rule of law and the legitimacy of the state (Grabowsky and Larmour 2000, 2). Indeed, police officers are entrusted with significant powers, including coercion and (lethal) force. Due to the fact that these powers can be manipulated for private gain, there are many linkages between police corruption and abuses of human rights, which undermines not only security, but also civil and political rights (Chêne 2010). This becomes particularly evident when one takes into account the violent crimes in which the PPBA has been implicated; in this case, not only do the police become ineffective at maintaining public order, but in addition, they become one of the main factors that threaten public order in the first place. In the late 1990s, for example, it is estimated that approximately one-third of every homicide in Buenos Aires was at the hands of a police officer (Williams 2002, 88). The result is that, instead of security being

\textsuperscript{4} These percentages are comparable to the average of survey results for Latin American countries for the same year (approximately 62 percent reporting either little or no confidence in the police, and 65 percent being either not very or not at all satisfied with the functioning of police institutions in their country). However, the disparity is greater when compared to the other Southern Cone countries of Chile (36 and 49 percent, respectively) and Uruguay (47 and 55 percent, respectively).

\textsuperscript{5} Perhaps even more telling of public dissatisfaction with the police was a survey question in which respondents were asked to characterize the police as 1) increasingly respectful of human rights; 2) increasingly efficient; 3) increasingly transparent; 4) in possession of the resources it needs; and 5) none of the above. 62.4\% of Argentines responded “none of the above,” significantly higher than the regional average answering in this manner (49.1\%). Among the Southern Cone, only 31.9\% of Chileans and 44.8\% of Uruguayans surveyed gave this response.
provided by the state, it becomes a commodity to be bought and sold. This is illustrated by the fact that, in the Province of Buenos Aires, private security guards have outnumbered police officers since at least 2006 (Eaton 2008; Ungar 2007). In addition to the fact that this signifies the deterioration of one of the essential functions of the state and by extension state legitimacy, it also means that those least able to afford security—which tend to be those living in the areas most in need of it—will be those least able to obtain it and most susceptible to crime and police corruption. In this sense, police corruption contributes to the already highly unequal socioeconomic makeup of Argentina.

Intertwined with the above-mentioned effects of police corruption are also negative economic consequences. In his review of negative economic effects of corruption, Seligson (2002) highlights several effects of government corruption that collectively contribute to slowing economic growth. One such example is that low-level, “street” police corruption reduces government revenue by lowering or eliminating fines tied to law breaking in exchange for bribes to private pockets. Paradoxically, research on the PPBA has also found that the force itself is partially funded by income derived from illegal revenues; in this case, corruption may (interestingly) provide financial support to the police force, but it is almost always at the expense of citizen security given that these revenues come from police participation in illegal activities such as drug rings and kidnappings. An additional consequence relevant to note is the uneven and often inferior provision of public services that results from corruption (Seligson 2002). Police officers’ receipt of bribes allows them to focus their attention to those who pay bribes and

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6 The most recent year from which data could be located on the estimated number of private security forces in the province of Buenos Aires is from 2006, when an estimated 70,000 private security guards (Ungar 2007, 32). As of this writing, the PPBA has approximately 55,000 officers—still significantly less than the number of private security guards in 2006. The increasing trend towards greater reliance of citizens on private security observed in the 1990s and 2000s suggests that current figures have only continued to increase this disparity.
deny their services to (or use their police power to persecute) those who do not. This focus on private gain at the expense of the public good ultimately leads to a poorer quality of services provided to the public. Yet another example of negative economic consequences is that corruption often results in a reduction in human capital, as otherwise talented individuals engage in rent-seeking activities rather than productive ones (Mauro 1998). That is, in the context of the PPBA, both police have the incentive to spend greater time on carrying out corrupt behavior and less on providing quality policing.

The above-mentioned consequences of police corruption would be enough to justify in-depth study of any police force in which corruption is rampant. However, the case of the PPBA is even more pertinent given that the force has undergone two ambitious reform waves over the past two decades. Understanding these reforms, their objectives, and their results is crucial to understanding corruption in the PPBA. These reforms were pursued under the governorships of Eduardo Duhalde and Felipe Solá, yet ultimately were discarded in both instances with the arrival of opposition candidates to the province’s governorship. Both attempts aimed to reorganize, demilitarize, and in sum, democratize the police force—along with the province’s public security system more generally—and included a strong emphasis on anti-corruption and accountability mechanisms. Given the norm of corruption and impunity in Argentina’s public institutions, rampant corruption in the PPBA probably should not come as much of a surprise. Indeed, pervasive corruption and the public’s general lack of confidence in the PPBA can perhaps be best viewed as a mere example of broader institutional decay in Argentina’s public sector throughout the past century (Boruchowitz and Wagner 2011).

What are the causes of corruption in the PPBA? What does corruption in this police force look like? And why have comprehensive strategies aimed at preventing police corruption
ultimately failed? The latter question begs yet another: how can corruption be effectively addressed in the PPBA? This thesis aims to answer these questions—and to identify areas in need of more research in order to be able to answer them better—through a comprehensive review of the literature on this particular police force that deals with corruption in its ranks. Furthermore, this thesis argues that understanding conclusions reached by the global literature is an important means for assessing the breadth of our knowledge on the Argentine case; not only does no review of the literature on the Argentine case exist, but furthermore, literature on the PPBA does not tend to synthesize its findings and conclusions with those reached at the global level. The following sections explain the need for this comprehensive review and the methods employed by this research in order to be able to answer these important questions.

I. Research Justification and Hypothesis

Research on the PPBA has increased markedly over the past two decades since the institution of the first and second reform waves. A survey of this literature highlights that scholars have focused on an array of themes related to corruption in this police force and its causes, empirical manifestations, and strategies to address it. Most have in some way focused on one or both of the attempts at comprehensive reform in the PPBA (1997-1999 and 2004-2007), highlighting factors that inhibited their success and ultimately resulted in their premature ends and unfinished results (see for example Arslanián 2008, Eaton 2008, Estévez 2008, González 2005, Hinton 2005 and 2006, Kobilanski 2011, and Saín 2008). Other studies, albeit significantly less, have adopted different perspectives by focusing on the base of the organization and examining how these corruption networks function on a day-to-day basis (see for example Dewey 2011 and 2012, Klipphan 2004, Saín 2010b and 2013, and Vallespir 2002). However, despite the increased and varied amount of literature on police corruption in the PPBA, to date
no comprehensive review of existing literature on this case exists. Similarly, the PPBA literature itself only rarely tends to reference scholarly literature on police corruption outside of Argentina, which highlights an opportunity to better synthesize case-specific findings with conclusions reached at the global level.

This thesis is an attempt to fill this void. It is particularly intended to be of use to scholars engaged in the study of police corruption—in Argentina and beyond—insofar as it may permit for a clearer identification of what is known—and not known—on police corruption in this particular case. In doing so, I also suggest areas for future research in the field. To be sure, any such organization of existing literature on a particular case implies an organizational framework grounded on existing knowledge of the subject in question. It is in this vein that the central hypothesis of this thesis, as a stand-alone literature review, is that the global police corruption literature provides an analytical framework for assessing the breadth of the literature specific to the PPBA. The organization of discussion, then, will be guided by the global police corruption literature as a means of classification and organization of academic production on this particular case. The key research question is therefore: based on the global police corruption and case-specific literature, what is known and what do we still need to research in order to further understand corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police?

II. Methods

Given the nature of the proposed research, the methods followed were rather straightforward. Essentially, the methods involved an in-depth review of literature on police corruption at the global and case-specific levels. In both cases, the type of review conducted is best characterized as an integrative literature review given that the aim of this research is to review and synthesize the police corruption literature at the global and case-specific levels in an
integrated manner so as to generate new frameworks and perspectives on the topic (Torraco 2005, 356). In the case of the global literature, nearly all literature reviewed consisted of scholarly sources, namely peer-reviewed journal articles and books. Some literature was also obtained from non-scholarly sources, namely NGO reports and government agencies. Other non-scholarly sources, such as newspaper articles, opinion pieces, or non-peer reviewed articles were not included in the review. In the case of the PPBA-specific literature, the majority of literature reviewed also consisted of peer-reviewed articles, books, and book chapters. However, for the sake of providing an exhaustive review and given that the case-specific literature is much smaller than the global literature, non-scholarly sources from NGOs and government agencies were also relied on as sources of information to a greater extent than they were for the global literature review. Other non-scholarly sources, namely newspaper articles, were used solely as source of information for interviews with public officials and scholars and not as a source for research in their own right. The methods followed for selection of global and case-specific literature are further detailed below.

This research does not limit literature to a specific time frame. However, with regard to literature specific to the PPBA, it is worth noting that most literature dates from after the 1997 reform wave; case-specific literature prior to this period is more limited. Additionally, while there is literature that covers the period from the end of the second reform attempt in 2007 to the present, the amount of this literature is significantly lower than that which focuses on researching police corruption reform waves encompassing the years from 1997 to 2007. The review of global and case-specific literature was carried out as follows:
i. Review of the Global Police Corruption Literature

In contrast with the review of case-specific literature (see below), the review of the global literature is not exhaustive. Given the size of the global literature and the focus of this thesis, it was not feasible nor was it necessary to exhaustively review all scholarly production on police corruption at the global level. Rather, a sufficient quantity was reviewed so as to establish an analytical framework with which the case-specific literature can be assessed. The strategy employed for selecting this literature was the “snowballing” method. This approach consisted of first reviewing several existing literature reviews of police corruption and subsequently reviewing relevant sources cited within these reviews as means for finding additional literature. These sources, in turn, were reviewed and their sources were also scanned for relevant sources on the topic. This process was repeated several times. Similarly, the snowballing strategy also consisted of conducting a literature search of journal article databases to find relevant literature. These sources were reviewed and, in turn, relevant sources cited within them were subsequently reviewed.

As literature was reviewed, notes were taken on the key salient points and findings of each work. While the organization of these notes was initially made based on exploratory descriptions of areas of scholarly interest, these areas of interest became clearer and more defined as more literature was reviewed. This, in turn, allowed for integrating these exploratory descriptions into broader areas of scholarly research encompassing larger quantities of work. The review of additional literature was stopped once new literature consulted as a result of the snowballing method repeatedly reinforced the areas of scholarly research that had been established by the review. This in-depth review yielded the finding that most literature on police corruption has addressed one or more of the following areas:
1. Definitions and typologies of police corruption

2. Causes of police corruption

3. The nature and organization of corruption in police forces

4. Preventive measures to combat police corruption

The findings of this global review are summarized in-depth in this thesis, each with its own separate chapter. While the main purpose of summarizing this literature is to provide a framework of lines of research with which the case-specific literature can be assessed, a secondary contribution of this research is that it has succinctly reviewed and synthesized decades of research on police corruption, which is of benefit to all scholars of police corruption even beyond the Argentine case.

ii. Review of the Case-Specific Literature

This review is an exhaustive survey of accessible literature on corruption in the PPBA. The strategy for locating literature was the same snowballing approach employed in the global literature search, with the difference that there was no review of the PPBA literature already in existence from which literature could be drawn. Instead, the snowball method began through an initial search of article databases as well as literature that had already been read by this researcher as part prior study of the PPBA. The snowballing continued until an exhaustive search of existing and available literature was completed. Scholarly contributions to this case are assessed and discussed using the above-mentioned framework established by the global literature as a guide. In this way, the aim of this research is to identify congruence and divergence in the global and case-specific literature in order to assess areas in which the case-specific literature is comprehensive and others in which it is lacking.
III. Organization of this Thesis

This thesis will proceed as follows. The first chapter reviews definitions and typologies of police corruption that have been developed and refined over more than half a century of scholarly research. While no case-specific literature deals with the issue of definitions of police corruption specifically, a review of the global literature is nevertheless crucial in order to clearly establish what is—and is not—meant by the term “police corruption,” to delineate its boundaries, and to categorize common types corrupt police behavior.

The second chapter proceeds to review causes of police corruption described by the global literature. The chapter organizes this literature based on the predominant themes and research agendas discussed at the global level in order to organize scholarly production in this area and synthesize key arguments and conclusions. The third chapter proceeds by using these findings as a framework for assessing the causes of corruption identified by scholars of the PPBA. Areas of agreement and differences between the literatures are highlighted and the chapter concludes by suggesting areas for future case-specific research.

The fourth chapter reviews and organizes research that has examined empirical manifestations of corruption and corruption networks at the global and case-specific levels. While research in this area is limited (hence the global and case-specific literatures being combined into one chapter), sources of information reviewed are nevertheless diverse and include commission findings from corruption investigations, surveys of police officers, personal interviews conducted by scholars, as well as case studies. This chapter proceeds by using this framework in order to compare findings at the global level to those obtained through field research and interviews of the PPBA. Areas for future research are also proposed based on this review.
The fifth chapter proceeds by reviewing possible preventive strategies suggested by scholars at the global level in order to effectively fight police corruption, once again organizing the discussion based on the predominant arguments and conclusions that have been reached by scholars. The sixth chapter relates these findings to those developed by research on the PPBA by reviewing the experiences of the two prior police reform attempts in the PPBA and scholars’ suggestions for reigning in corruption in this police force as a means to better explain reasons for both efforts’ ultimate downfall, suggest alternative conditions and strategies necessary for successful reform, and highlight areas that would benefit from further scholarly study. The final chapter briefly summarizes the contributions of this thesis to the literature.
CHAPTER 1

DEFINITIONS AND TYPOLOGIES OF POLICE CORRUPTION

The importance of clearly defining what is meant by police corruption is difficult to overemphasize. Indeed, conceptual clarity carries real and concrete implications for the design, implementation, and effectiveness of public policy. Further, having a clear definition of police corruption has important implications for determining the extent of corruption as well as its causes. As Loree (2006, 3) notes, without a conceptual, policy, or legal definition, the measurement of the extent and determination of the causes of corruption is quite difficult. In other words, it is important to be able to distinguish corrupt behavior from other forms of police deviance or misconduct. As this chapter will discuss, this is not an easy or uncontroversial task given that there is discord in the literature regarding what constitutes corruption—whether police corruption or otherwise.

To be sure, from a policymaking standpoint, it is not the definition itself that is of greatest use so much as are the typologies that allow for clearly identifying varieties of corrupt police practices as well as distinguishing these actions from other forms of misconduct or deviance, such as the use of excessive force, discrimination, or violations of regulations (Prenzler 2009, 16-17). For example, an effective tool at combating police corruption has been the introduction of training and guidance that clearly and realistically describes corrupt actions in practice (Goldstein 1975, 41; Punch 2000, 318). In this way, clear identification of the types of corrupt behavior and their description is of great use for the design and implementation of anti-corruption policies. Nevertheless, arriving at such typologies first implies a having a clear definition of what corruption is and is not in the first place.
It is in this vein that this section will discuss definitions and typologies of police corruption that have been contributed by the scholarly literature. It begins by reviewing scholarly discourse related to defining the concept and highlights areas of discord, namely debates regarding what constitutes a “misuse” of one’s office, the extent to which non-monetary forms of gain from corruption are consistent with its definition, and several “grey areas” in policing that further complicate scholarly agreement on defining the concept. Building on this discussion, the subsequent section reviews key literature on typologies of police corruption noting that variations in the latter are heavily influenced by debates regarding its definition.

I. Defining Police Corruption

Despite some scholars’ assessment that strong agreement exists among definitions of police corruption in the literature (see for example Withrow and Dailey 2004), still others note a general lack of such conceptual clarity and agreement on the term (Goldstein 1975; Porter and Warrender 2009; Sayed and Bruce 1998a; Simpson 1977). Paradoxically, both groups are correct in their observation. On the one hand, definitions of police corruption have very closely mirrored a commonly-employed definition of public sector corruption more generally as “the misuse of public office for private gain” (Rose-Ackerman 1999, 91) to the extent that scholars have generally focused on two essential components: the means used by a corrupt official and the ends said official pursues. In this way, scholars of police corruption have tended to agree on the fact that police corruption involves some degree of abuse of an officer’s authority (means) in order to obtain some sort of gain (end). Discord arises, however, when one looks more specifically at scholars’ interpretations of what may constitute “misuse of authority” and “gain”. Similarly, the question of who gains has also given rise to divergent opinions among scholars. Furthermore, defining the boundaries or “grey areas” of police corruption versus misconduct or even
acceptable behavior is a point of contention in the literature that has given rise to divergent definitions of police corruption.

It is worth noting that debates in the police corruption literature regarding definitions mirror existing scholarly discourse in the corruption literature more generally. The above-mentioned “traditional” definition of corruption is not without its criticism. On one hand, it relies heavily on a legalistic view of corruption (Svennson 2005, 20); corruption is an ethical problem and views regarding ethics and morality vary across cultures, for which reason scholars have argued for greater cultural relativism in defining corruption (Schwenke 2000). Similarly, this definition is focused heavily on office or bureaucratic settings and does not take into account the detrimental role played by political corruption in participatory democracy by excluding citizens from decisions that affect them (Warren 2006, 804). In essence, then, one of the central issues with defining corruption is that all definitions are based on the conception of the state in a specific place and/or historical time, and therefore what is considered a corrupt practice may change with time and place (Johnston 1986). In this way, while the traditional definition of “misuse of authority for private gain” has proven useful and is widely cited as a general definition, it is important that these nuances and areas of discord be taken into account in any discussion aimed at defining corruption—whether in the police or otherwise. Indeed, as discussed in the following sections, the same areas of discord among scholars are equally present in the literature focused exclusively on defining police corruption.

i. Misuse of Authority

A review of several key definitions can shed light on the discord that exists on the aforementioned points. McMullan’s (1961, 183) definition of corruption—which, while not
limited to police officers specifically, has been frequently cited by the police corruption literature—considers a corrupt public official as one who:

“accepts money or money’s worth for doing something that he is under a duty to do anyway, that he is under a duty not to do, or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons.”

Roebuck and Barker (1974), focusing on police corruption specifically, offer another broad definition:

“[Corruption is] any type of proscribed police behavior engaged in by a law enforcement officer who receives or expects to receive, by virtue of his official position, an actual or potential unauthorized material reward or gain” (emphasis in original).

Goldstein (1975) offers a more succinct definition of police corruption as:

“the misuse of authority by a police officer in a manner designed to produce personal gain for the officer or for others.”

All three definitions recognize that the resulting or expected gain is due to one’s position. Indeed, as Klockars (1983, 334) notes, “if police officers steal from the scene of a crime they are called to investigate, they are corrupt. If they steal from their families, from their friends, or from stores and homes without the cover of their police role, they are merely thieves.” However, it is clear is that McMullan takes a broader approach at interpreting misuse of one’s authority than do Roebuck and Barker and Goldstein; in fact, the term is not specifically mentioned by McMullan, who considers an official engaging in wrongdoing (e.g. accepting money for performing his or her duty) to obtain some sort of gain as corrupt. For McMullan, such an act is corruption regardless of whether a clear misuse of authority takes place. This approach bears great resemblance to Kleinig (1996, 165), who notes that motivation is key to understanding corruption: “Behavior is not made less corrupt by the mere fact that officers do what they should be doing because of the inducements sought or accepted” (emphasis in original). By contrast,
Roebuck and Barker emphasize that the behavior in question must be proscribed (unlawful) for an act to be corrupt and that, furthermore, the gain must be material. Stoddard’s (1968) definition also focuses on the requisite of illegality in defining a corrupt act.

This brings forth an important point raised by Sayed and Bruce (1998a), which is the variation between what the authors identify as “formal” and “social” approaches to defining police corruption. These scholars note that the formal approach takes its most extreme form in an entirely legalistic definition of corruption (e.g. “an unlawful exchange between two parties”) while the social approach focuses on terms such as “immoral” or “lacking integrity.” However, neither approach is without its shortcomings; the former can lead to many acts often considered corrupt being excluded from the definition, whereas the latter—which is evident in McMullan’s aforementioned definition including actions carried out for “improper reasons” as corrupt—is too broad insofar as it is difficult to reach consensus on what moral or “improper” behaviors are and are not. As the authors rightly note, a solid definition requires terminology that is broad but not vague (Sayed and Bruce 1998a, 7).

Sherman’s work sheds considerable light on this issue. Sherman (1978, 30) defines police corruption as “the illegal use of organizational power for personal gain”; however, he qualifies the term “illegal” to mean the violation of any civil, criminal, or administrative law. In doing so, Sherman broadens the types of acts that can be considered corrupt. For example, the acceptance of a gratuity or free meal in exchange for patrolling a particular establishment more than others may not be in violation of a criminal or civil law, but if department regulations prohibit the acceptance of any type of gratuity, then said act is corrupt according to Sherman’s definition. Yet another important point made by Sherman is his use of the term “organizational power” as opposed to “authority” or “occupational power”; in doing so, he includes not only the legal
powers of the police but also the powers granted to the police as an organization, such as access to police resources and information, influence over fellow officers within the organization, and the credibility that police officers tend to enjoy outside the organization, such as in the legal system (Sayed and Bruce 1998a, 7).

\[ \text{ii. Gain} \]

Goldstein’s definition above is broader than the others in terms of its interpretation of gain. In contrast to the other definitions, Goldstein highlights that gain does not necessarily have to be in the form of financial benefit; greater status, prestige, or power can also function as strong motivators and are a clear gain in themselves and for what they, in turn, can secure an officer over time—such as promotions, higher salary, greater authority and/or access within the organization, etc. Carter (1990, 88) also mentions the importance of status and psychologically rewarding experiences as motivators for corruption.

The question of who gains also varies among these definitions and scholars more generally. While Roebuck and Barker seem to implicitly emphasize personal gain (as does Sherman in his aforementioned definition), and still other scholars express ambivalence or uncertainty regarding whether gain must be personal (see Klockars 1983, 336-337), Goldstein indicates that gain need not be personal so long as someone gains as a result. Subsequent scholars have broadened definitions of police corruption to more clearly articulate this point. For example, Punch (1985) broadened McMullan’s definition by adding misuse of authority pursued for a wider group (e.g. the police institution). In a similar fashion, Kleinig (1996, 166) offers a rather inclusive definition of corruption that builds on the aforementioned definitions to account for an officer’s true motivation in determining whether an act is corrupt, while also including the fact that gain need not be merely personal:
“Police officers act corruptly when, in exercising or failing to exercise their authority, they act with the primary intention of furthering private or departmental/divisional advantage.”

Kleinig’s definition makes clear the point that in addition to knowing the means and ends of a corrupt act, knowing motivation is also important (albeit not always possible in practice). For example, according to Kleinig’s definition the acceptance of a free meal would not be considered corrupt if the officer had no intention of “exercising or failing to exercise” his or her authority as a result of said free meal. If, however, the officer bases his or her actions on the receipt of a free meal or other gratuity, then the act is clearly corrupt7.

As noted in this section, despite agreement on the surface of scholars’ definitions of police corruption involving some degree of misuse of an officer’s authority in order to obtain some sort of gain, significant variation exists on how these scholars define said misuse of authority and gain, as well as whether said gain has to be personal or may include a larger group or even the entire organization. Sayed and Bruce (1998a) developed a working definition of police corruption that aims to integrate these discordant components:

“Police corruption is any illegal conduct or misconduct involving the use of occupational power for personal, group, or organizational gain.”

The scholars’ definition is succinct and parsimonious while also being sufficiently inclusive of the array of manifestations of questionable police behavior that go beyond the mere acceptance of bribes or extortion. In this way, Sayed and Bruce’s definition emphasizes that police corruption 1) need not be only illegal conduct but also any misconduct prohibited by the police organization; 2) can include the use of one’s own position as a police officer but also the police occupation and the powers given to officers as a result (e.g. credibility, resources,

7 For an in-depth discussion on this point, see Kleinig (1996), Chapter 9.
information); and 3) the fact that gain need not only be personal, but rather of a group or even of the entire police institution.

It is for this reason that this definition will be adopted for the purposes of discussing police corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police in this thesis. Indeed, as will be noted later, corruption in this police force goes far beyond the individual-level corruption emphasized by earlier scholars and, indeed, has reached systemic proportions affecting all levels of the institution, in many cases not only in the pursuit of individual or even group gain, but also for the gain of the police department as a whole. The systemic nature of corruption in this force as well as the varieties of police corruption that have been documented over the past decades—ranging from bribery and extortion to participation in kidnappings, collusion with drug cartels, and political policing—makes an inclusive definition necessary in order to take into account the full nature and extent of corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police.

iii. Boundaries and “Grey Areas”

As Kleinig (1996) notes, if we accept corruption as an ethical problem, it is clear that the boundaries will be unclear. Focusing on these boundaries can assist in clarifying corrupt acts from other forms of misconduct or deviance. In his valuable review of police corruption literature, Newburn (1999) identifies three ethical boundaries at which scholars often dispute whether or not an act constitutes a corrupt practice.

The first boundary is that of gratuities or other perks versus more serious forms of corruption. On one hand, policing is a public good and it is therefore clear why providing services to police officers who have the duty to serve citizens anyway is problematic. The acceptance of gratuities can easily detract from the ‘democratic ethos of policing’ (Kleinig, 1996, 178). By contrast, Goldstein (1975, 5) emphasizes that accepting gratuities or free meals is
on the periphery of the corruption problem and is not of great concern, although he does acknowledge their problematic nature and suggests that a clear code of ethics within police departments is needed in order to draw the line in practice. Sherman (1978) notes that reform police departments have often taken a hardline stance against accepting gratuities as they are seen as a gateway to more serious forms of corruption. Kleinig (1996) addresses this issue in depth and argues that an officer’s motivation is key to determining whether or not such an act is corrupt. In an empirical study based on survey data from Australia, Prenzler and Mackay (1995) noted that, while the stance of the general public and police departments on the acceptance of gifts and gratuities was almost universally condemned, police attitudes on the acceptance of such gratuities, based on other surveys conducted in the literature, were not in line with these attitudes.  

This boundary is closely related with yet another: the extent to which minor forms of corruption can progress into more serious forms. In his 1985 paper “Becoming Bent,” Sherman discusses the psychological process through which officers progress in order to justify more serious forms of corruption in the future. He argues that there are stages to this process and that each stage requires making a moral decision and a subsequent “redefining of self.” Through this process, an officer gradually comes to view progressively more serious forms of corruption as acceptable. Punch (2000, 315) also reinforces this “slippery slope” of police corruption. Indeed, the hardline stance generally taken by police departments against the acceptance of any gifts or gratuities is in line with these views, even if, as noted above by Prenzler and Mackay (1995), this

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8 Withrow and Dailey (2004) adopt a unique perspective on corrupt exchanges by arguing that the intention of both givers and receivers is important in determining whether an exchange is corrupt, outlining a three-fold typology for both givers and receivers; the true nature of corruption is thus determined by where one’s intent fell on this spectrum combined with the intent of the other party.
stance does not necessarily coincide with the views of police officers themselves.

A third boundary, on which a substantial amount of literature has been developed, is the extent to which “noble cause” corruption (also referred to as the “Dirty Harry Problem” or process corruption) is, in fact, corrupt behavior. While it can take on different forms in practice, noble cause corruption generally involves some sort of manipulation of evidence (e.g. stealing from a crime scene, bribing a witness) in order to secure a conviction of an individual arrested by the police. Writing extensively on the issue, Kleinig (2002) notes that noble cause corruption should not be considered on par with other forms of corruption because the end is to secure a conviction of someone believed to be guilty; hence there is no placement of one’s own interests above the public good as is characteristic of police corruption more generally. 9

However, it is clear that noble cause corruption is, nevertheless, problematic. First, if we accept Sherman’s “slippery slope” argument, then it is clear that the moral leap taken to justify tampering with evidence can easily give way to the justification of other prohibited and potentially corrupt acts. Secondly, if we accept that gain need not be personal but can also be organizational, then noble cause corruption can easily fit into the definition of police corruption as an abuse of occupational power for (in this case) organizational gain. Lastly, it is difficult to assess one’s true motivation in such acts; perhaps the officer tampering with evidence does want to secure a conviction for the public good, but he or she may also want the recognition and status associated with playing a major role in securing said conviction. In this latter case, the motivation is not so much noble as it is personal gain. Therefore, regardless of where noble cause corruption ultimately falls on the corruption spectrum, it is clearly a problematic practice. As

9 Klockars (1985) also analyzes the “Dirty Harry Problem” in depth and, based on a review of the literature, summarizes potential, albeit admittedly defective, solutions to this question of police ethics.
Kleinig (2002, 291) notes in his review on this issue, while the practice is a common occurrence in police work and not infrequently viewed by police officers as a legitimate crime-fighting tactic, it is, at the same time, almost universally condemned by police leaders and the public.

As this section has emphasized, discussion related to defining police corruption and delineating corrupt practices from those that are not has received extensive attention in the global literature. These definitions are important not only from the standpoint of ensuring scholarly rigor, but also from a policymaking perspective insofar as any efforts to institute effective measures to fight police corruption require a knowledge of what corruption is and is not. In this regard, scholarly debates on defining and refining what is meant by police corruption have given way to typologies of corrupt police behavior which are of great use to police agencies and academics alike. These typologies and their contribution to the police corruption literature are the focus of the next section.

II. Typologies of Police Corruption

The inherent value of typologies of police corruption is that they provide a more precise description and delineation of corrupt behavior than do definitions alone. Of course, the inherent drawback is that disagreement on the nature of a particular behavior may give way to it either not being included in a typology or uncertainty about how said behavior is best categorized in practice. Despite these issues, and in contrast to the wealth of literature focused on revising definitions of police corruption, literature focused on typologies of police corruption, for all its breadth, demonstrates relative consistency across decades of research.

Perhaps the best-known typology of police corruption is that identified by Roebuck and Barker (1974). In constructing their typology, the authors argue that deviant behavior can be analyzed across several dimensions: the acts and actors involved; the norms violated (e.g.
administrative, legal, or both); the degree of peer group support of the behavior; the organizational degree of deviance (e.g. opportunistic corruption versus organized, premeditated corruption); and the police department’s reaction to corruption (which may range from acceptance to criminal prosecution) (427). Based on these considerations the authors develop an eight-fold typology of police corruption:

- Corruption of Authority: an officer receives something due to their position but is not actually breaking the law (e.g. free gifts, meals, etc.)
- “Kickbacks”: an officer receives things for referring business to others
- Opportunistic Theft: stealing from arrestees
- “Shakedowns”: An officer accepts a bribe in return for not following through a criminal violation
- Protection of Illegal Activity: police protection of illegal activity which allows it to continue
- “The Fix”: undermining criminal investigations
- Direct Criminal Activities: a police officer commits an actual crime (e.g. drug trafficking; kidnapping)
- Internal Payoffs: privileges within the police force are bartered, e.g. shifts, holidays

Punch (1985) adds a ninth category to the typology:

- “Flaking” or “Padding”: planting or adding to evidence.

The categorizations above are by no means mutually exclusive; it is quite feasible, in fact, for a corrupt act to include two or more of such categories. For example, officers who protect illegal activities (e.g. drug trafficking) may also be directly involved in drug trafficking themselves. Furthermore, receiving internal payoffs may be dependent on an officer engaging in certain corrupt behavior, such as sharing monies obtained from bribes or planting/adding evidence in an investigation.

While the above typology is a useful tool to classify varieties of corrupt police behavior, it does not in itself clarify the problematic lines of characterizing corruption from other forms of police deviance or misconduct. That is, all corruption is deviant and an example of misconduct, but not all deviance or misconduct is necessarily corruption. More recently, scholars have
endeavored to characterize police behavior based on where it falls within this spectrum of deviance, and provide typologies of behaviors falling under each of these categorizations, such as that of Roebuck and Barker included above.

Punch (2000) developed a three-tier classification system of categorizing police deviance: misconduct, corruption, and police crime. Misconduct involves breaking internal rules or procedures (e.g. sleeping on duty, falsely claiming illness to not come in to work) and they are generally investigated and sanctioned internally (Punch 2000, 302). Corruption, by contrast, involves acts united by the fact that they involve gain (whether personal or otherwise) in exchange for an abuse of one’s position. Lastly, police crime involves breaking the law (not simply internal regulations as is the case with misconduct) in serious ways—including excessive violence, drug dealing, theft, etc. (303). Based on these categorizations Punch refines the aforementioned typology so as to more accurately reflect the delineation of types of police deviance:

**Police Misconduct:**
- Corruption of Authority: an officer receives something due to their position but is not actually breaking the law (e.g. free gifts, meals, etc.)

**Police Corruption:**
- “Kickbacks”: an officer receives things for referring business to others
- “Shakedowns”: An officer accepts a bribe in return for not following through a criminal violation
- Protection of Illegal Activity: police protection of illegal activity which allows it to continue
- “The Fix”: undermining criminal investigations
- Internal Payoffs: privileges within the police force are bartered, e.g. shifts, holidays

**Police Crime:**
- Opportunistic Theft: stealing from arrestees
- Direct Criminal Activities: a police officer commits an actual crime (e.g. drug trafficking; kidnapping)
- “Flaking” or “Padding”: planting or adding to evidence.
In a similar fashion, Dean et al. (2010) advocate for a three-tier typology of police deviance, but emphasize the “sliding scale” nature of deviance from more minor forms of corruption (e.g. free meals, gifts) to the most extreme forms, which the authors term as “predatory policing”. For the authors one of the key aspects in determining the severity of a corrupt act is the degree to which said corruption is reactive versus proactive; while both attitudes are corrupt, authors note the qualitative difference between accepting a bribe when offered and actively seeking corrupt enrichment, for example through extorting criminal organizations:  

![Diagram of Sliding Scale of Police Deviance](image-url)

**Figure 1:** Sliding Scale of Police Deviance, Dean et al. (2010, 21)

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10 Skogan and Meares (2004) also advocate for the distinction between “proactive” and “reactive” corruption; while their research focuses on the acceptance of bribes specifically, this logic can extend to other forms of corruption as well.
An additional key point made by the authors is the extent to which these degrees of severity of police corruption tend to occur with different degrees of institutionalization and collective participation; the most petty forms of misconduct are argued to be most attributable to an individual officer, whereas corruption tends to be most attributable to police culture norms and thus more pervasive within the institution (e.g. the “blue code of silence”, addressed in the next section); and predatory policing (essentially corruption but exclusively that which is actively pursued rather than passively accepted), tends to be most attributable to systemic corruption at all levels of the police organization, including the upper ranks.

Despite some discrepancy between these authors’ sliding scale and the typology of Roebuck and Barker (1974) as categorized by Punch (2000) above—for example, the former’s inclusion of planting or tampering with evidence as police misconduct versus the latter’s classification of this as police crime, as well as the former’s inclusion of favoritism as a form of corruption—some common threads are apparent. First is that police deviance—from misconduct to petty corruption to “predatory policing” and police crime—can affect all levels of the police institution, although the more severe forms tend to involve a greater number of actors and permeate up to higher levels of the organization. Second, a great degree of overlap can occur in classifying a given police behavior; looking at any potential gain received and the intention of the individual in question is key to determining a corrupt act from other forms of deviance. Third, looking at whether a corrupt act is engaged in passively or proactively can serve as an indicator of the severity of corruption, both in terms of the act itself as well as the likelihood of its practice permeating the police institution.

Sayed and Bruce (1998b) identify a typology of police corruption strongly resembling that of Roebuck and Barker, but further clarify its boundaries by identifying other activities that,
based on either 1) no occupational power being used and/or 2) no identifiable gain being derived, are not examples of corruption but rather of other forms of police deviance and crime. Such behavior includes:

- Discrimination (e.g. harassment or abuse of members of a particular group)
- Brutality and excessive use of force
- Not pressing charges against valuable informers
- Providing drugs to informants as payment for information
- Falsification of evidence
- Illegal searches and seizures
- Perjury

Chêne (2010) provides a typology of police corruption that essentially encompasses the same activities as the previous typology, albeit more parsimoniously combining several actions into more general categorizations. In particular, Chêne places emphasis on the fact that criminal corruption (e.g. protection of or conspiring with criminal organizations) can not only involve mere association, but also the infiltration of criminal actors into the police force and even into the upper levels of political power—the latter which, in turn, may work to ensure that oversight institutions such as the police work in their favor (ibid: 3). Furthermore, Chêne also emphasizes how political corruption can easily relate to police corruption insofar as the police are used to suppress political dissent, interfere in investigations, or even cover-up political killings. As noted by Sayed and Bruce (1998b, 18), such actions are not necessarily forms of individual police corruption; however they are clear examples of a corrupt use of the police, in this case by political actors. Punch (2000, 305) also notes the potential for political use of the police, which he identifies as “State-Related Police Crime.” Indeed, these observations may be of particular importance for developing countries still in the process of democratic consolidation and with a tendency towards weak institutions and pervasive political corruption.
III. Final Comments

Decades of research have given rise to a wealth of literature that has sought to define police corruption and describe its manifestations and its boundaries with other forms of police deviance. This literature is not solely important for scholarly research, but also for policymakers, as the ability to design effective reform measures first requires an understanding of what is meant by the term “corruption” in the first place and, subsequently, operationalizing said definition into behaviors that constitute corruption and defining boundaries for acceptable versus unacceptable conduct.

There is general agreement on the means (misuse of authority) and ends (gain) of police corruption; however, discord exists related to what these terms constitute as well as whether such gain must be tangible and/or personal. Therefore, reform policymakers must clearly define both of these terms and their boundaries to make expectations clear. Many scholars advocate for more inclusive definitions to allow for misuse of authority to include violations of any administrative, civil, or criminal law or regulation (see, for example, Sherman 1978; Sayed and Bruce 1998a; Kleinig 1996) and for gain to be inclusive of non-tangible benefits, such as status, promotions, and psychological gratification (Goldstein 1975; Carter 1990; Punch 2000). Furthermore, several scholars also advocate for the concept of gain to move beyond mere personal gain to include group and organizational gain (Punch 1985; Kleinig 1996; Sayed and Bruce 1998a).

Relatedly, boundaries or “grey areas” of police corruption (e.g. gratuities; noble cause corruption) versus other forms of police deviance can be difficult to establish. Looking at motivation can be a useful tool in assessing whether an act constitutes corruption. Furthermore, scholars such as Sherman (1978) have argued in support of the “slippery slope” of police
deviance, which emphasizes that such behaviors, while potentially not corruption per se, are clearly problematic and may give rise to corruption in the future.

Lastly, it is clear that different types of manifestations of police deviance can affect different levels of the institution; whereas the pettiest forms of misconduct may be most indicative of deviance confined at the individual level, most behavior understood to fall under the category of “corruption” (e.g. bribery, extortion, collusion with corrupt politicians or organized crime) or other manifestations of police crime generally indicate corruption at a group level or throughout the entire organization.

Literature dealing with the PPBA has generally not been concerned with defining what is meant by the term “corruption,” much less categorizing the types of corrupt behavior observed in the police force. However, the relatively large amount of literature on the PPBA has documented a wide range of behaviors clearly classifiable as corruption and police crime, ranging from the solicitation of bribes, extortion of businesses and individuals alike (particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized populations), participation in organized crime rings and drug trafficking, and collusion with corrupt politicians. Indeed, the forms of corruption observed in this police force indicate the systemic nature of the problem both within the force itself and the Argentine public sector more generally. Further sections will discuss these and other forms of corruption more in depth in terms of their causes, their modus operandi in practice, and possible prevention strategies.
CHAPTER 2

THE CAUSES OF POLICE CORRUPTION

While the implementation of initial measures to control police corruption does not necessarily require an in-depth knowledge of the root causes of police corruption, it is nevertheless the case that long-term success requires solving specific problems related to causality (McCormack 1996, 245). Indeed, many reforms fail to take such considerations into account. Similarly, the inability to adapt to the local or organizational context can also result in the untimely demise of police reform. Both the 1997 and 2004 reform waves in the PPBA (see Chapter 6) are clear examples of reform strategies that, while comprehensive and based on proven strategies in fighting corruption, did not fully take into account the causal relationships that promoted corruption within its ranks. These causal factors include those at the systemic level, such as political environment, as well as others from within the institution, such as the need for strong leadership from the higher ranks and taking into account characteristics of police culture itself.

There is considerable agreement in the literature on the causes of police corruption, although significant variation exists among how scholars classify these distinct causes (Newburn 1999). One common thread in contemporary research is the rejection of the traditional “rotten apple” theory of police corruption in which corruption is blamed on a few corrupt officers. This has often been the strategy employed by police agencies themselves when facing scandal as a means to protect the integrity of the organization and the morale among other officers (Goldstein 1975, 32). The result of the “rotten apples” approach is therefore that officers are dismissed, regulations are updated to prohibit a given activity or increase punishments, and the police agency, having convinced the public and political elites that the problem has been adequately
addressed, continues to operate in general as it had before. This is not to imply that scandal has not given way to comprehensive reform efforts; as Sherman (1978) argues based on his empirical analysis of several police departments in the United States, widely publicized scandals were often the impetus for comprehensive reforms—although the duration and ultimately success of reform depended not on the scandal but on other factors, such as leadership and political will.

Indeed, the role of leadership and political will applies to anti-corruption efforts beyond the police and has been emphasized by corruption literature more generally (see for example Brinkerhoff 2000).

In contrast with the “rotten apple” theory, most contemporary scholars tend to view police corruption as a symptom of wider problems within the police agency. For example, Skogan and Meares (2004, 74) argue that corruption is endemic to policing due to the opportunities that police officers have in deciding how and when to enforce the law. In a comparative study of corruption in Western European and American police forces, Punch (2003) also notes the systemic nature that corruption can take on in police forces, noting this was particularly the case in Western Europe. By contrast, American police forces tended to display widespread forms of “grass eating” such as low-level bribery and graft (307). This highlights the fact that police corruption can take on significant cross-cultural and cross-national differences (ibid). Similarly, Williams (2002, 91) notes the importance of taking into account the fact that police departments do not operate within a vacuum but instead respond to norms prevailing in other segments of the external environment. While Williams specifically mentions the justice system, one can extend this to include the wider political, institutional, and cultural environment within which police departments operate on a daily basis. If corruption is common outside of the police department, it is naïve to assume that systemic corruption can be weeded out solely...
through changes within the department. Indeed, much literature emphasizes the fact that changes within the police agency are an important and necessary component to addressing corruption, but insufficient in itself if corruption is widespread in the community and the public sector.

All of this is not to imply that “rotten apples” do not cause corruption; indeed, much individualized corruption can be linked to officers that, due to their own personal defects or situations, engage in corruption. Substantial literature has noted individual factors that can lead to corruption in police officers, and it is worth noting here. The key is to differentiate individualized corruption from more pervasive, systemic corruption that infiltrates a large portion or even an entire police force—such as can be argued in the case of the PPBA and police forces throughout much of Latin America more generally. It is important for both to be addressed through preventive anti-corruption measures, although the strategies for doing so, discussed in a later chapter, are quite different.

The remainder of this section summarizes literature on the causes of police corruption. While there are many manners in which these causes can be classified, I have divided them here into three main categories based on their principal level of analysis: individual-level factors, police agency factors, and external environment factors. I believe this division is useful given that the strategies employed to prevent police corruption, discussed in a later chapter, vary based roughly on these divisions.

I. Individual-level Factors

i. Personality Defects, Vices, and Background

As noted previously, while causes of police corruption at the level of an individual officer cannot explain systemic corruption, it can nevertheless explain isolated corrupt practices and also have important implications for recruitment and retention policies, for example, insofar as these
policies are designed to weed out and detect those guilty of or with an identified propensity for corrupt or unethical behavior. Souryal (1979, 78) argues that police corruption can be traced to personality deficiencies in individual officers, specifically naming human weakness, overzealousness, temptation, and cynicism as some of these causes. Roebuck and Barker (1974, 424) also highlight personality deficiencies and dishonest or criminal recruits as potential causes of police corruption, although qualify this with an array of other relevant factors at the police agency and environmental levels, such as faulty training and supervision, types of police organization, weak leadership, poor professional standards, and political corruption, among others. In discussing police corruption in the Mexican police forces, Botella and Rivera (2000, 62) note the effects of infiltration of the police force by organized criminal networks—in particular drug cartels—in perpetuating corruption and inefficiency within the department.

Personal vices such as drug use and gambling, as well as personal financial problems, have also been associated with increased incidence of corrupt behavior by individual officers (Moran 2002, 143; Quinton and Miller 2003, 5), as have been officers who resided in high crime areas prior to joining the police force; the argument for the latter being that once equipped with the occupational power of the police, these officers were tempted by local friends and family to engage in corrupt or criminal behavior (GAO Report 1998, 4; Moran 2002, 143).

ii. Addictive Element of Corruption

An additional individual-level cause of corruption is its addictive element (Goldstein 1975, 28). In this case, even if the initial cause of corruption is not individual but rather due to institutional factors (e.g. police culture, lack of oversight) or the external environment (collusion with corrupt politicians or organized crime), it is further perpetuated by an individual’s increased dependency on the economic gain received as his or her cost of living increases in accordance
with their corrupt earnings. This point is also related to Sherman’s (1985) “Slippery Slope” argument, which posits that minor forms of corruption can give way to more serious forms of corruption given that even accepting a free meal requires a psychological justification that, once crossed, may make it easier for one to accept a bribe, for example, and so on.\(^\text{11}\) In essence, one’s integrity is gradually subverted which, in turn, leads to increased facility in engaging in unethical conduct.

II. Police Agency Factors

A variety of factors attributable to the police agency level—including the nature of police work itself, organizational culture, and police department policies, procedures, and management—have been associated with corruption going beyond a few “bad apples” and extending itself through varying ranks of the police agency—and even up to the highest levels of police leadership in the most extreme examples. Some of these factors relate to the inherent nature of police work and police culture and are therefore best seen as “constants” that all police departments must have in mind when attempting to curb corruption, while others are variable among police agencies, with the most corrupt departments tending to demonstrate the greatest degree of deficiency in their application.

i. Constant Factors

Proximity to Deviance. Issues inherent to the nature of police work itself are conducive to corruption. One such factor is the proximity to crime and deviant actors that police officers are exposed to on a regular basis. This proximity to crime leads to temptation (Barker 1977, 354).

\(^{11}\) Souryal (1975, 64-65) outlines in-depth a six-stage process leading to corruption of an individual officer throughout one’s career: Pre-Corruption, Experimentation, Accustomation, Conceptualization, Improvisation, and Benediction. Essentially, this process involves a series of experimentation with and justification of corrupt practices, which ultimately becomes a vehicle for advancement within the ranks.
Indeed, scholars have argued that some areas of policing are more prone to corruption for this very reason; Manning and Redlinger (1977, 356-358) address this issue and refer to these areas as the “invitational edges of corruption.” Regulating illicit markets is particularly prone to corruption given that the actors involved have limited opportunity for legitimate political influence or lobbying, which places their focus on the police (Newburn 1999, 27). The illicit drug trade in particular opens these opportunities for corruption given the large amounts of money it manages and its need to avoid interference from the police. Other areas of police work particularly prone to corruption are informant-handler relationships and undercover work (Marx 1988). Marx notes the close proximity between officers and criminals in these situations and that when relationships are close, officers can come to share the world-view of criminals; on the other hand, if the relationship is adversarial it can foster noble cause corruption insofar as an officer may be tempted to frame a suspect for a crime through unlawful tactics such as planting evidence or using false testimony.

*Discretion.* Relatedly, police work generally involves a high degree of discretion which, especially when combined with the monopoly over powers granted to the police—such as deciding when and how to enforce the law, including the legitimate use of force—is conducive to corruption. For example, police have the discretion to arrest and to determine the degree of a charge (Sherman 1974). Officers also have easy access to information, and supervision is generally limited over police operations in the field (Quinton and Miller 2003, 5). Factors such as these make it easy for police to accept bribes, extort money, or collude with organized crime.

*Police Culture and Socialization.* Police discretion—and corruption—are further perpetuated by characteristics of police culture more generally. A large amount of literature has

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12 Carter (1990) explores the issue of drug-related police corruption in depth and develops a useful typology for categorizing the types of police corruption observed in this realm.
discussed the so-called “Blue Code of Silence” which describes the general lack of willingness of police officers to report or discuss their colleagues’ misconduct. In the policing profession, officers are often entrusted with each other’s lives. The loyalty and *esprit de corps* is reinforced through training and daily operations, and it may facilitate policing and protect police against threats to their safety (Kleinig 2000, 7). While this is not unique to the police, the dangers of police work and general public scrutiny faced by officers further reinforces the Code and its sense of loyalty among officers (Skolnick 2002, 8). However, the Code can simultaneously promote a criminal subculture protecting the interests of corrupt police officers (Skolnick 2002, 7) and fostering an “us vs. them” mentality (Williams 2002, 86). In this way, corruption is facilitated by tolerance or at least passive unresponsiveness by peers (Skogan and Meares 2004, 76). Given the protective nature of the Code and police culture more generally, it is no surprise that police departments are generally closed and resistant to progressive change (Stenning and Shearing 2005, 175). Therefore, not only does the Code allow corruption to flourish, it also makes its detection and sanctioning more difficult and complicates reform efforts by reinforcing a closed, conservative group mentality.  

Related to the Code of Silence is that police officers tend to take on a common worldview of moral cynicism as a result of their profession. Kleinig (1996, 164) and Goldstein (1975, 24) note how police officers are brought into contact with sectors of society on a daily basis that induce them to moral cynicism, and in turn they may come to see corruption as compensation for the more unpleasant dimensions of police work. Delattre (1996, 81) argues that police separate

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themselves from the larger society into a subculture that inevitably leads to cynicism, which causes the officer to become alienated from the social constraints of law and morality. Punch (2000, 315) further adds that the police may come to view agencies that administer justice as rotten or ineffective, which can also lead to alienation as well as used as a justification for corruption.

Also related to the Code of Silence and police culture more generally is the socialization process of new recruits into the police agency. Punch (2000, 314) notes how group dynamics can be a key force in fostering a culture of corruption given that young officers relate primarily to small, cohesive units upon joining and have to conform to informal norms in order to be accepted. Porter (2005) also notes how colleague influence—in a manner more direct than social culture—arises from relationships with peers and supervisors. In the case of supervisors, for example, hierarchal organizations such as police departments tend to have many layers of management to which junior officers look up to as role models; if the former break rules, then said rules are undermined in the eyes of junior officers.

**ii. Variable Factors**

Other causes of police corruption are not necessarily inherent to the policing profession or police culture more generally, but instead arise from deficiencies within a police department. The literature has identified a variety of such deficiencies, namely in leadership, accountability systems, training and guidance, and a variety of departmental policies focused on addressing and preventing corruption.

*Leadership.* Perhaps the most frequently cited factor associated with police corruption is a lack of leadership within the institution to promote integrity. McCormack (1996, 243) identifies effective leadership over time as the most important factor curbing corruption within
institutions. Indeed, lack of leadership has a clear association with the other causes of corruption discussed in this section. Failure to promote integrity from the top has been associated with cases of police corruption throughout the institution (GAO Report 1998). Effectively combating corruption requires a dedicated police administrator willing to make difficult choices. In response to scandals or other revelations of police corruption, it is not uncommon for police administrators to implement hasty, poorly drawn solutions in an effort to deceive the public into believing something has been done or simply due to naiveté regarding the effectiveness of ad hoc measures (Goldstein 1975, 11). In other words, as Skogan and Meares (2004, 79) note, calls for reform can fall on deaf ears and the response tends to be individualized, short-term solutions to widespread, systemic problems.

Leadership is particularly important given the traditional hierarchy within police institutions. Excessive hierarchy has been associated with increased conduciveness to corruption given that it tends to hinder discussion and debate—including the discussion of ethical standards (Owens and Pfeifer 2002). In assessing corruption in the Indian police forces, Verma (1999, 274) notes how the elitist nature of police leadership in this force lead supervisors to abuse their position through accepting “perks” such as the personal use of patrol cars and surveillance of one’s own residence, as well as accepting bribes from patrol officers. Such behavior sends a clear message to the lower ranks that corruption will be tolerated and eliminates any hope for reform under the current leadership.

The issue of strong leadership is also critical because there are many pressures on administrators within police institutions that otherwise inhibit reform-minded administrators from effectively weeding out corruption. For example, administrators are pressured by officers and police unions from using techniques that would otherwise be at their disposal to detect
corruption, such as surveillance, undercover operations (e.g. integrity tests), and informants (Goldstein 1975, 31). Similarly, administrators are faced with morale issues when combating corruption, as officers often demand blanket support from the chief (32). These internal pressures, reinforced by the “us vs. them” mentality of police culture and the Blue Code of Silence, can discourage even well-intentioned administrators from pursuing the often long, arduous task of reforming corrupt police departments. Furthermore, external pressures from outside the police agency, discussed in the following section, add even greater constraints on administrators’ actions.

**Internal Accountability Systems.** Inadequate systems of accountability within police institutions are another factor associated with corrupt departments. In particular, many scholars have identified insufficient control and supervision over police behavior as a cause of corruption within police departments (Carter 1990; Punch 2000; Roebuck and Barker 1974; GAO Report 1998; Sechrest and Burns 1992). Punch (1985, 90) notes that the need for proactive internal investigations is often out of line with institutions such as the police that tend to be reactive in nature. Ineffective internal investigations (Skogan and Meares 2004, 79) and difficulty in prosecuting officers suspected of corruption (Punch 2000, 302) are also conducive to malfeasance, given that a low probability of detection and sanctions balances opportunity structures in favor of corruption. Furthermore, an overall lack of transparency of police information and operations has also been associated with increased incidence of corruption in police departments (USAID 2007, 7).

**Training and Guidance.** Other policies within police institutions can be conducive to corruption. Many scholars identify deficiencies in training as a factor for police corruption. Williams (2002, 87) notes the importance of training focused on integrity and self-control given
that education on respect for citizens’ rights, civic duty and limits of one’s authority and understanding of the law can foster an environment in which officers desire to protect integrity not because of fear of sanctions but because they view corruption as morally wrong. Relatedly, Roebuck and Barker (1974, 424) similarly note that a lack of professional standards within police departments is conducive to fostering corruption.

Recruitment and Screening Procedures. A police department’s recruitment policies and procedures can also be conducive to permitting entry of individuals who, at best, are unqualified for police work and the inherent temptations associated with the profession’s high degree of discretion, or, at worst, who enter with the sole purpose of extracting financial or other benefits through the misuse of their police authority. Williams (2002, 87) highlights that corrupt police departments are generally deficient in recruitment procedures such as adequate background checks, psychological testing, and impartial written and physical exams. Indeed, in corrupt organizations, the reproduction of corrupt practices depends in part on the organization’s ability to avoid bringing those aboard who would not go along with these practices. McCormack (1996, 243) notes that agencies that do not have at least a 10-15% dismissal rate during training and probationary periods are probably not using these periods effectively. Younger and less educated recruits have also been found to be more likely to engage in corrupt or criminal activities (GAO Report 1998, 4); growing evidence suggests that college-educated officers perform better than those with only a high school degree (McCormack 1996, 243-244).14

Other Policies: Promotion, Pay, and Resources. Additional policies associated with corruption in the literature are those related to promotions and police resources (e.g. equipment, equipment, equipment...

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14 For an in-depth review of employment screening strategies for police officers see Arrigo and Claussen (2003).
pay) (Stenning and Shearing 2005, 171; Williams 2002, 89). In the former case, unclear or unspecified promotion criteria can potentially create opportunities for corruption as corrupt supervisors extract bribes from officers in exchange for a promotion or desirable posting—or used as a means for corrupt supervisors to reward those who participate in their network of corruption. In the latter case, the lack of resources to do one’s job can create incentives for extracting graft in order to buy resources for the police service itself and/or for one’s own pocket if one’s salary is insufficient to meet basic needs. Indeed, there is abundant literature on the role of public official’s salaries and corruption (see for example Becker and Stigler 1974). Raising salaries has been a common strategy suggested for fighting corruption in the public sector, although literature to date has been inconclusive regarding its overall effectiveness and growing consensus argues that doing so must be combined with other strategies in order to be effective (Linder 2013). However, and in the case of police officers, it is also worth noting that police salaries are often low in the developing world (Andvig and Fjeldstad 2008, 27) and that the temptation to engage in corruption in order to meet basic needs is likely high. In this way, when combined with other anti-corruption strategies, raising salaries may assist in curbing corruption

III. External Factors

The external factors that facilitate police corruption are numerous. As with individual and agency-level causes, they tend to be strongly interrelated among themselves. Among the most frequently cited are factors in the political realm and in oversight institutions. Factors associated with high degrees of police corruption at this level include pervasive political corruption, a lack of political will, an ineffective and/or corrupt justice system, lack of support from the public and the media, unenforceable laws, and organized criminal interests.
i. Political Environment

The political environment within which a police department operates has strong implications for the likelihood and persistence of corruption. The decision to fight police corruption ultimately comes from above; elected officials decide to either pursue reforms or not. The extent to which this is the case may often depend on public demands for greater police accountability and transparency after a scandal. However, this must also be balanced with political considerations. Indeed, there are several reasons for which politicians may not find it convenient to pursue comprehensive reform within policing institutions.

One such reason is that politicians may use the police as a tool for controlling or intimidating opposition parties or groups and this manipulation often involves corrupt quid pro quo exchanges of funds or other benefit to the police in exchange for police protection—up to and including criminal acts such as kidnapping and murder. Punch (2000, 305) refers to such a situation as “state-related police crime.” Politicians may also benefit financially from corruption networks with the police. Given the potentially high payoffs from participation in corrupt practices—particularly in an environment with little oversight or accountability over politicians’ activities—these networks can prove highly resistant over time. Additionally, when there is high political corruption within a community and also little community interest in fighting it, attempts to control the police are likely to fail (McCormack 1996, 243). It is difficult to imagine a serious attempt at police reform in situations in which politicians themselves directly benefit politically and/or economically from police corruption.

Police reform is expensive and difficult; it requires political will and state capacity. Furthermore, this will needs to be sustained over the long term in order to increase the likelihood of success. For example, other reforms may be given priority over the police as issues rise to the
political agenda (Stenning and Shearing 2005, 171). Even if police reform is politically salient and supported by local politicians, the inherent tension between democratic reforms (e.g. police accountability) on the one hand, and maintaining law and order on the other hand can complicate efforts to reign in the police; instead, public demand for crime reduction can lead to greater discretionary power being granted to the police to appease public concern (Skogan and Meares 2004, 79). The ultimate result is that police corruption is allowed to persist.

*ii. External Oversight*

Other factors frequently associated with police corruption originate from deficient external oversight. One such area are courts of law themselves. Indeed, Goldstein (1975, 25) cites prosecutors and courts as the most significant external factor facilitating corruption in a police force. On one hand, the aggressiveness of local and federal prosecutors is one factor associated with the upper boundary of how far corruption can go before “heads start to roll” (Skogan and Meares 2004, 76). Furthermore, it is often difficult to convince judges and juries to convict police officers, and that even in those few cases where a conviction is made, sentences imposed tend to be light (Miller 2003, 26). Given these factors, and the large degree of credibility that police officers tend to enjoy in the legal system, the courts often serve as an inadequate sanctioning mechanism for the deterrence of police corruption.

Further, an ineffective justice system may actually encourage police corruption in the first place. Officers often view the courts and legal process as inefficient and futile, and thereby justify withholding an arrest or dropping charges in exchange for a bribe as a means of retribution, given that further prosecution wouldn’t likely produce an effective result; this is even further compounded when judges or prosecutors themselves are corrupt, as even honest officers
may be tempted to engage in corruption and view their own integrity as pointless (Goldstein 1975, 26).

Public support is an important component to fighting corruption and the media can play an important role as a deterrent to corruption insofar as it provides disincentives for police to engage in corrupt acts by increasing the risks involved in doing so. Indeed, the intrusiveness of the media in a given context may determine the upper limits of corruption before “heads start to roll” (Skogan and Meares 2004, 76). The same case can also be made for civil society organizations; an active civil society can play a key role as a deterrent for corruption and encouraging greater transparency and accountability and disseminating information to the public (see for example OECD Report, 2003; USAID 2007, 9-11). In addition to deterrence, media and non-governmental organizations can also play the role of discovering and disseminating instances of corruption when they do occur. As Sherman (1978) highlights in his empirical analysis of police reforms in several U.S. police departments, scandal often was the impetus for serious reform efforts, and the media clearly plays a key role to this end.

However, while the media can serve as an important mechanism to fight corruption, it also has the power to inhibit efforts to reign in the police (Stenning and Shearing 2005, 171). As mentioned previously, pressure to fight crime—which may be highly disseminated or even supported by the media—can work against reforms aimed at controlling the police. Relatedly, the extent to which the media sheds light on corruption in the police force can play a major role in whether or not sufficient interest arises to address it. If the media places little importance on investigating police corruption then there is less probability for scandal or public outcry to result—and therefore less pressure on politicians and administrators to take action against corruption.
iii. Other External Factors

While the political environment and the role played by external oversight institutions are probably the greatest external factors that explain police corruption, other factors external to the police agency have also been identified as conducive to corruption. One such factor is unenforceable laws (Goldstein 1975, 23; Rose-Ackerman 2002, 4). When non-enforcement is common, an opportunity opens for the public to buy immunity and for police to accept payoffs. Activities such as illegal gambling, prostitution, and narcotics operations are all prone to such payoffs in exchange for non-enforcement by the police. Countries looking to deter corruption may need to decriminalize some activities in order to reduce the opportunity for corruption. This requires a careful analysis by policymakers of where the line between legal and illegal activity is drawn and whether criminalization is providing few social benefits relative to its effects on fostering corruption and illegal business (Rose-Ackerman 2002, 4).

Organized criminal interests, most notably drug trafficking, are also a significant external factor for police corruption (Goldstein 1975, 23; Shelley 2001). The ample resources possessed by these organizations—combined with their interest in purchasing non-intervention or even active participation of the police—makes their presence within a community conducive to police corruption by increasing available opportunities and payoffs. While proximity to crime and deviance is a constant factor for corruption related to the nature of policing itself, the strength of highly organized criminal interests—which in some areas may have more resources and capacity than the state—make them a factor worthy of separate mention and particularly relevant to Latin American police forces given the central role of much of the region in the drug trade.
IV. Final Comments

The causes of police corruption are diverse and highly interrelated. Despite earlier theories that promoted the “bad apple” hypothesis of police corruption, most contemporary scholarship now recognizes police corruption as a larger, systemic issue endemic to the policing profession (Punch 2000) and with causes that go beyond the individual to include deficiencies within police agencies—such as policies, internal controls, and leadership—as well as factors related to the external environment, in particular those related to the political environment and external oversight. The role of other external factors such as unenforceable laws and, especially, organized criminal interests, can also serve as factors that favor police corruption. Effective control of police corruption over the long term requires knowledge of these causal relationships. In this vein, these causes serve as important frames of reference from which preventive strategies can be designed and implemented.

These causes are also an important frame of reference for evaluating the literature on police corruption in the PPBA. The comprehensiveness of the literature on this police force can be assessed based on the extent to which scholars focusing on the PPBA have addressed the causes of police corruption identified by decades of scholarly research into the subject. In this way, identifying areas of high research production versus those with little scholarly interest in the case-specific literature can indicate areas that are either largely irrelevant for study in this case or that are, indeed, in need of greater attention in order to broaden our knowledge on corruption in this particular police force. This is the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

THE CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE

The literature on causes of corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police (PPBA) is extensive both with regard to the quantity of literature that addresses the issue and as well as the breadth of causal factors that scholars have assessed. At the same time, most of this literature has not focused specifically on addressing the causes of police corruption in the PPBA, but rather, on addressing issues related to police reform within the framework of democratization (Dewey 2011, 13). Nevertheless, as part of its discussions of police reform, this literature has implicitly and extensively addressed the causes of corruption in the PPBA. Indeed, the PPBA’s two failed reform waves from 1997-1999 and 2004-2007\(^{15}\), both of which were followed by periods of counter-reform measures, have provided fertile ground for scholarly analysis of the reform policies themselves as well as the conditions that ultimately led to their demise. Other studies have looked more specifically at police violence and brutality within the framework of human rights and democracy\(^{16}\). While most of these analyses have not been focused solely on police corruption per se, most have addressed the issue to some degree and, collectively, have contributed significant insight on the causes corruption in the PPBA.\(^{17}\)

Academic production on this case has mirrored that of the global literature insofar as the “bad apples” theory of police corruption has been largely discredited by scholars assessing this police force. Virtually no literature on the PPBA has attempted to link police corruption to individual factors such as personality defects or the addictive element of corruption. In keeping

\(^{15}\) See Chapter 7 for an in-depth discussion of these reforms.

\(^{16}\) See, for example, Chevigny 1995, Chapter 6 and the annual Human Rights Reports published by the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS).

\(^{17}\) For studies that do look exclusively at corruption in the PPBA see, for example, Dewey (2011; 2012), Klipphan (2004), Latorraca, Montero, and Rodriguez (2003), and Saín (2010; 2013).
with the rejection of the “bad apples” theory, the PPBA literature has looked to organizational and external factors for explaining corruption within the police agency. Indeed, a significant amount of this literature looks to the external environment in attempting to explain systemic police corruption, and, in particular, discusses corrupt alliances with politicians for mutual gain as well as an overall lack of political will to effectively manage the police, instead allowing for a large degree of police autonomy. Factors further promoting this autonomy and corrupt alliances identified by the literature include political disputes aggravated by Argentina’s federalism (Eaton 2008; Hinton 2006, 95; Ungar 2008, 19) and public demands for increased security at the expense of greater police oversight (Fuentes 2005; Sain 2008, 33; Seri and Estevez 2010, 33).

This chapter examines the causes of police corruption identified by the PPBA literature at the police agency and external environment levels. Given that individual level causes of police corruption identified at the global level have not been addressed by the PPBA literature, this level of analysis is not covered in this chapter. These discussions are followed by a final section that summarizes key similarities and differences between the PPBA and the global literatures and proposes suggestions for future research.

I. Police Agency Factors

Various factors at the police agency level have been identified as conducive to corruption in the PPBA. As with the global literature, these causes can be divided between those that are inherent to the policing profession, or at least the policing profession in Argentina (constant factors), and those that are not inherent to the policing and show greater variation among police agencies (variable factors).
i. Constant Factors

a. Authoritarian Legacies

Argentina’s turbulent political history has been ripe with authoritarian regimes, which have had lasting effects on the country’s police forces. From 1946 to 1990, Argentina experienced a total of 15 military uprisings and coup events (Boruchowicz and Wagner 2011, 22), the most notorious of which was the country’s most recent military dictatorship from 1976-1983 in which human rights organizations estimate approximately 30,000 Argentines were forcibly “disappeared” at the hands of the military government (Pereira and Ungar 2004, 14). During this time the country’s police forces were regularly used for political purposes and to carry out measures for social control, including torture (Chevigny 1995, 186). Chevigny (1995) states the following on Argentina’s authoritarian legacy, rooted in nationalist ideology, and its effects on everyday police practices:

“The nationalist ideology in Argentina opposed rationalism and liberalism as secular creations of the Enlightenment, and idealized authority as it was before the destruction of the Old Regime in Europe. […] Although in its pure form nationalist ideology never had a mass appeal in Argentina, it had a strong attraction for some of the powerful, including many in the military. It encouraged police practices that were anti-liberal, rooted in the power of authority, even terror, rather than law; the tough, even the rogue, police were glorified.” (185).

Given that, in Latin America, enemies have traditionally come from within (e.g. guerillas, anarchists, and radical party members) as opposed to externally, police in the region have tended towards militarization of their practices rather than focusing on citizens’ rights (Bonner 2009, 227; Gonzalez 2005, 58; Kobilanski 2011, 5). Further, while the quick collapse of the military regime in Argentina in 1983 may have been more conducive to institutional reforms than the pacted transitions in Chile and Brazil, no serious attempt at reform occurred until over a decade after the transition; this suggests that the impact of democratic transition is neither direct nor
inevitable in terms of police reform (Pereira and Ungar 2004, 12). Indeed, despite the country’s successes in reigning in the military since democratization, Argentina has repeatedly failed to do the same with its police institutions. Indeed, the human rights abuses of the military during the dictatorship favored a shift towards strong civilian control over the armed forces; by contrast, the fact that the police were never as directly implicated in these abuses (although certainly accomplices to them), combined with periodic demands by the public and politicians to address crime, has favored greater police autonomy and lack of political interest in and public demands for reigning in police power (Hinton 2006, 83; Seri and Estévez 2008, 5; Ungar 2008, 17).

In the case of the PPBA, the persistence of authoritarian legacies has resulted in the continuation of militarized training and doctrine, a high degree of violence, lack of court oversight, and continuity in militarized organizational structure (Pereira and Ungar 2004, 1). Saín (2003, 179) further notes the lack political control over the police and the lack of community participation mechanisms for oversight as consequences of authoritarian legacies. The literature most frequently cites the implications of this militarization on human rights; however, its implications for promoting corruption within the PPBA are also equally clear: a closed institution lacking external oversight from elected officials and the courts, with an organization model promoting excessive hierarchy and blind obedience to the “boss”, promotes a high degree of discretion and low degree of accountability that provides an environment strongly conducive to corruption.

While the authoritarian legacies argument can explain why police corruption and abuse have been difficult to weed out in the PPBA, its flaw is that it implies this factor is constant and therefore any attempts at reform are futile. To this end, scholarship on the PPBA seems to indicate the contrary; that is, while authoritarian legacies certainly explain the staying power of
engrained practices that are conducive to misconduct, they cannot explain why politicians decide to initiate reforms and, later, counter-reforms, as has been the case in the PPBA since 1997. In other words, politics matters. These factors will be further discussed in the next section.

b. Police Culture

As with the global literature, PPBA literature has pointed to police culture as a factor that is conducive to corruption, although research has been limited. There is a consensus among scholars that certain similarities in police culture are discernible in widely differing police forces across the world (Stanley 2004, 84). Indeed, field research consisting of interviews with PPBA officers has confirmed this argument (85). Covering up colleagues’ and superiors’ misconduct in the PPBA has been linked to the *esprit de corps* among officers and the informal “code of silence” (Gonzalez 2005, 59). Arslanián (2008, 232) similarly notes that this feeling of *esprit de corps* gave way to internal judgments in favor of officers and even to the systematic “fixing” of investigations in order to cover up police misconduct. In reference to the maintenance of corruption networks with politicians and criminals, scholars have described a “subculture” in the PPBA of secrecy, solidarity, loyalty to the boss, and acceptance of illegal violence and corruption (Seri and Estevez 2010, 8).

In addition to the “code of silence” being perpetuated by loyalty and organizational pride, Stanley (2004, 89) notes that fear or reprisals from superiors has been a strong factor that has help enforce the code. Officers interviewed noted they felt threatened by the vindictiveness and arbitrary actions of their superiors (89). This finding differs from the traditional factors cited by the global literature that support the code, such as that of junior officers viewing supervisors as role models and therefore accepting their malfeasance (Porter 2005). Further, other factors frequently cited by the global literature related to police culture and the code—in particular,
moral cynicism, distrust of the justice system, and the socialization process of new recruits—have not been mentioned by the case specific literature as factors that support the code of silence and police corruption in the PPBA. While it is clear that police culture in the PPBA presents characteristics that have been cited by the global literature as favorable to corruption and that are common among police agencies, further research into the socialization process of new recruits and police officers’ views of the community and institutions may yield additional insight into the dynamics of police culture and its relationship with corruption in Argentina.  

Related to police culture, resistance from the police institution has been frequently cited by scholars of the PPBA as a factor that, while not causing corruption directly, has allowed corruption networks to withstand efforts aimed at reining them in. Hinton (2005, 78) notes that bureaucratic reforms are difficult and lengthy as bureaucracies typically act as a kind of special interest group within the government and has vested interests in maintaining the status quo, which is further complicated by the aforementioned closed, secretive, and loyal nature of police culture. Dammert (2007) identifies police resistance as one of several factors that have traditionally led to failed police reform efforts in Latin America more generally. Scholarship on the PPBA has identified police resistance as an important factor impeding reform efforts (Fuentes 2005). The earliest reform attempt of the PPBA in 1987 under governor Cafiero aimed at controlling police abuses and corruption was quickly abandoned after police went on a strike in protest of the coming changes (Gonzalez 2005, 60). As yet another demonstration of

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18 Stanley (2004) also argues that, while the PPBA police culture shares similarities with the police cultures identified by other scholars in different police forces, this fact appears to weaken the explanatory ability of this variable given that all forces demonstrate similar police cultures yet have widely varying levels of corruption. While Stanley is correct, if one views police culture as a constant (as this thesis does in Chapter 2) rather than a variable, one can argue that characteristics of police culture clearly favor corruption—hence Punch’s (2000) statement of corruption being “endemic” to the police profession—yet ultimately their impact on corruption levels in a police force is conditioned by other factors within and external to the institution.
resistance, during the 1997 reform wave, amidst powers of the police being restricted, there were complaints that some police captains who had been dismissed for corruption had been hired at police stations as “security directors” (Smulovitz 2003, 139).

In describing police resistance in the PPBA, Saín (2008, 15) highlights that the police, and especially the higher commands, have traditionally resisted all types of inspection or examination from political, journalistic, institutional, legal, or academic arenas. He further notes that reforms have generally received resistance from the police due to two main factors. The first is the conservative institutional framework within which the police operate, viewing reforms as a threat that lead towards institutional disaggregation and disarticulation and hence a loss of power. The second is what Saín refers to as the “corrupt institutional framework” of the police, through which the institution responds like a mafia against any threat to their corruption networks through a variety a means (e.g. freeing up zones to criminal organizations, directly or indirectly perpetrating crimes, homicides or kidnappings with high public visibility) (60). While police resistance to reforms may not be a direct cause of corruption, it clearly has perpetuated the persistence of corruption networks by playing an important role in undermining reform efforts.

ii. Variable Factors:

a. Militarized Structure, Hierarchy, and Centralization

Related to the aforementioned authoritarian legacies argument is the organizational structure of the PPBA, which has been consistently described as centralized and strongly militarized (Arslanián 2008, 15). Indeed, to counter this persistent structure, both the 1999 and 2004 reforms focused heavily on functional and territorial decentralization, although their subsequent counter-reforms effectively eliminated much of these changes and returned to the centralized, hierarchal model that is present in the PPBA as of this writing.
The police chief in particular has traditionally held—and currently holds—a large concentration of power. This concentration has been directly linked to the illicit collection of funds in order to sustain funding of the police institution (Arslanián 2008, 63). The strong position of the police chief has also been used to support illegal actions by subordinates and protected corrupt officers in order to promote an *esprit de corps* within the force as well as using promotions as a means to promote loyalty to the chief rather than being based on objective criteria for merit (64). The police chief is widely viewed as the superior institutional authority, rather than the Minister of Security or the governor (Sain 2002, 186).

The structure of the PPBA makes clear the desire for obedience rather than promoting internal control mechanisms. One former law, only repealed as recently as 2005, prohibited subordinates from reporting misconduct committed by superiors, unless said misconduct “harmed [the declarant’s] person, rights or faculties or is of the utmost severity.” The force also maintains a cast-like system of parallel bodies of officers (commissioned) and “sub-officers” (*suboficiales*), who are non-commissioned personnel who experience vastly different working conditions and treatment from within (Seri 2012). As two commissioned PPBA officers note:

“[Suboficiales are] badly trained people with no good education.”

“A *suboficial* today is a youth between eighteen and thirty-five years old who, having the same qualifications, decides to join one school instead of the other…for a question of time. And, then, for the next twenty-five years I—an officer—will keep segregating him from the rest.” (Seri 2012).

In further interviews conducted with PPBA officials, junior officers cited they felt powerless to criticize police hierarchy due to the fact that abuses emanated from the top of the institution and also due to the rigid and unchallengeable status distinctions among ranks (Stanley 2004, 89).

19 50 Art. 248 of the *Ley de Personal de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*. Translation by author. This law was repealed by Decree 1766/05 in 2005 and the new law did not include this language.
This cast-like system and rigid hierarchies both between and within these parallel ranks has traditionally served as a means of informal control over police agents in which any questioning of authority can result in an unfavorable action, such as being transferred to an undesirable location or position or failure to be promoted within the force (CELS and HRW 1998, 9).

Relatedly, promotions themselves are also highly influenced by this hierarchy and are often based solely on time of service and not having disciplinary actions—or if they do, having connections with an influential decision-maker; in this way the structure serves as a mechanism of political and institutional control of the police elite over the rest of the force (Saín 2002, 182). In these cases, it is clear that the rigid, centralized, and hierarchal structure of the PPBA operates as a mechanism for enforcing and reproducing corruption networks through placing value on blind loyalty and a strong degree of dependence on superiors and the police chief for promotion and other benefits. While the 2004 reform of the PPBA sought to decentralize the force and unify its rigid, militarized system of ranks, these efforts were ultimately backtracked with the counter-reform measures implemented by governor Daniel Scioli upon his election in 2007.

b. Recruitment and Screening Procedures

Contrary to the global literature, which has produced extensive research on the role of recruitment policies in detecting individuals who, for personality defects, vices, or other factor in their background, may be more inclined to engaging in corruption, the PPBA literature has only sporadically examined the role of recruitment policies in curbing corruption. Nevertheless, important findings have resulted from this research. One important conclusion is that even a basic step towards preventing misconduct such as improving recruitment can present difficult obstacles in Argentina:
“Only a tiny sector of the population has any interest in entering the police academy because of the bad pay and terrible image of the police in the community…the majority come from families of police officers. At the same time, when the same agency has tried to raise the standards for police recruitment, it has resulted in a shortage of candidates. However, the alternative of raising police salaries is also debatable as it cannot be seen in any way as recognition for a force that is so highly questionable.” (CELS and HRW 1998, 9; translation by Neild [2000]).

In a comparative analysis of the PPBA and Chile’s Carabineros—which is widely regarded as among the region’s most professionalized police force with lowest levels of corruption—Boruchowicz and Wagner (2011) note several important differences in the educational backgrounds of officers prior to joining the force. In 1995, one-third of Argentine police (nation-wide) had not completed elementary school, whereas 90% of Chile’s police force have a high school diploma (8). While the PPBA now requires a high school degree as a prerequisite for entry since legislation passed during the 2004 reform wave (Arslanián 2008, 115), the force still employs many who entered prior to this requirement. No data as of this writing was available regarding the percentage of officers who have post-secondary studies, which has been associated with better performance than those with only high school degrees (McCormack 1996, 243-244).

Further, while no data was available regarding the average age of recruits, the PPBA requires all new recruits be 18-30 years of age, submit a criminal records certificate, and undertake a physical and psychological exam. These exams are a common legal requirement for accepting formal employment of any kind in Argentina, not just the police. Scholars on the PPBA have not discussed the psychological exam component of the recruitment process and whether it addresses particular concerns to detect inclination towards corrupt behavior, nor whether additional measures are taken to detect prior criminal behavior or associations other than receiving a criminal records certificate. Indeed, while deficient recruitment procedures are only
one component of many that may lead to a corrupt police force, it is clearly an area in need of further research on this case.

c. Training

Dútil and Rangendorfer (1997, 15) note that traditionally PPBA officials have been “badly equipped, badly paid, and, overall, badly recruited and badly trained.” Numerous scholars have noted deficient training and resources in the PPBA and its implications for fostering corruption. With regard to training, it has been noted that training on rights of citizens and the use of firearms is essential to controlling misconduct, but has traditionally been lacking in Argentina (CELS 1997, 61-62, in Chevigny 2003). Instead, training has been highly militaristic, rigid and focused on discipline and obedience (Saín 2010). Reform processes, discussed in depth in Chapter 7, focused heavily on overhauling the PPBA’s police academies and promoting ethics and human rights components into newly designed training programs. However, the counter-reform periods following these reforms left much of these advances behind by reinstating formerly closed institutions, essentially rendering void agreements and degree programs formed with local universities, and reinstating instructors that had been removed from their positions during the reforms (Fernandez and Ulrich 2008, 11).

Training in the PPBA has also been notoriously short and less difficult than in more well-regarded forces, including Chile’s Carabineros and even the Argentine Federal Police (PFA). Prior to the 2004 reform wave, training for new recruits was only 3 months—as opposed to 6 months with the PFA and one year with the Carabineros (Boruchowicz and Wagner 2011, 8). Training eventually had increased to 8 months and, as of 2014 legislation was passed to increase training to two years for the PPBA, although this was soon changed to 12 months and also includes a provision for shortening training to 6 months when needed due to an “emergency”—
such as was the case in 2014 due to the “security crisis” declared by governor Scioli in April 2014; indeed, as of early 2015 training lasted approximately 6 months for new recruits (CELS 2015, 213-214). Another deficient aspect in training in the PPBA has been the observation that only officers likely to be promoted receive ongoing training; otherwise, officers are not likely to receive additional training after their initial recruitment (Boruchowicz and Wagner 2011, 8).

d. Leadership

As with the global literature, the importance of strong leadership to effectively fight corruption has been emphasized in the PPBA literature. However, most of the PPBA literature has focused to a much greater extent on leadership outside the police institution (that is, political leadership) rather than from within (see next section, “External Environment”). This is likely due to the fact that the police—and police corruption—in Argentina is highly politicized and the decision whether to fight corruption is ultimately determined by politicians who, in turn, appoint police chiefs and other senior management to do so. Replacement of police leadership was a key objective of the 2004 reform attempt (Sain 2008, 211). The literature has also emphasized the principal role that certain police reform leaders—in particular Security Minister Arslanián—who presided over the 1997 and 2004 reform waves had on taking concrete steps to weed out corruption in the PPBA.

The importance of strong leadership is made evident by examining the role of the police chief in the PPBA. Indeed, the police chief has traditionally held a concentrated amount of formal and informal power within the PPBA. Formally, chiefs serve as a central figure of authority with the institution and are granted a large degree of rights and discretion over the police force. In fact, one of the main focuses of reforms in the 1990s and 2000s was to reign in these positions by decentralizing power functionally and territorially throughout the PPBA.
(Arslanián 2008, 65), although these efforts were ultimately reversed after these reforms ended.

Informally, chiefs have historically been granted the ability to self-govern the institution without executive or legislative oversight and to set their own priorities, strategies, and negotiations with elected officials (Seri and Estévez 2008, 6). This structure does not favor accountability and it is clear that lack of integrity at this level greatly inhibits promoting integrity at lower ranks. For example, corrupt police chiefs has also been used to support illegal actions by subordinates, protect corrupt officers, and promote officers based on their loyalty to the chief rather than being based on objective criteria for merit (Arslanián 2008, 64). Indeed, and as the global literature has noted, is naïve to imagine an honest police force when corruption emanates from the top down, in particular in militarized, centralized, and hierarchal institutions such as the PPBA.

Leadership is also important for the role it plays in communicating expectations regarding subordinates. For example, after a change in government in 1999 the new opposition governor, Carlos Ruckauf, replaced the reform-minded Security Minister Arslanián with Aldo Rico, the former leader of a military faction (carapintadas) that had tried to overthrow Argentina’s new democracy in the 1980s (Eaton 2008, 16). The result was, not surprisingly, a complete reversal of police reform attempts and with it the reform’s advancements in anti-corruption and accountability measures, including the severe weakening of the internal affairs office and ethics tribunal, reinstating officers removed from the force for corruption and other abuses, and discontinuing community and neighborhood forums (Arslanián 2008, 235).

\[20\] Law 12.155 (1998) created the Office for Control of Corruption and Official Misconduct, which was composed of two divisions: the Internal Affairs Office and 2) the Ethics Tribunal. The former dealt with cases of corruption and serious official misconduct damaging to the police force (minor misconduct was still dealt with by the Administrative Proceedings Division (Dirección de Sumarios Administrativos). The Ethics Tribunal was composed of retired high ranking officers and officials outside the police force to render decisions on investigations into serious official misconduct.
An interesting point regarding leadership in the PPBA was made by Arslanián after assuming once again his position as Security Minister in 2004, noting that he was fortunate to have found the PPBA in such a dismal state, which he attributed to its lack of leadership as well as institutionalized corruption, because the severity of the institutional crisis and the desire for officers to regain prestige made reform viable (Serí and Estévez 2008, 9-10). In this way, just as strong leadership is important for ensuring anti-corruption policies are implemented, weak leadership over a corrupt police force may present a window of opportunity to institute anti-corruption efforts, provided that political viability and political will exist.

\textit{e. Wages and Benefits}

Low wages have also been cited as a factor conducive to police corruption in the PPBA (Neild 2000, 228; Pereira and Ungar 2004, 16; Sán 2008, 38). While the relationship between a low salary and the desire or need to supplement one’s insufficient earnings with graft is clear and has been cited by the global police corruption literature as conducive to corruption, the corruption literature more generally has emphasized that while raising wages can form part of a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy, the effect of doing so is inconclusive and is unlikely to curb corruption on its own (Lindner 2013).

Perhaps the most in-depth review of wages and other benefits in the PPBA has been that of Boruchowicz and Wagner (2011), whose study appears to corroborate this conclusion. The authors did not find any explanatory ability when assessing PPBA wages, pensions, and other benefits when comparing the force with other, colloquially less corrupt forces (e.g. Chile’s Carabineros, the Argentine Federal Police, and the Argentine Gendarmerie). They found that in the province of Buenos Aires officers can earn more than other observationally equivalent
individuals\textsuperscript{21}, receive 100\% of their salary for overtime, had similar pension benefits with other police forces and also enjoy special non-wage benefits such as special health insurance and hospitals for PPBA officers and their families as well as special credit facilities (10-11). Therefore, while low wages are commonly cited in passing by the PPBA literature as a factor for corruption, a more in-depth analysis appears to suggest that wages and benefits do not likely play a large role in determining the levels of corruption observed in the PPBA.

\textit{f. Resources and Budget}

Deficient organizational resources and budget for the PPBA have been frequently cited as factors that perpetuate corruption networks between the PPBA on the one hand, and politicians and criminals on the other. As is further discussed in Chapter 5, the notoriously insufficient budget of the PPBA has led to the force being financed through illicit means, in particular the sale of illegal protection to criminals and, increasingly, drug traffickers (Dewey 2011, 2012; Sáñ 2013). As PPBA expert and former Vice Minister of Security for Buenos Aires Province (2002) Marcelo Sáñ states:

\begin{quote}
“There is a huge budgetary deficit. The police force of Buenos Aires has 55,000 men, and when people want more security they ask for more policemen. […] If one day the police force stopped illicitly collecting money, [if] they didn’t get anything from anywhere or anyone, then [the PPBA] may be able to operate only for the first ten days of a month.” (Interview with Marcelo Sáñ, December 12, 2011, in Dewey [2012, 666]).
\end{quote}

A report on the results from the 2004-2007 reform wave indicate that the budget for these reforms was in deficit during this period and cited a lack of information systems, insufficient material resources, absence of purchases of materials, among other deficiencies (Dewey 2012, 665). The literature indicates these budget shortfalls have been anything but new to the PPBA.

\textsuperscript{21} Boruchowicz and Wagner (2011) use the term “observationally equivalent individuals” to mean 25 to 45 year-old male individuals with nine years of education that are currently working according to the 2003 INDEC (National Institute for Statistics and Census) survey.
Indeed, there has been an active or passive acceptance of government authorities and politicians that this deficit be financed through illegal methods (Saín 2010), such as participation in drug trafficking, kidnappings, and political policing, to name a few activities in which the PPBA have been implicated. Therefore, it is clear that corruption in the PPBA goes far beyond personal gain and is instead a systematic mechanism for organizational gain. In this way, Sayed and Bruce’s (1998a) definition of police corruption (see Chapter 1) to include organization gain finds strong empirical referents in the PPBA. This is not to imply that personal and organizational are mutually exclusive, however; indeed, the PPBA is only valuable to criminals and organized crime insofar as the organization has the capacity to have a monopoly over the illicit services it can provide—such as information, protection, or the ability to follow through on threats. In this way, a corrupt officer’s ability to profit from illicit activities such as drug trafficking may be directly linked to the organization’s resources at his or her disposal.

g. Internal Accountability Systems

In his review of research on Latin American police forces, Frühling (2009, 472) notes that access to information on internal accountability mechanisms is generally very limited and police authorities tend not to provide researchers with current data. He further notes difficulty in obtaining access to police officers as a significant obstacle in adequately analyzing the functioning of accountability mechanisms. While extensive literature on the PPBA has examined external control mechanisms (or the lack thereof) over the PPBA—and especially political control—relatively little has assessed in depth the functioning of internal accountability mechanisms within the police force. Nevertheless, certain key findings have come forth, especially through analyses of police reform legislation during the 1997 and 2004 reform waves and their subsequent counter-reforms.
The consensus in the PPBA literature is that internal accountability mechanisms are deficient. Saín (2008, 149) notes there are a lack of mechanisms and procedures to detect corruption and abuses and that those systems that are in place are subject to the manipulation of police management and used as a means of control over the rest of the police agency. Saín further notes the following key points regarding accountability mechanisms in the PPBA:

- No mechanisms or agencies responsible for preparing and updating situation reports regarding police corruption in order to analyze information and identify recurrent disciplinary and criminal issues.
- No study or analysis of risk situations to identify factors or institutional/social conditions that favor or determine corruption and abuse.
- No programs or means of intervention to prevent corruption or abuse.
- Lack of preventive oversight mechanisms, e.g. inspections, documentation requirements, or requests for reports.

Prior to the 2004 reform, for over two decades police behavior was regulated by Law 9550/80, and its Regulation 1675/80, which gave disciplinary authority to the Administrative Proceedings Department (Dirección de Sumarios Administrativos), led by a high-ranking police officer reporting to the police chief. This department had no external or community oversight of its decisions and actions were taken by the very colleagues of those who were under investigation (Arslanián 2008, 231). While the reform focused heavily on restructuring internal affairs and placing it under a civilian authority subject to external oversight, it was once again returned to police control under the governorship of Daniel Scioli (CELS, 2011).

The overall weakness of the PPBA’s internal disciplinary system means it often depends on the whim of superiors and does not afford due process to the accused official (Chevigny 2003, 58). Ales et al. (2003) also emphasize the selective use of internal control mechanisms and, similarly, the arbitrary punishment of officers who report corruption. These conditions deprive internal accountability systems of fairness and impartiality and, in doing so, severely weaken the
latter’s effectiveness as a deterrent mechanism. Given the limited accountability from within the institution, activists in Argentina have typically gone the route of criminal prosecution, although this is a very long and cumbersome process (Chevigny 1995) and the courts themselves, as discussed in the next section, have not traditionally exercised efficient management of corruption cases.

Data available on the internal sanctioning of police misconduct does demonstrate a certain degree of efficiency in following through on allegations of corruption and other abuses, although most of those police officers investigated retained their employment. In 2010, approximately 13,600 police officials of PPBA were under investigation for acts of corruption, violence, or irregularities in service (U.S. Department of State 2010). This staggering number constitutes roughly 25 percent of the province’s police force. However, the number of those actually found guilty and sanctioned is significantly lower; of those investigated, 872 were relieved of duty and 1,779 were reassigned to different positions (ibid). During 2011, approximately 300 officers were fired for corruption, violence, or irregularities in job performance (ibid). What is clear is that while investigations for police corruption have increased dramatically (the 2008 figures represent a 75 percent increase in 2006-2007 levels), the number of those found guilty and sanctioned is much lower in comparison.

II. External Environment Factors

While the previous section has noted a substantial degree of literature that has looked to assess causes of corruption in the PPBA at the police agency level, the majority of the PPBA literature identifies the root causes of police corruption as attributable to factors outside the police agency and, in particular, within the political realm. That is, while police agency factors can and do have an effect on corruption, the persistence of certain factors external to the agency
has allowed corruption to flourish within the PPBA and, similarly, has undermined reform efforts within the institution. The general consensus in the PPBA literature is that while police agency factors clearly have a role in either promoting or helping fight corruption, they are conditioned to a large degree by factors outside of the institution. As further discussed in this section, the literature has generally focused on factors pertaining to the political environment, a high degree of police autonomy, and to (the lack of) various external oversight mechanisms.

  
  
i. Political Environment: “Mano Dura” and Fear of Crime

  Perhaps the most oft-cited factor that has undermined reform efforts—and that by extension has promoted corruption within the PPBA—is the Argentine public’s demands for mano dura (“iron fist”), tough on crime approaches to policing, given that these approaches have traditionally come at the expense of human rights-based approaches that place a greater importance on factors such as police accountability. Despite the public’s lack of confidence in the police, there are systemic and repeated claims for greater and more severe police presence after any event producing public disorder (Saín 2008, 33). Similarly, social repulsion from corruption and abuse is not accompanied by the logic that overcoming these issues requires modernization of police forces and public investment (Saín 2008, 40). Research from the region shows that most Latin Americans have a high tolerance for police excess if it is seen as a price to be paid for effective crime control; only when crime and police excesses increase simultaneously do citizens begin to associate police power with their inability to control crime (Pereira and Ungar 2004, 2). This was precisely the context that gave way to long overdue police reforms in 1999 and 2004 in the Province of Buenos Aires, but in overall terms mano dura policing—and the public’s support for it in Argentina—has persisted even despite reform attempts.
In a comparative analysis between Argentina and Chile, Fuentes (2005) discusses in depth the civil society factions that have developed, with “pro-order” factions on the one hand, and “civil rights” coalitions, on the other. Fuentes notes that silence on the issue of police abuses in Chile was the result of Chile’s democratic transition, with pro-order proponents having greater access to the political system than in Argentina, where civil rights coalitions have been able to set more of the agenda. However, Fuentes notes as well that even though the issue of police abuses has received greater public visibility in Argentina, it has, nevertheless, not resulted in effective reforms. Literature on the PPBA notes that pro-order factions have played decisive roles in pressuring the provincial government to address crime by increasing police discretion, which has resulted in greater police autonomy to engage in corruption. Indeed, Fuentes notes that “those who defend pro-order views enjoy comparative advantages over those who defend civil rights views in terms of access to policymakers and available strategies” (5). This leads to the contradictory situation identified by Ungar (2008), in which increasing levels of crime have tended to retard police reform rather than promote it.

Intrinsically linked to mano dura demands has been a perceived rise in crime rates and sensations of insecurity felt by the general population (Dammert and Malone 2002; Romero 2003). This perceived increase in insecurity has validated authoritative approaches to policing and higher degrees of police discretion at the expense of police accountability, oversight, and transparency. In Argentina, as in Latin America more generally, over a decade of survey data show no clear relationship between personal exposure to crime and its perception as a serious problem, yet surveys confirm Argentines’ fear of crime placing them at the top of the list of those living in fear of crime within the region as well as globally (Seri 2012). Smulovitz (2003, 125) also notes that opinion polls show perception of insecurity has tended be far higher than
what is warranted by actual crime statistics. Similarly, Chevigny (1995, 200) notes that fear of crime and sensations of insecurity have been artificially inflated—in part due to the presence of police violence itself—in order to maintain control and avoid accountability, in particular for crimes of corruption.

Despite Argentina’s turbulent politics, demands for mano dura have been persistently consistent. In 1998 president Carlos Menem advocated mano dura as the solution to fighting crime, stating that “some human rights organizations are going to raise an outcry against this, but I think we have more protections here for criminals than for the police or the people” (Clarín 1998, in Neild 2000). A decade later, soon after becoming governor of the province, Daniel Scioli stated that “insecurity is the main preoccupation of our people” (Seri 2012) and proceeded with a counter-reform process to render void many of the prior 2004 reforms, including the grating of greater discretion to police officers and the subsequent appointment of “pro-order” proponent Alejandro Granados as Minister of Security—who, soon after assuming office, declared the need to increase the number of PPBA officers from 55,000 to 100,000 (CELS 2015, 211). Indeed, the 2009 and 2013 legislative elections centered heavily on insecurity and mano dura approaches, and these demands have not been limited to a particular party or ideology—even members of the leftist Front for Victory Party openly supported mano dura due to electoral pragmatism (CELS 2015, 250).

Ultimately, the result of demands for mano dura have been detrimental to fighting corruption in the PPBA and, more broadly, to providing long-term policy solutions to Argentina’s deficient public security system. Promoting legal and political accountability in Argentina is further complicated by the mano dura approach given the tension between voters’ preference for a tough approach towards law and order and the principles of legal accountability
that emphasize actions of public officials being within the limits of the law (Stanley 2005, 73). Politicians feel pressured to address crime rates quickly, which has led to erratic policy decisions aimed almost exclusively at increasing police presence and police discretion. As Smulovitz (2003, 130) emphasizes, solutions based on social policy and social measures, which produce results over the long term, are seen as inadequate to meet urgent political necessities. An excerpt of an interview with an anonymous public servant perhaps summarizes best:

“The are all bandages, patches. There are no State policies in terms of public security. This is why one goes from police reform aimed at ending police corruption to strengthening mano dura with that same corrupt police force and there are even those who state publicly that the military needs to be placed on the streets like in the dictatorship.” (Interview by Latorraca, Montero, and Rodriguez [2003, 6]).

**ii. Political Environment: Federalism**

According to Eaton (2008), another factor that has promoted the persistence of corruption within the force and impeded reform of the PPBA has been the federal nature of Argentina’s government. As Eaton notes, this seems contradictory on the surface given that one may think that this federalism would encourage policy innovation at the local level; however, in the Argentine case the result has been conflicts of interest between one level of government and the other (9). In the case of the PPBA, these levels of conflict include the provincial-municipal level and the federal-provincial level.

On one hand, opposition to reforms by mayors within the province has greatly hindered reform implementation. For example, they were threatened by the reform’s creation of 18 (and later 32) departments, which represented an additional administrative unit between them and the province (Saín 2002: 90, 115). They were also threatened by the creation of municipal

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22 Translation by author. For an in-depth review of short-sighted policymaking as the norm in Argentina, see Spiller and Tommasi (2000).
ombudsmen, who were independent from municipal authority. This resistance has empirical referents in the flawed implementation of reforms. In the case of the 1997 reform, by 1998 only 22 out of 134 mayors had created the newly required municipal ombudsmen offices (Eaton 2008: 16). It is probably not surprising, then, that the 1999 opposition candidate for governor Carlos Ruckauf—who campaigned strongly on the platform of instituting measures to reverse the 1997 reform—received considerable support from mayors in the province. Indeed, their opposition to reforms was key in Ruckauf’s ability to drastically reverse the reform process upon assuming office in 1999.

In the case of the 2004 reforms, mayors once again rejected the reforms, which had initially aimed to create separate forces for each municipality, arguing that the provincial government was trying to put the blame on municipalities for their failed ability to reign in the police. This resulted in Security Minister Arslanián’s initial plans being revised to instead only advocate for the creation of municipal forces on a voluntary basis (Eaton 2008, 16). Even as recently as 2014, this same argument has been repeatedly used by mayors against any efforts aimed at increasing their responsibility over policing. In June 2014, a law was passed by the provincial legislature for the creation of local police forces in districts of greater than 70,000 inhabitants that would depend on the mayor as their director. Further, mayors would also be responsible for the PPBA officers stationed within their district. The mechanisms for financing and fund transfers for the police were hotly debated, as was the model of police to be created, with prominent mayor and soon-to-be presidential candidate Sergio Massa declaring that with the limits imposed by the law the police would be a like a group of boy scouts rather than serious police force (La Nación 2014). Mayors also strongly opposed taking responsibility of PPBA officers in their district (CELS 2015, 213).
Additionally, in a prime example of “blame game federalism,” conflict between governors and the federal government also hindered reform efforts. Hinton (2005: 95) perhaps says it best:

“…governors blame the federal government for insufficient funds and support. Federal governments respond by launching ambitious action plans, and blast governors for poor implementation or lack of compliance as soon as the public security situation deteriorates again. The business class complains over high crime while demanding reductions in labor benefits and pushing for wages to stay low. The police, inevitably, have become the universal scapegoat.”

In 2004, for example, Governor Solá, after the Blumberg scandal (see Chapter 7), blamed President Néstor Kirchner for the province’s lost co-participation revenues. Kirchner, it turn, criticized Governor Solá as lacking dedication to fight corruption in the police, refusing to speak with him (La Nación 2004a). Tension was also created by talks of the federal government using its authority to intervene in the PPBA (La Nación 2004b), although this never came to fruition. Finger pointing and blaming has been commonplace, and has hindered the creation of coherent strategies to clean up the PPBA. One such effect has been contradictory policies and security paradigms coexisting simultaneously, even during the reforms themselves, by, for example, promoting a human rights approach to policing on the one hand while also passing legislation to strengthen police discretion in detainments (Gonzalez 2005, 72). These contradictions clearly undermined reform and have allowed corruption and illicit networks to flourish.

**iii. Political Environment: Political Collusion and Political Policing**

Another factor that has played a key role in perpetuating corruption in the PPBA has been collusion between politicians and the police. Through turning a blind eye towards police corruption and abuse—in all of its varied forms—in exchange for a part of the corruptly earned profits in order to fund their campaigns and strengthen their parties, these corruption networks permeate police-politician relations in Argentina and create a strong political disincentive to
control the police. Political collusion and political use of the police both have referents in the global literature (see, for example, Punch 2000, 305; McCormack 1996, 243). However, the PPBA literature has focused on this aspect to a much greater extent, likely due to the fact that political corruption is far more pervasive in Argentina than in countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia on which a substantial amount of the global literature has drawn its conclusions.

As Dútil and Rangendorfer (1997, 10) infamously note, “behind every important corrupt police officer in Argentina stands an important politician.” All three leading police reform activists in Argentina (Justice Minister Gustavo Béliz, Vice Minister of Security Sáín, and Security Minister Arslanián) have denounced illicit ties between elected officials and the police (Eaton 2008, 20). Ever since its formation, the PPBA has been closely connected with political parties at the local or provincial level (Dewey 2012, 665). Sáín (2008) describes police-politician relations as governed by a “reciprocity pact” in which the police are granted autonomy in exchange for being able to guarantee acceptable levels of crime so as to avoid citizen uprisings. Further, Sáín (2008, 299) notes that elected officials’ overall ignorance, disinterest, and lack of understanding of public security policy—and hence their willingness to defer matters to the police—has only been interrupted by certain politicians’ willingness to benefit from involvement in illicit circles of crime between the police and criminals.

Using the case of mayors opposed to reforms, while said opposition may have been due in part to municipal interests as well as political concerns, it was also likely motivated by the desire to defend bribes earned from corrupt police in exchange for lending them political support (Sáín 2002). As another such example, Peronist politicians secretly defended PPBA police officers that were targeted for purging under the short-lived 1997 police reform, and, similarly,
Eduardo Duhalde’s (President of Argentina from 2002-2003 and leader of the Peronist party in the province of Buenos Aires during Néstor Kirchner’s administration) defense of pockets of police corruption consistently limited the latter’s ability to respond to demands for reform of the PPBA (ibid).

In addition to monetary gains from police corruption, politicians also benefit from these corrupt networks because the police officers they protect serve as power resources against rival politicians and parties. That is, the loyalty of a province’s police force constitutes a great degree of political power against others. In fact, Eaton notes that political control over the police has been a prominent factor in some of the most important inter- and intra-party conflicts in recent years. Looked at in this context, it is not surprising that during the widespread riots at the wake of the country’s financial meltdown in 2001, which ultimately forced President De la Rúa (a member of the UCR Party) out of office, the PPBA, under the control of Peronist governor Carlos Ruckauf, were quite passive in quelling the unrest (Eaton 2008, 20). Eaton notes that this has particularly been the case with the Peronist party, due primarily to the fact that Peronists have governed more provinces for longer periods of time than any other party, which has given them greater opportunities to build corrupt networks with provincial police, and hence have the most to lose from police reform.

This point relates to Hinton’s (2005; 2006) argument that the normalization of corruption networks, and their permeation in all levels of Argentine politics and society, seriously undermine reform efforts and have deep historical roots. As Hinton notes, in fragile institutions with the lack of long-term guarantees, elected officials are in constant threat of being destabilized, even in under democratic governments. Boruchowicz and Wagner (2011) also highlight the use of the PPBA as a power resource as a mere example of a more structural pattern
of institutional decay over the 20th century in Argentina, in which an uncertain and unpredictable political climate is a disincentive to long-term investments and instead promotes the use of the police as a political tool for maintaining power and control. Using the police as a resource to monitor, infiltrate, and subdue rival social groups has been a common practice in the country, and in this way police reform runs directly against this power resource (Hinton 2005, 80). As a PPBA officer states:

“The police must adapt themselves to the current government. This is the way things are. The police belong to the powers that be. They must adapt, the police, to whatever government is in place” (Seri and Estevez 2010, 6).

The paradox of this relationship is that as pressure from citizens and civil society organizations to reform the police increases, the more tempting it will be for corrupt politicians to depend on their networks with corrupt police officers in order to raise money for increasingly expensive and competitive campaigns. Only by changing the incentive structures that influence politicians to be complicit with corrupt police in exchange for bribes can such behavior be effectively combated.

iv. External Oversight: Police Autonomy

The global literature places emphasis on the need for external oversight of the police and, as mentioned previously, notes that political will is generally a prerequisite for any serious attempt at reigning in corruption. As the previous sections have demonstrated, demands for mano dura policing, the nature of Argentina’s federalism, collusion with politicians, and the political use of the police as a power resource (political policing) all create disincentives for the political class to seriously address corruption in the PPBA. In fact, in Argentina, the lack of control over public security and delegating authority to the police to make security decisions has been a politically viable means of public administration, the political costs for which have been minimal.
Neither government authorities, legislators, nor political parties have demonstrated an interest in governing public security (15), leading to Sain describing the PPBA as a “Blue Leviathan,” which is the result of a vicious circle of political disinterest, social nearsightedness (e.g. demands for mano dura policing at the expense of police accountability), and police self-management (39).

At the same time as greater autonomy of the police has fostered the persistence of corruption networks given the lack of oversight over the institution and its members, it has also lead to an overall “ politicization” of the police in which the PPBA is used by government and party leaders to gain from illicit earns and intimidate local adversaries (Sain 2008, 128). Indeed, political actors of the province have repeatedly delegated policy design and goals to the police (Gonzalez 2005, 62), allowing it to function as it wishes so long as crime levels can be maintained at acceptable levels. In this system, police chiefs have traditionally set their own priorities and strategies, negotiating directly with elected officials and supported by politicians who are close to the police (Seri and Estevez 2010, 6). Since accountability is not valued by this system, it favors corruption and impunity. While reform attempts in 1999 and 2004 represent a divergence from this tradition, their ultimate and untimely demise have left the institution largely as it had been prior to the reform processes. As one PPBA officer states:

“In 1983 everything was ready for changing things completely, and they let [the opportunity] slip by. And, then, when the situation with Arslanián exploded, they let it slip by again.”

Furthermore, regarding the failure of elected officials and political parties to follow through on reforms, the Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS) states the following:

“Political parties are largely indifferent or incompetent to deal with questions about security policies and the police. The failure to use the institutional fora created by the reform processes and the lack of basic agreements and joint actions on these issues reflect, in reality, a retreat of the political class at the moment
when it was taking control of one of the most complex and socially urgent institutional issues it faced. This political weakness represents the most serious obstacle to the effort to conduct a comprehensive reform of the security system and provincial police. The political class must not forget that there is no obedience where there is no leadership.” (CELS and HRW 1998, 105).

It is clear, then, that police autonomy resulting from a lack of political oversight and control has permitted an environment in which corruption and police abuses are commonplace. Only when political will exists to effectively control the police can this situation be remedied. However, given the lack of incentives discussed in this section, the prospects for serious and sustained reform remain unlikely as of this writing.

v. External Oversight: The Courts

An additional structural factor that is key to understanding the persistence of corruption in the PPBA is the historical weakness of Argentina’s judicial branch. Together with the legislature, the Argentine judiciary consistently ranks as among the most discredited of national institutions (Hinton 2005, 91). In addition to being notoriously slow and inefficient, the judicial system also been accused of lacking impartiality and of succumbing to political influence. For example, the carrying out of technical-expert tasks and criminal investigation of police officers by administrative police—rather than the creation of a judicial police to do these tasks—as well as a lack of supervision and control over judicial authorities has resulted in an informal intervention of political-administrative power in the courts and the political manipulation of cases sensitive to the government in power (Saín 2008, 163). Indeed, this is a common pattern

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23 See the UN Convention Against Corruption’s (UNCAC) Civil Society Review: Argentina (2011: 6-8).
24 For a relatively recent example of this interference, see the report on the case of Candela Rodriguez, a minor who was kidnapped and murdered by a local drug cartel and the evidence of which was manipulated by the PPBA, in coordination with political elites, to attempt to hide the PPBA’s active participation with the drug trafficking organization. See Comisión especial de acompañamiento para el esclarecimiento del asesinato de Candela Sol Rodríguez. 2012. Final Report. Senate of the Republic of Argentina: La Plata.
observable in the Argentine judicial system’s treatment of corruption cases. Many judges take advantage of their position of power to obtain private benefits in exchange for a determined handling of an investigation (ACIJ 2008). Additional deficiencies affecting the treatment of corruption cases include the lack of adequate tools for carrying out investigations, the saturation of federal judges’ workload with less relevant cases, and the existence of excessive appeals that delay the adjudication process (ibid). A further disincentive includes the fact that judges have received threats for prosecuting police officers (Chevigny 1995, 196).

The judiciary’s weakness not only affected purges during the reforms (and to this day), but also the implementation of reforms in the investigative police, which constituted an important focus of both reform waves. In the 1997 reform, for example, the transfer of 35,000 cases from the police to the courts was met with resistance from the latter. Due to this resistance and the courts’ limited capacity, the police continued to carry out tasks that weren’t related to their functions (Estévez 2008: 13). Indeed, despite the goal of promoting greater judicial oversight over police investigations, in practice, the weakness of the judicial branch has resulted in a continued autonomy of police investigations, a factor that has been associated with greater corruption and police abuses.

vi. External Oversight: The Media

Public support is an important component to fighting corruption and the role of the media can either assist or inhibit efforts to reign in the police (Stenning and Shearing 2005, 171). Research on the role of the media in PPBA reforms is limited, although it is closely linked to the aforementioned demands for mano dura policing and citizens’ fear of crime. Stanley (2005), in an analysis of the role of the media in fabricated crimes by the Argentine Federal police, noted
the ambivalent role played by media in terms of generating police accountability. Stanley notes that without the media, PFA would have had little reason to fabricate crimes. Further, the media accepted in good faith the police version of these fabricated events (76). At the same time, the threat of a media scandal is what prompted Minister of Security to open an investigation. Indeed, in the case of the PPBA, media scandals following instances of PPBA participation in criminal activity is what ultimately opened up a window of opportunity for reform in 1997 and 2004, which has clear correlations to Sherman’s (1978) argument that scandal is a key impetus for reform.

Therefore, in Argentina, the media has clearly played an important role in exposing scandals and in this way has served as an important vertical accountability mechanism. However, it has simultaneously contributed to perpetuating citizens’ feelings of insecurity and demands for mano dura policing, which have in turn made reform attempts difficult and have generally favored greater police autonomy. Its role is, therefore, ambiguous, although further research on the role of the media in police corruption scandals is needed to shed further insight on this aspect.

III. Final Comments and Suggestions for Future Research

The wealth of literature on the PPBA has contributed a great degree of knowledge on the causes of corruption in the PPBA. While certain areas of study on this topic have received a wide degree of research and are frequently cited, still others have received much less or no attention and merit further study. The sections below summarize comparisons with the global literature

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25 This practice involves planting evidence on innocent individuals in order to accuse them of a serious crime while simultaneously alerting the media in order to receive widespread coverage and give the appearance of an efficient police force that is effectively fighting crime.
and suggest potential areas for future research related to causes of corruption in the PPBA at the individual, police agency, and external environment levels.

It is worth reiterating that, given the rejection of the “bad apples” hypothesis by the global literature and substantial evidence that police corruption in the PPBA has systemic origins from macro-political factors, an overall lack of research on individual-level causes of corruption in the PPBA is not surprising, nor is in-depth study of this dimension necessarily warranted. Indeed, while individual defects such as vices, criminal histories, or even the addictive nature of corruption itself may impact corruption in the PPBA, the widespread corruption observed in this police force (see Chapter 4) indicates the problem goes far beyond “a few bad apples.” For this reason, individual-level causes of police corruption are not discussed as an area in need of future research in the PPBA. Figure 2 organizes the causes identified by the literature as well as those causes that merit further study in the PPBA.

**Police Agency Causes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Police Corruption</th>
<th>Addressed by the Global Literature</th>
<th>Addressed by the PPBA Literature</th>
<th>Gaps in Knowledge Warranting Further Study (PPBA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police Culture</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Accountability</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment/Screening</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/Budget</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Policies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian legacies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy and Militarized Structure</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discretion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to Deviance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 2: Causes of Police Corruption and Areas for Future Research

Please note that this figure is meant solely as an organization tool rather than a summary of substantive knowledge. All cited causes of police corruption at the global and case-specific levels, as well as relevant sources and specific suggestions for future research, are discussed in-depth in their respective section in this thesis and in the final comments section. Causes are presented in the order in which they are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

#### i. Police Agency Causes: Comparing the Global and PPBA Literature

A comparison of both the global and PPBA literatures shows that both have tended to focus on similar potential causes of corruption at the police agency level. Those causes at this level addressed by both literatures include the following:

- Police culture
- Leadership
- Internal accountability
- Recruitment and Screening Procedures
- Training
- Agency resources/budget
- Human resources policies, in particular wages and promotions

Still other factors are more specific to Argentina and Latin America more generally and have therefore not received as much attention in the global literature:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Police Corruption</th>
<th>Global Literature</th>
<th>PPBA Literature</th>
<th>Future Research Needed (PPBA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Iron-fist&quot; Policing and Fear of Crime</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Collusion and Political Policing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Oversight: Police Autonomy</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Oversight: the Courts</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Oversight: the Media and Civil Society</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unenforceable Laws</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized Crime</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Authoritarian legacies
- Hierarchy, centralization, and militarized organizational structure

Given that most of the global literature draws its conclusions from Anglo and American police force experiences with corruption, it is perhaps not surprising that the authoritarian legacy component finds greater resonance in the Latin American context. It is important to note that global literature has addressed the role of hierarchy, centralization, and rigid command structures as conducive to corruption and common in police forces (see Owens and Pfeifer 2002), however the PPBA literature has done so to a greater extent.

A final difference between the literatures at this level of analysis is that two factors highlighted by the global literature as causes of police corruption that are inherent to the policing profession are not widely discussed in the PPBA literature as causes of police corruption:

- Discretion
- Proximity to deviance

This is not to imply that these factors are absent in the PPBA; as these are both constant factors that are inherent to policing itself, one could assume said factors are also present in the PPBA. Instead, rather than focusing on discretion as an inherent part of policing, the PPBA literature has focused on factors that tend to increase discretion, which at the police agency level can perhaps most clearly be attributed to limited internal accountability mechanisms and poor leadership. Similarly, while much literature has discussed the PPBA’s proximity to and participation in criminal activity (see Dewey 2011, 2012; Sain 2013), it has not focused on attributing corruption to this proximity per se but rather to lack of internal controls as well as broader factors in the external environment, such as the political dynamics of mano dura and political corruption.
**ii. Police Agency Causes: Suggestions for Future Research**

As regards areas of future research regarding causes of corruption at the police agency level, several suggestions are worthy to note. First, future research is needed on the recruitment of new officers into the PPBA. This area has only received limited attention, but knowing information such as the average education levels of PPBA officers today, as well as the psychological profiles addressed in the psychological exams used on new recruits could be useful. Similarly, scholars have not focused on analyzing changes to recruitment policy during the 1997 and 2004 reform waves aside from basic aspects such as instituting the requirement of a high school degree. More in-depth study, such as interviews with officers or key decision-makers on this topic, could provide very useful insight on the nature of recruitment policies and their changes over the years, both during reform waves and subsequent counter-reforms.

Further research is also warranted on the socialization process of new recruits and police officers’ views of the community and institutions in order to yield additional insight into the dynamics of police culture and its relationship with corruption in Argentina. While extensive literature has assessed training in the PPBA, its deficiencies, and changes during reform waves (and ultimately their subsequent reversals), not much focus has been placed on examining the socialization process of new recruits and its implications for corruption.

Additional research is also needed on the nature of police culture in the PPBA more generally. While limited research suggests police culture mirrors the characteristics observed in other police forces by the global literature (Stanley 2005), more research into the extent to which factors such as the “code of silence,” professional pride, loyalty to fellow officers, and other characteristics of police culture play a role in police corruption is warranted in order to reach firmer conclusions.
Internal accountability systems within the PPBA also merit further study. While the PPBA literature over the past two decades has consistently found internal accountability systems to be deficient, this conclusion has tended to be based on limited information given that the functioning of these systems in practice is not well studied. One example of an area in need of future research is the extent to which proactive internal investigations have been conducted in the PPBA as a means of detecting corruption. Another such avenue is the extent to which specific accountability mechanisms have actually been used in practice. For example, the latest reform wave introduced an “Abuses Map” to track statistics on situations that may indicate corruption or participation in organized crime, organizing said information spatially to serve as an evaluation tool (Arslanián 2008, 176). However, no scholarly analysis of this or other such mechanisms in the PPBA currently exists.

An additional area in need of further study, and related to this previous point, is the degree of discretion that is common for day-to-day police work in the PPBA. While police work inherently tends to have a high degree of discretion (Quinton and Miller 2003, 5), fieldwork such as interviews with officers could provide useful insight into the extent to which accountability mechanisms and supervision play a role in everyday activities of PPBA officers.

**iii. External Environment Causes: Comparing the Global and PPBA Literature**

While the global literature notes the effects that the external environment can and does have on police corruption, the extent of the literature focusing on this realm in the PPBA is substantially greater than that which does so at the global level. This disparity may be due to the fact that certain macro-level factors, such as political stability, likely play a larger role in Argentina and other developing countries than in the stable democracies of the United States, UK, and Australia, on which a disproportionate amount of the global literature reaches its
conclusions. Nevertheless, both literatures clearly address the fact that political factors can and do have important impacts on police corruption. For example, both have mentioned the impact of fear of crime and insecurity on demands for hardline stances against crime, which tend to result in greater police discretion and, by extension, opportunities for corruption. This has been particularly well documented in the PPBA case. Both literatures also address the role that collusion with local politicians has on perpetuating corruption networks, as well as the roles played by other external actors, such as the courts, the media, and civil society.

One distinction between the literatures with regard to external factors for corruption is argument pioneered by Eaton (2008) that federalism has greatly impeded police reform in Argentina and, in that way, has promoted the persistence of corruption. By contrast, the global literature has not identified federalism as a factor of police corruption. It is worth clarifying, however, that Eaton’s argument is not that federalism itself is conducive to corruption but rather that the political dynamics created by federalism in the Argentine context have created conflict that has made reform difficult.

Another notable distinction between the literatures is that scholars researching the PPBA have cited police autonomy as a cause for corruption due to a wide degree of political disinterest in managing the police, which has given way to an institution that has developed a large degree of independence from formal political or civilian control (see, for example, Saín 2008). While the global literature has noted that addressing police corruption is a very difficult political issue—and Sherman’s (1978) work in particular regarding the role of scandal as an important, and often necessary, impetus for politicians to take control of the police—it has not tended to address the issue of police agencies as truly autonomous entities governed by their own rules without formal control. By contrast, in the case of the PPBA, not only is police reform a difficult
political issue, but further, the PPBA has shown a large degree of resistance and independence from formal control in its own right (see Palmieri, Filippini and Thomas 2001, 22).

iv. External Environment Causes: Suggestions for Future Research

In summary, most of the literature on external factors for corruption in the PPBA is comprehensive and well developed. Indeed, a review of the PPBA literature demonstrates that significantly more literature assesses causes of corruption at this level of analysis than at the other levels. The impact of political factors on police corruption—from answering to mano dura demands, to dynamics created by federalism, to collusion with corrupt politicians—has been clearly delineated by the literature through numerous, methodologically diverse studies. Similarly, the absence of external oversight mechanisms exercised by politicians, the courts, and civil society have also been well documented. However, significantly less literature, albeit with important exceptions, has been concerned with studying the role of the media in either facilitating corruption (e.g. by increasing demands for mano dura and police autonomy) or curbing it (by giving way to media scandals uncovering police corruption). While the literature to date suggests the media has played an ambiguous role by both perpetuating the persistence of police corruption as well as exposing it, more research on this area is needed in order to draw more concrete conclusions. Similarly, additional research should also assess the role played by civil society in Argentina as a mechanism for deterring police corruption. Argentina has been widely credited as having an active civil society promoting issues related to human rights and government accountability (see, for example, Fuentes 2005), however additional research into the dynamics of the relationship between civil society and police corruption in the PPBA is warranted.
An additional suggestion for future research is to study the effect that unenforceable laws may or may not have on corruption in the PPBA. While their impact likely pales in comparison to demands for *mano dura* and corruption networks with politicians, it nevertheless has important policy implications given that the global literature has identified unenforceable laws as providing important opportunities for corruption.

A final suggestion for future research is to assess the degree to which organized criminal interests play a causal role in corruption in the PPBA. Several studies have looked to examine PPBA participation with organized criminal interests (Dewey 2011, 2012; Sain 2013); however, all have assessed this participation as a situation in which the PPBA exercises efficient control over organized crime and seeks to profit from it due to the force’s ability to control the terms of the negotiations. This situation is substantially different from that experienced in other Latin American countries, such as Mexico, in which organized criminal interests have infiltrated police forces and in this way serve as a serious corrupting factor (Botella and Rivera 2000, 62). As Sain (2013) notes, however, this may not always be the case as organized crime—and in particular drug trafficking—gains increased presence in Argentina. Future research should continue to examine the vulnerability of state capture through the PPBA by these interests.
CHAPTER 4

THE NATURE AND ORGANIZATION OF POLICE CORRUPTION:
GLOBAL AND CASE-SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Despite the breadth of literature at the global level that aims to define police corruption, identify its causes, and propose measures to assist in preventing it, significantly less literature has focused on researching the nature of corrupt practices within police agencies and its organization and *modus operandi* in practice. Similarly, the literature specific to the Buenos Aires Provincial Police has mirrored the global literature on police corruption insofar as the depth and extent of literature focused on researching the nature and organization of corruption within the police force is significantly less than that which looks to explain the causes of police corruption and possible preventive measures. This lack of information is perhaps not surprising, as it reflects the general lack of such literature on corruption more generally. Indeed, given its clandestine nature, corruption is inherently difficult to study systematically, and this is even more the case when the objective is precisely on breaking through its secretive shield and characterizing the day-to-day workings of corrupt officials and corruption networks. In other words, those who have the firsthand knowledge of how these activities are carried out in practice also have the most to lose by such activities being exposed. Therefore, under most circumstances, very little incentive exists for these individuals to discuss their activities.

Despite its limited breadth, this literature has made important contributions to scholars’ understanding of how corruption operates in police forces globally and in the PPBA. The following sections discuss key findings in both literatures related to the nature and organization of corruption in police agencies, highlighting areas of agreement as well as differences between
these literatures. The final section concludes by suggesting avenues for future research in the PPBA case.26

I. Global Literature Findings

i. The Collective Nature of Corruption and Behavior Rationalization

While the individual characteristics of an officer may influence his or her propensity to engage in corruption, scholarship on the nature of corruption within police forces has increasingly argued for the understanding of corruption as a learned and socialized behavior carried out at the group level. Indeed, these findings have been based on in-depth case studies and commissions established to investigate the nature and organization of corruption within police forces. While such investigations have been limited, they have revealed that police corruption, rather than being an individual act, tends to involve at a minimum groups or informal cliques of officers.

In this vein, one oft-cited study by Stoddard (1968) focused on the recollections of an ex-police informant who served a one-year prison sentence for theft. Critiquing the individual

26 Information on the nature and extent of corruption within police agencies has tended to come from several sources: commissions tasked with investigating police corruption in a particular department, scholarly case studies, surveys of police officers, interviews with police officers, and analysis of agency records and statistics from the criminal justice system (see Ivkovic 2003). The PPBA literature has benefitted most greatly from investigations into police corruption, especially during the 1997 and 2004 reform waves, as well as scholarly case studies that have researched corruption in the police force, many of which have employed qualitative methods such as one-on-one interviews with police officers and senior leaders. In contrast with the global literature, no survey of PPBA officers on police corruption has been conducted to this researcher’s knowledge. Similarly, and in line with the global literature, little information has been obtained from PPBA records related to the nature or organization of corruption in practice. Some data from the agency and the criminal justice system related to police officers removed from the force on corruption or other misconduct charges—especially as part of the several purges carried out within the reform waves—has contributed to the literature as a means of shedding light on the extent of corruption in the PPBA (Arslanián 2008, 251-252; Seri and Estevez 2008, 4; U.S. Department of State 2010), although these numbers are of little descriptive value in terms of explaining the nature and means of organization of corruption in the PPBA.
approach to police corruption that had been developed by early scholars such as Vollmer (1936) and German (1958), Stoddard argues for a group approach to explaining the nature of police corruption. In particular, he notes that the acceptance of small bribes and favors tends to occur in informal cliques within the police force, and that once begun these actions can become norms or informal standards within cliques. New officers, in turn, are socialized into accepting these practices and the norms eventually take precedence over police department rules or legal statutes (203). Similarly, Stoddard notes that failure to accept the informal code bars individuals from the inner secrets of the profession, isolating him or her socially and professionally from colleagues and even superiors (207). Indeed, this process is self-reinforcing, as failure to socialize new recruits into the informal code may threaten those who currently practice it; participation implicates them, which in turn binds them to secrecy (212).

In a similar fashion, Carter (1990, 89) notes the rationalization of behavior that officers undertake to justify increasingly serious violations. He notes that an officer initially feared detection after his or her first corrupt act, although this fear decreases with time until another opportunity of corruption occurs. The period of fear of detection becomes shorter as incidents increase, as the failure of being detected reinforces the safety of the practice. As one example of behavior rationalization, he notes that while officers surveyed generally cited taking drugs from police custody as “wrong”, they did not view it as corrupt as there was no exchange of money. Instead, they viewed it as a question of “not putting drugs in the property room” rather than “taking drugs from a user or dealer”; in this way, they rationalized their behavior to minimize the perception of wrongdoing (89-90). A similar rationalization of behavior can be observed by officers commonly distinguishing “clean” versus “dirty” money. For example, police who receive money from gambling, prostitution, and liquor may not be viewed as deviant but rather
as “realistic” (Skolnick 1967, 207-208); by contrast, money from narcotics or directly from criminal activities is considered “dirty” and frowned upon by those who only accept “clean” money (Roebuck and Barker 1974, 427).

New York City’s 1973 Knapp Commission is perhaps the most frequently cited commission that investigated allegations of systemic police corruption. The Commission uncovered patterns of corruption at the group level in which corrupt earnings were shared among the clique, including, in some cases, supervisors. One of its key findings was the identification of two general profiles of corrupt police officers: “grass-eaters” and “meat eaters”:

“The overwhelming majority of those [police officers] who do take payoffs are ‘grass-eaters,’ who accept gratuities and solicit five- and ten- and twenty-dollar payments from contractors, tow-truck operators, gamblers, and the like, but do not aggressively pursue corruption payments. ‘Meat-eaters,’ probably only a small percentage of the force, spend a good deal of their working hours aggressively seeking out situations they can exploit for financial gain, including gambling, narcotics, and other serious offenses which can yield payments of thousands of dollars” (Knapp Commission Report, 65).

The Commission therefore concluded that, while the meat-eaters received greater media attention and larger payoffs, grass-eaters were the heart of the problem because their greater numbers made corruption respectable (Knapp Commission Report, 4). The Commission also noted that grass-eaters learned corrupt practices from other officers and received incentives as a result of engaging in them. Further, the Commission also found that engaging in these practices was used as a means to prove loyalty to colleagues. Interestingly, approximately 20 years later New York City’s Mollen Commission (1994) identified that, by contrast, meat-eaters had become the norm rather than the exception, with groups of officers actively committing crimes, largely in connection to the illegal drug trade. The Commission also noted a lack of leadership and commitment on the part of the department’s administrators as reasons for its reappearance and pervasiveness (U.S. GAO Report 1998, 8).
Relatedly, another key finding from the Knapp Report was the highly organized manner in which corruption was carried out in practice, involving multiple layers of the organization with defined roles and payoffs for different tasks and one’s rank:

“In a highly systematized pattern, described to the Commission by numerous sources and verified during our investigation, plainclothesmen collected regular bi-weekly or monthly payoffs from gamblers on the first and fifteenth of each month, often at a meeting point some distance from the gambling spot and outside the immediate police precinct or division. The pad money was picked up at designated locations by one or more bagmen who were most often police officers but who occasionally were ex-policemen or civilians. The proceeds were then pooled and divided up among all or virtually all of the division’s plainclothesmen, with each plainclothes patrolman receiving an equal share. Supervisory lieutenants who were on the pad customarily received a share and a half and, although the Commission was unable to document particular instances, any commanding officer who participated reportedly received two full shares. In addition, the bagman received a larger cut, often an extra share, to compensate him for the risk involved in making his collections…” (Knapp Commission Report, 74).

In this way, investigations into police misconduct such as the Knapp Commission have revealed that, far from being an issue of a “few bad apples,” police corruption, especially by the time it reaches public view, is systemically organized and tends to involve multiple actors and ranks, up to and including senior officers and decision-makers (see section ii below). While the specific rules by which police corruption is organized are difficult to uncover, the limited information available suggests it tends to be governed by clear processes and procedures—such as those related to the division of tasks, the distribution of funds, and the classification of “clean” or “dirty” corrupt practices—that are enforced and replicated by the parties involved. Indeed, as discussed later in this chapter, these patterns and degrees of organization have also been clearly observed in the PPBA.


\textit{ii. The Role of Police Leadership}

Research has also assessed the degree to which police leadership plays a role in corruption networks within police agencies. In a case study examining corruption in the Indian police, Verma (1999) examined in depth the nature and organization of corruption networks within the police institution, and found that corruption within the senior ranks drove corruption at the lower ranks—from accepting bribes to extortion to doctoring official statistics. The result was the institutionalization of corrupt practices through the perpetuation of systemic police corruption at all levels of the institution. Verma also notes how the excessive hierarchy within the police department allowed senior officers to regularly post their “trusted” officers to certain posts in order for them to extort and share the spoils with them, as well as threaten subordinates in order to receive a cut from collections made (270-271). These “perks” contributed to maintaining a lavish lifestyle for senior officers, who also regularly abused police resources—receiving personal guards, official cars for use off duty, and other privileges—despite no official right to them (271).

The role played by police administrators cannot be underemphasized. Even if not complicit in corruption directly, administrators can use cover-up tactics for organizational, rather than individual, protective reasons for stigma management and corrupt organizational management (Roebuck and Barker 1974, 426); the first is for cases in which corruption is not systemic and the case is dealt with quietly to avoid the entire department being labeled as corrupt, whereas in the second case the department has extensive corruption and attempts are made to prevent investigation through cover-up tactics.
II. Case-Specific Findings

As with the global literature, scholars on the PPBA have highlighted the systemic nature of police corruption within this police force. While examples of petty forms of corruption in the PPBA are abundant and their practice does not necessarily suggest collective involvement (Arslanián 2008, 246), a common finding among researchers has been that corruption in the PPBA tends to involve all levels and ranks—from junior officers to the police chief—and that, rather than being individualized or opportunistic in nature, it is systemically organized and regulated from within the institution by various informal rules and norms. As discussed in depth in the sections below, most of this literature has discussed the role of the PPBA in regulating criminal activities, the PPBA’s practices of selling illegal protection, and the organization of corruption networks from within the organization and with the political class.

i. Regulation of Criminal Activity

Several scholars have studied the role of the PPBA in the illegal regulation of criminal activities in the province (CELS 2013, 244-246; Dewey 2012; Klipphan 2004; Sain 2010b; Sain 2013). Sain (2013, 5) notes that the PPBA has been most extensively involved in actively regulating three particular criminal industries: drug trafficking, theft and resale of vehicle parts, and human trafficking. Indeed, the PPBA has engaged in direct and indirect participation in crime by aiding, covering up, and protecting criminal activities in exchange for personal and, frequently, organizational benefit (Sain 2008, 157). With regard to drug trafficking organizations in particular, Sain (2010b) argues that police supervision of nascent drug cartels in Argentina

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27 Arslanián (2008, 246-248) provides a list of the most common forms of administrative misconduct investigated by the PPBA’s internal affairs division during the 2004-2007 reform. While some crimes listed indicate more severe forms of corruption (e.g. extortion and theft) others demonstrate petty forms of corruption that may not indicate the involvement of multiple actors (e.g. using funds available for gasoline to fill one’s personal vehicle; unlawful possession of items requiring registration).
was a necessary condition for their expansion and the stabilization of the illicit drug market in Argentina given that police participation provided the conditions for the territorial domination that was necessary for these organizations to establish themselves. However, rather than contesting state capacity, such as is the case in Mexico and Central America for example, drug cartels—at least for now—depend on the state, and in particular the police, to guarantee their operations (ibid). Indeed, this situation has given way to what Sain (2013, 20) refers to as the “double pact”: on the one hand is the “reciprocity pact” between politicians and police in which the former agree to not interfere with the activities of the latter—including corrupt activities—so long as the latter can guarantee acceptable levels of crime control so as to not damage politicians’ reelection prospects. The active participation of politicians in the sharing of proceeds from police corruption also reinforces this end of the reciprocity pact. On the other end of the “double pact” is the agreement between the police and criminal organizations in which the former permit and even assist the latter in their activities in exchange for personal or organizational gain.

One relatively recent example of active PPBA participation in drug trafficking, accompanied by the close participation of political actors, is found in examining the case of the kidnapping and murder of 11-year-old Candela Rodriguez in August 2011. The crime was perpetrated by a local cartel as a form of revenge against the child’s father—who was imprisoned for forced robbery—due to a dispute between rival criminal organizations in the area. Public outcry over the crime, combined with then-governor Scioli’s hopes for reelection in the coming months, created pressure for its prompt resolution (Sain 2013, 20). At the same time, and as revealed by a subsequent congressional investigation into the events, the PPBA worked to cover-

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28 See Chapter 3 for further discussion on the reciprocity pact as a factor for police corruption in the PPBA. See also Eaton (2008, 19-21) and Sain (2008, 125-126, 195-197).
up the true perpetrators of the kidnapping as well as their motives. Doing so was motivated by
the fact that the police—as well as political leaders who formed part of the ad hoc committee
formed presumably to solve the crime and find Candela—were aware of the context of rival drug
cartels and narco-kidnappings in which the child had disappeared and had an interest in not
exposing the true nature of the crime to the public. This, in turn, was due in part to questions of
political expediency, especially given upcoming elections, but also to the fact that the PPBA
themselves had been actively doing business with the cartels and did not want this information
revealed\textsuperscript{29} (Sain 2013, 40). Findings from an investigative commission (ibid, 245) into police
actions taken as a response to the crime revealed the following efforts by the PPBA, with active
participation of political leaders, to cover up the true nature of the crime:

- Manipulation of Candela’s DNA in two objects presented as principal evidence
- Construction of a fake criminal group, using anonymous witnesses to substantiate
  this invention, to hide the true perpetrators of the crime.
- Except for two individuals, all others charged were individuals who had already
  committed crimes or were informants to the police
- One anonymous witness was already on trial for a different crime and promised a
  favorable ruling on his case in exchange for serving as a false witness.

Ultimately, the commission concluded that there existed strong linkages between drug
trafficking groups and sectors of the PPBA, although it was not able to identify particular police
agents identified by witnesses. It also found that the kidnapping scandal put at risk business of
drug trafficking in which the PPBA was involved, and therefore its prompt resolution and cover-
up was the main concern of police and political actors involved in the “investigation” of the
crime. The Candela case clearly demonstrates the extent to which serious forms of corruption
have persisted within the force, which has been, at best, tolerated and, at worst, aided by political

\textsuperscript{29} See also Comisión Especial de Acompañamiento para el Esclarecimiento del Asesinato de
Candela Sol Rodríguez 2012, 3-4.
actors who aiming to hide them from public view and, in some occasions, profit directly from corrupt police proceeds themselves.

\textit{ii. Provision of Illegal Protection}

In addition to active participation in criminal organizations, Dewey (2011, 2012) has researched the PPBA’s common practice of selling illegal protection. Dewey (2011, 24) notes that the most common form of selling illegal protection observed in the PPBA has been the arrest of individuals for legal or illegal reasons in order to collect sums of money for their release. In this way, either the selective enforcement of laws or simply disregarding laws altogether in order to detain an innocent individual turns into a form of “protection” insofar as those with the funds available to pay a bribe are guaranteed their freedom. An additional form of illegal protection observed has been the practice of accepting bribes in exchange for “freeing areas” (\textit{liberar zonas}) for criminals through which PPBA officers protect areas in which illegal activities take place (such as storing drugs, chop shops) or release areas at specific times to particular individuals or groups to allow them to engage in unlawful activities. The third type of illegal protection observed has been the protection of criminal informants. Given that information is a precious commodity, chief officers have been involved in purchasing information related to criminal activity, such as information related to drug cargos, in order to organize drug seizures that, due to media interest, earn them promotions and awards. \footnote{30 This latter practice bears certain similarities to a practice observed largely in the 1990s in Argentina’s Federal Police (PFA) by which police officers planted false evidence on innocent individuals—generally from the most vulnerable sectors of society—in order subsequently inform the media about an imminent police operation (e.g. a drug bust) and arrest said individual, thereby receiving wide media coverage, an improved image of the department by the public, as well as raises and promotions for the officers involved (for an in-depth discussion of this topic, see Ales et al, 2003). The difference in this case is that the crimes uncovered by the PPBA were real rather than fabricated; nevertheless, both activities require unethical behavior (fabricating...}
are not prosecuted and can receive other benefits, such as protection of their own illegal operations, in exchange for their information.

As Dewey (2011, 25) notes, all of the above forms of illegal protection require administrative mechanisms in order to keep them invisible, including tampering with records and in some cases collusion with the legal system. For example, the acquisition of certificates, authorizations or permits through complicity of the legal branch in tampering with documents is commonplace, and without this participation these illegal businesses would not have prospered to the extent that they have (Dewey 2012, 669). Fieldwork researching the organization of networks in practice has revealed valuable information on their nature and extent. In a series of interviews with PPBA officers, every single interviewee confirmed that police stations have a set fee for illegal protection, which is determined according to the particular “business” in question (Dewey 2011, 23). These fees also have well-defined mechanisms for distribution within the agency. Those street-level officers who are trusted by superiors to collect corrupt money receive between 10-20 percent, the chief officer receives 20 percent, and the remainder goes up to the highest levels of the department. Of this remaining percentage, some goes to the Office of the Superintendent of Operative Coordination (Dewey 2011, 17). If funds are collected without having gone through the usual mechanisms and one does not share proceeds with his or her chief officer, then one runs the risk of being viewed as a “traitor” and given less favorable work, such as patrol or clerical work (ibid).

31 Tampering with public documents is commonplace, as confirmed by two former Internal Affairs auditors. See Administrative Summary Investigation 4679/702, Internal Affairs Division, Ministry of Security of the Province of Buenos Aires (2002).
The pervasiveness of the sale of protection in exchange for personal or organizational gain has given rise to what Dewey (2012) refers to as “hybrid stateness,” an understanding of stateness that takes into account the state’s ability to operate illegally. Dewey notes that aspects of the state such as strength or capacity do not necessarily imply legal actions; instead, the PPBA partially finances its everyday operations by selling protection to criminals and, in this way, its operational capacity is directly related to its illegal activities (661). While these alliances clearly benefit the PPBA economically, they also benefit criminal actors. Indeed, alliances with the state are valuable for criminal groups as a way to secure markets, improve business, and obtain advantage over competitors (663). In this perverse system of hybrid stateness, the “capacity” of the PPBA clearly functions as a detriment to citizen security and democratic principles such as the rule of law.

iii. Organization of Corruption Networks

While knowledge on the day-to-day organization of corruption within the PPBA is limited, recent scholarship has shed light on the organization of corruption within the agency as well as its modus operandi. In general, the literature emphasizes that the PPBA has well-defined, informal rules and procedures that govern corruption networks within and external to the department. Scholars have discussed several aspects of the nature and organization of corruption within the police force, namely the existence of “grass eaters” and “meat eaters”; the funding of the PPBA and private pockets of police officers by graft from “traditional” and “dirty” funds; normalized mechanisms for kickbacks such as “the list”; and collusion with external actors—namely politicians and the courts—for the collection and distribution of corrupt earnings. These manifestations of corruption in the PPBA are further discussed in this section.
Grass Eaters vs. Meat Eaters. Sain (2010a) notes that there are three general types of police officers in the PPBA. He notes that there are many officers who are aware of corruption within the ranks, but are silent about it and tolerate or even justify it even despite not practicing it. The second type of officer does not negotiate with delinquents but does engage in petty forms of corruption, such as inappropriate use of government resources for personal gain and theft of property under police custody. This category clearly corresponds to the “grass eaters” as identified by the Knapp Commission (see Chapter 4). Sain further notes a third group of officers, which would correspond to Knapp’s “meat eaters,” who are smaller in number but nevertheless active in the PPBA and engage in and protect criminal activities and groups through the use of state resources in exchange for personal, group, or organizational gain. To Sain’s categories one could add a fourth, namely those that condemn corruption and actively work to fight it. Indeed, the Leaders for Change program implemented in 2006 during the PPBA’s second reform wave was an attempt to harness the power of these individuals as a force for fighting corruption and showed promising results, although the untimely end of reform one year later left its objectives largely uncompleted (see Chapter 6).

“Traditional” and “Dirty” Funds. Just the global literature has noted the distinction made by police officers between “acceptable” and “unacceptable” forms of corruption as a means of behavior rationalization (Skolnick 1967, 207-208; Roebuck and Barker 1974, 427), this distinction has also been documented in the case of the PPBA. Sain (2008, 159) notes that corrupt earnings in the PPBA are divided between “traditional” and “dirty” funds. Sain discusses that the former has been widely considered to be a natural and unavoidable aspect of police work in the PPBA to complement low salaries and insufficient budget, while the latter has been considered by most to be a criminal activity engaged in by highly corrupt officers; nevertheless,
fellow officers have passively worked alongside and tolerated this criminality even if not directly implicated themselves. Traditional funds have consisted of graft obtained from gambling and prostitution as well as kickbacks for turning a blind eye to illegal or regulated activities, such as informal businesses, cabarets, and nightclubs (Saín 2010a). “Dirty” funds, by contrast, consist of graft from drug trafficking, vehicle theft, truck hijackings, and kidnappings. Sain further notes that as self-financing of the institution through illicit means gradually became more institutionalized, “dirty” funds gradually became the dominant source of illicit funding for the higher ranks, while traditional funds served as funding for the middle and lower ranks. Furthermore, Sain notes that over time traditional funds has come to include funds from more serious forms of corruption, including from innocent individuals framed by the police for crimes they did not commit and the freeing of areas to thieves and other criminals.

“The List.” An additional revelation of the modus operandi of systemic corruption in the PPBA is demonstrated by “the list.” As PPBA scholar Alejandra Vallespir notes:

“When a captain leaves a police station because he received a promotion or is being transferred, he hands over [to the new captain] a book called “the list.” The list details the individuals who pay the police department for their illegal activities and how much. The new captain receives the list but with lowered prices, because the captain who is leaving charged each of them a bonus for making them appear to have paid a lower amount than what they were actually paying.” (Página/12 2002. Translation by author).

The list serves as an example to highlight one of the main conclusions reached by the PPBA literature, which is that corruption within this police force is systemic, organized, and governed by informal rules. Rather than mere opportunism or individual “bad apples,” the existence of the list demonstrates the extent to which forms of corruption re normalized in day-to-day functions in the PPBA.
Political Collusion. In addition to their distribution throughout the police institution, corrupt funds have also been directed towards political leaders in the Ministry of Security and to politicians outside the organization. In the case of the former, Sain (2008, 195-197) notes that as the newly appointment Deputy Secretary of Security during 2002 he was offered a “monthly stipend” (mensualidad). The officer assured him it did not come from “dirty” funds and that it “did not have any blood on it.” In this way, Sain noted that the illegal financing system in the PPBA had political protection and support, making reform of the system seemingly impossible given that assignments, raises, and promotions of officers were in the hands of Ministry officials.

A notorious example of such corruption was former superintendent general of police (equivalent to police chief at that time) Alberto Sobrado, who had laundered large sums of money to the Bahamas, Uruguay and Spain and was eventually forced to retire after Internal Affairs found a sum of money that could not be justified (Sain 2008, 198-199). Similarly, the police chief of the municipality of San Isidro, Anibal de Gastaldi, likely had linkages with criminal groups in the area responsible for kidnappings for extortion (203).

Collusion with politicians has been among the most strongly emphasized factors contributing to police corruption in the PPBA (see Chapter 3) and one of the most difficult aspects to address in attempting to prevent police corruption (see Chapter 6). A general prosecutor for the municipality of San Martín, notes that police corruption ultimately moves up towards the coffers of political parties:

“The police collect [money] for politics. There are police officers who off the record admit that they work for the ‘black box’ of a politician in office. There are cases brought forth in the courts in San Martín (Buenos Aires) that start at the police station and rise up to clearly defined political sectors, although it is difficult to find the necessary proof to punish those responsible.”

32 Interview with Luis Chichizola by El Mundo Diplomatique, in Latorraca, Montero and Rodriguez 2003, 6-7. Translation by author.
While information on the extent of collusion with the political class is limited and politicians have increasingly been accused of protecting police officers involved in serious forms of corruption such as drug trafficking and vehicle theft (Saénz 2005), the amount of funds being handled by these networks is not known nor has it been studied by the literature. However, as Eaton (2008, 19) notes, despite their involvement in increasingly serious crimes, the actual monetary gains that the corrupt police-politician nexus creates certainly pales in comparison to graft generated by other forms of corruption in Argentina, such as the privatization of state-owned companies in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the persistence of the police-politician nexus over time suggests that significant payoffs are obtained from these transactions in relation to the relative risk involved.

One factor for this persistence is likely the fact that the small scale and low visibility of these transactions makes them difficult to expose and eliminate (Eaton 2008, 19). Another is the fact that the monetary gains obtained from these transactions are more critical to a wider set of lower-level politicians, such as mayors and local councilmembers (concejales) who depend on these funds for campaigns (ibid). Similarly, local political brokers (punteros33) have been widely implicated in participation in the police-politician nexus as a means to generate funds for their respective candidates and parties.34 The dependence on police corruption as a means to finance politics is further documented by observed increases in crime during election periods:

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33 In Argentina, punteros are local representatives who work for particular politicians or parties and play a central role in carrying out clientelist practices, often in a mafia-like fashion, including the distribution of goods and services to those who pledge support a given candidate, organization of political rallies, and threatening those who do not pledge support or attendance with adverse actions. For an informative analysis of clientelism in Argentina and the role of punteros, see Auyero (2002) and Zarazaga (2014).

34 See interview with Alejandra Vallespir, Página/12 (2002). See also Vallespir (2002).
“During campaign times there is an increase in crime because the police let the rackets do their work. Letting their businesses run is a means for politicians to raise money during campaign times. That is the reason why at that time there is also a decrease in drug seizures; there is a need to sell. The deal for the mayor is to win money that is then passed on to the chief officer. And it is also meant for other things. For instance, to leave the *punteros* free to commit armed robberies. The *punteros* work for the mayor during the day and at night they commit armed robberies.”

In a similar vein to police-politician collusion for financial gain, the political use of the PPBA by politicians and party leaders to intimidate members of the opposition is well documented by the literature. As one such example, Saín (2008, 207) notes an alleged plot to destabilize the provincial government of Felipe Solá, supported by rival Eduardo Duhalde, in which the PPBA assisted politicians in orchestrated crimes so as to fuel perceptions of insecurity among the general population. Saín also notes that while Deputy Minister of Security for the province during 2002, he received contact from the Argentine Intelligence Agency (SIDE) indicating that police passivity towards crime was premeditated and that an intelligence report given to the President indicated that Saín had a large amount of information to support his claims of political involvement in the police that was compromising for many leaders, including some with high positions in the national government (Saín 2008, 209). Further information on the dynamics of police-politician networks is needed, although it is clear from examples such as these that the political use of the police has given way to both financial and political benefits for elected officials.

### III. Final Comments

While literature examining the nature and extent of police corruption in practice is rather limited, especially when compared to the extensive literature focused on the causes of police

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corruption and its control, scholarship has nevertheless shed light on this aspect of police corruption and has at the very least provided a basic understanding of how police corruption functions within departments. Sources of information are varied and range from scholarly case studies, commission investigations, and surveys, to internal department investigations, agency records, and criminal justice system data. While all of these sources of information have potential benefits as well as drawbacks—and some are notoriously difficult to obtain by the general public—together they have contributed to an increased understanding of corruption within police departments.

The overall discrediting of the bad apply theory of police corruption is also evidenced by empirical research into this aspect of the police corruption literature. Rather than individuals operating alone, instances of systemic corruption have revealed that corruption tends to occur at the group level and involves a learning, socialization, and rationalization process that begins with new recruits and can often encompass even the senior ranks. These informal cliques give rise to informal codes of conduct and group loyalty that often surpasses one’s loyalty to the police agency or to the public, and are self-reinforcing insofar as one’s implication in the group ensures one’s secrecy. Furthermore, corruption is often highly organized and involves defined roles and payoffs for different tasks performed and one’s rank. Lastly, police leadership can play a central role either actively participating in corruption or assisting in its cover-up so as to preserve organization’s image or allow corruption to persist.

Diverse sources of information ranging from scholarly case studies to field interviews to congressional inquiries have yielded significant and valuable insight into the organization and modus operandi of corruption in the PPBA as well as its linkages to external corruption networks with organized crime and politicians. While significant gaps in knowledge remain, such gaps are
neither surprising nor are they unavoidable given the clandestine nature of corruption. Indeed, the main areas of research at the global level regarding the nature and organization of corruption within police agencies have been addressed by the PPBA literature. One significant difference, however, has been that the global literature has emphasized the role played by police administrators and supervisors in corruption networks (Roebuck and Barker 1974, 426; Verma 1999, 270-271), while the PPBA literature has focused to a greater extent on the central role played by political actors (Eaton 2008 19-21, Sain 2008, 195-197), although the role of figures within the institution, such as the police chief, has also been addressed (Dewey 2011, 23; Sain 2008, 203).

Future research on the PPBA should continue to assess nature and organization of corruption in the agency through methods such as interviews with officers and decision-makers and individual case studies. One means of doing so could be analyses of several corruption scandals, looking in particular at aspects such as the manner in which corruption in each case was organized, the actors involved, the types of activities that were carried out and the gain (financial or otherwise) that was achieved by the parties who participated. Additionally, a greater emphasis on the roles played by different ranks within the institution may provide further insight on corruption in the PPBA. While the literature has emphasized corruption in the agency as involving all ranks, further research on different roles played by officers based on their ranks and titles could provide an avenue for better understanding of the day-to-day organization of corruption within the agency; it could also allow for better assessing whether different forms of corrupt practices are more prevalent at one level than at another as well as the extent to which payoffs vary based on rank.
Of course, undertaking this type of research is difficult given the clandestine nature of corruption and lack of incentives for those involved to shed light on their activities. It is further complicated by the general reluctance of police departments to share information related to internal affairs or investigations with the public. In this way, while the PPBA literature has advanced understanding on the nature and organization of corruption within the force, and, in particular, its linkages to the political realm, its limited breadth when compared with literature that focuses on the causes of corruption and anti-corruption strategies directly mirrors the same trend observed in the global literature. Despite the difficulties involved in engaging in such research, this remains an area in need of further study and development.
CHAPTER 5

ADDRESSING AND PREVENTING POLICE CORRUPTION

Extensive literature has examined potential solutions to address corruption within police forces. Proposed solutions vary widely and appropriate measures for a given context largely depend on how far up within the organization—or even outside of it—corruption is prevalent. In this way, the selection of anti-corruption measures and their effectiveness depend on having a strong diagnostic of corruption within the police force. Strategies aimed at detecting corrupt tendencies in applicants or new recruits, for example, are likely to be fruitless if corruption pervades all ranks of the police force. Similarly, focusing anti-corruption efforts on the political environment or the courts as a means of promoting integrity within the police force may be unnecessary if insufficient evidence exists that corruption within the force is tied to external factors. Sherman (1978) argues that scandal is often the impetus for reform efforts, but by the time corruption scandals surface among the media and the public at large, corruption generally already systemic and pervasive throughout a police agency. This finding is consistent with the literature on police corruption prevention insofar as the literature consistently emphasizes the need for comprehensive, multi-faceted efforts to control corruption that address the problem from a variety of angles.

A review of the police corruption literature focused on anti-corruption measures within police forces yields the finding that strategies can be placed, at a very general level, in five main categories: human resource management policies, police management and leadership, anti-corruption policies, investigations and sanctions, and the external environment. This section reviews the key findings of the literature based on this organizing framework.
I. Human Resource Management

Many scholars have pointed to the role of human resource management in curbing corruption. In particular, the manner in which agencies go about recruitment, training, and promotion of police officers can have important effects on either potentially fostering or preventing corruption. Conditt (2001, 20) identifies hiring ethical and trustworthy individuals as the essential first step towards establishing a positive police culture (also referred as the agency’s “informal” code of conduct). The weakening of employment criteria to deal with understaffing issues has not demonstrated positive results in terms of fighting corruption (Moran 2002, 149). Fair and transparent mechanisms for posting job vacancies has been suggested as a means to avoid corrupt police officers from recruiting hand-picked individuals to collude within their corruption network (Miller 2003, 36). Another mechanism has been rigorous vetting processes, including psychological testing to detect inclination towards unethical behavior (Arrigo and Claussen 2003) as well as in-depth background checks. The importance of using probationary periods effectively has also been cited as a means of curbing corruption through good recruitment: McCormack (1996, 243) notes that agencies that do not have at least a 10-15% dismissal rate during training and probationary periods are probably not using these periods effectively, and that the most selective agencies have had probationary period dismissal rates of close to 50%. Younger and less educated recruits are more likely to engage in corrupt or criminal activities (U.S. GAO 1998, 4), and therefore hiring older, more experienced officers may be an effective strategy to reduce corruption.

Improvement in training has also been extensively cited by the literature as an effective anti-corruption strategy. Goldstein (1975, 43) emphasizes the importance of practical training on police ethics and corruption focused on specific examples commonly encountered in the field.
Goldstein emphasizes that the more realistic the training, the greater credibility the instructing staff is likely to have, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of officers taking warnings seriously; in this way, training should focus on concrete manifestations of corruption and ethical dilemmas rather than abstract lectures on ethics. Punch (2000, 320) notes the importance of an inclusive, error-tolerant environment in which sensitive subjects can be discussed. He also mentions the importance of training on integrity to be introduced early on with an emphasis on skills for dealing with practical dilemmas encountered in police work (319). In a survey of police officers that had received training in law enforcement ethics, 82 percent agreed that such training was effective in preventing abuse of authority (Weisburd et al., 2000). In essence, the literature highlights the need for ethics training to be practical in nature and adapted to the realities of police work in the field.

Several other human resource management factors have also been cited by the literature as potential solutions to corruption. Promotions can be an activity prone to exploitation by corrupt police supervisors. Several scholars highlight the need for clearly articulated rules regarding promotions and their basis on merit; for example, Goldstein (1975, 50) mentions that an effective strategy is to encourage honesty by rewarding officers for integrity, including integrity as a criteria for promotion. Increasing salaries, particularly for the lower ranks, has also been suggested as a means to curb corruption so as to reduce an officer’s temptation to supplement his or her income (USAID 2007, 14; Williams 2002, 97). However, this strategy—as with other human resource management strategies more generally—is unlikely to be effective unless combined with a comprehensive and multi-faceted anti-corruption strategy.

Rotation of personnel is another strategy to reduce corruption by discouraging the formation of corruption networks and collusion with criminals. This is particularly important
with “danger zones” that tend to be prone to corruption such as policing gambling, drugs, undercover work, and informant-handler relationships, among others; specialized units and senior officers also require particular scrutiny due to their status as a means to avoid internal controls (Punch 2000, 319).

II. Police Management and Leadership

The importance of strong leadership within the police agency to promote integrity throughout its ranks cannot be overemphasized. One common recommendation of most literature assessing prevention strategies is the need for integrity to be promoted from the top of the organization. Punch (1994, 34) speaks of the “positive symbolic leadership” provided by senior management such as the police chief and its importance for promoting a police culture focused on integrity and effective anti-corruption mechanisms. That said, a strong, “phony” stance against corruption vowing to eliminate it entirely is not realistic; instead, administrators must get the public and the department to see reform not just as attack on personnel, but instead as a means to provide support to honest, hard-working officers (Goldstein 1975, 40). Furthermore, support must emanate also from other management levels, such as sergeants and mid-level managers, as these are the individuals who oversee day-to-day operations and choose to either support or ignore the message sent by the chief (Swope 2001, 83).

As Punch (2000, 318) notes, individuals look up within organizations to see whether firm statements against corruption are actually meaningful; the behavior of the chief and management will also be scrutinized. Indeed, if external stakeholders are involved, they need to be ensured of their investment and will therefore look to see whether police management is serious about anti-corruption reform. Furthermore, it is often difficult for reforms to maintain momentum and many succumb to a “control cycle” of a hardline stance followed by eventual relaxation (Punch 2000,
It is therefore not surprising that strong leadership *over time* has been one of the best indicators for successful reform efforts (Sherman 1978). The importance strong leadership has also been reiterated by police officers themselves. A 2000 survey of police agencies throughout the United States found that nearly 85 percent of officers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that a police chief’s strong position against abuse of authority can make a big difference in deterring officers from abusing their authority (Weisburd et al. 2000, 6).

Given the importance of strong leadership, some scholars have emphasized the need for the police chief to be granted tenure in order to be immune from potential political pressures against police reform as well as pressures from police unions and individual police officers themselves, noting that many subordinates will not respond to a chief who appears in danger of losing his or her position (Goldstein 1975, 41). However, the need for protection from these forces must also be balanced with the need for accountability of the chief him or herself. Indeed, when corruption reaches up to the ranks of senior management, removal of these officials up to and including the chief is a necessary step—although certainly not sufficient in and of itself—towards fighting police corruption. Doing so, of course, requires political support for real police reform, an important issue addressed later in this chapter.

### III. Anti-Corruption Policies

Police leadership is a crucial factor towards fighting corruption to a large extent because of the role of reform-minded leadership in instituting anti-corruption reforms within the agency. Internal controls are a central aspect for corruption control and will be discussed in a separate section. However, other preventive strategies can also have important deterrent effects and promote integrity. One such policy is to create a strong code of ethics and guidelines for officers to follow so as to make expectations clear. The ultimate goal is to align an institution’s
“informal” code of conduct (e.g. behaviors learned on-the-job through socialization into police culture and practices) with this formal code of conduct (Conditt 2001, 19). As noted previously, training in ethics—both for new recruits and periodic refresher courses—is an important strategy to engrain the formal code of conduct into the culture of the organization and create a “culture of accountability” (Swope 2001, 85). Creating instructional manuals for dealing with actual ethical dilemmas encountered in police work is another effective means at promoting a culture of integrity (USAID 2007, 15). Such strategies aimed at changing institutional culture as a means at fighting corruption are able to more proactively address the problem than can doing so solely with threats of sanctions.

Improved complaint mechanisms are another strategy for curbing corruption within police institutions (Stenning and Shearing 2005, 170). Indeed, the use of these strategies is not limited to police agencies and they have been widely referenced by the corruption literature as a means to fight corruption in many sectors (see for example Vian 2013). Mechanisms such as tip lines have been suggested as a means for the public to report corruption with ease and privacy. Furthermore, remaining anonymous should also always be an option for those reporting corruption. In order to actually be effective, however, complaints must be able to follow through, investigate, sanction, as well as protect whistleblowers (Chêne 2010, 8). In this way, internal disciplinary mechanisms should be reviewed and strengthened, and an external complaint board (discussed further in the next section) created if people are too mistrustful to take complaints to an internal affairs bureau (USAID 2007, 9). Implementing enhanced complaint mechanisms will likely also require effective public engagement more generally through forums, informational campaigns, or similar strategies in order to publicize resources available to the public to denounce corruption. While an important strategy at fighting corruption and emphasizing the
importance of integrity within the police agency to the public, complaint mechanisms alone are insufficient in detecting and investigating corruption cases, and agencies must also include other internal control strategies to proactively detect corruption, such as surveillance and integrity testing (Goldstein 1975, 30).

Encouraging reporting from within the police agency is also an important anti-corruption strategy (Moran 2002, 146). Given the strength of the aforementioned “Blue Code of Silence,” doing so is not an easy task. Of utmost importance are whistleblower protection policies to ensure that officers are not discriminated against after filing a report. Indeed, rather than being recognized for reporting on corruption, most officers prefer to report in a way that does not require him or her being identified (Goldstein 1975, 50); therefore internal reporting must be able to ensure the privacy of the reporting officer. Furthermore, the vital role of police management is clear here insofar as the extent to which leaders promote and enforce a culture of integrity within the institution will likely influence the degree to which officers feel empowered to come forth with information on corrupt colleagues.

Probably the most cited strategy at combating police corruption from within the institution is improved monitoring and detection mechanisms. The specific strategies proposed within this realm are diverse and address corruption from a variety of angles, although all focus in some way on increasing accountability and reducing discretion. A consistent emphasis has been placed on the need for proactive control measures rather than simply reactive measures (e.g. receiving complaints and conducting an investigation). Many scholars have highlighted the merits of covert methods such as integrity testing, paid informers, and wiretaps, as well as surveillance (covert or otherwise) as means of deterring and detecting corruption (e.g. Moran 2002, 145; Punch 2000, 318; Sherman 1978, 175; Swope 2001, 85; USAID 2007, 11). Sherman
(1978) in particular argues for the importance of covert measures, noting that after the impetus created by scandal, the only reforms that failed among the police departments studied were those that did not employ covert measures to deter and detect corruption.\textsuperscript{36} Similarly, Shelley (2001, 220) notes the positive role played by internal checks on officers assigned to areas prone to corruption, such as drug units in Mexico; background checks and polygraphs were conducted periodically on these officers, and a central registry of officers fired for misconduct was maintained in order to prevent their employment in other departments. Periodic audits of financial paperwork and police operations (Punch 2000, 319), and personal asset declarations, in particular by senior officers (USAID 2007, 15) are additional monitoring and detection mechanisms that have been put forth.

With the increased emphasis on community policing\textsuperscript{37} strategies as an effective approach to crime fighting and public relations, it is important to note the limitation of these mechanisms in fighting corruption. The introduction of such strategies does not necessarily address corruption, and clear national standards and accountability mechanisms must be in place prior to implementation in order to avoid the risk of reinforcing undemocratic local authorities and power structures (USAID 2007, 14). Bracey (1992, 180) notes that at least some relationships formed

\textsuperscript{36} While most scholars agree that covert measures and integrity tests can play an important role in fighting corruption, support for these measures is not unanimous. Porter (2005) notes that such measures are likely to make officers less cooperative with investigators and less likely to report corruption. Prenzler and Ronken (2001) argue that such measures raise serious ethical concerns regarding privacy, deception, provocation, entrapment, and the legal rights of individuals.\textsuperscript{37} USAID defines community policing as: “[…] an approach to policing based on the concept that crime can be most effectively addressed through a partnership between the police and the community they serve. When put into practice, this approach is generally characterized by consultation between police and their communities; adaptation of police strategies to the requirements of particular communities or localities; mobilization of the public to work with the police to prevent crime; and the adoption of a mutual problem-solving methodology as the fundamental strategy of policing.” USAID Policy Guidance, December 2005 (PD-ACG-022), in USAID Program Brief: Anti-Corruption and Police Integrity, Security Sector Reform Program, page 1.
with the community will be intense and long in duration, providing opportunities for corruption. This is due to the fact that community policing tends to emphasize greater discretion of police work in order to promote officers’ initiative and ingenuity, but this in turn can facilitate corrupt exchanges. In fact, some of the close relationships emphasized by community policing may be weakened if exchanges of gifts or favors are prohibited (180). Other scholars have argued that community policing likely decreases gross forms of corruption such as extortion, while increasing minor forms such as free gifts (Weisburd, McElroy and Hardyman 1989); still others argue that it has no discernable impact on corruption (McElroy, Cossgrove and Sadd 1990). This is not to conclude that community policing and anti-corruption strategies are incompatible, but rather that they should not necessarily be viewed as intertwined or mutually reinforcing. 38

IV. Investigations and Sanctions

A strong internal affairs division and the investigation into allegations of corruption play a central role in fighting corruption. Indeed, the aforementioned mechanisms for detecting and deterring corruption (e.g. citizen complaints, integrity tests, etc.) highlight the need for a proactive strategy at combating corruption, which has been heavily emphasized in the literature. However, the effectiveness of proactive measures is likely to be significantly reduced unless alleged incidences of corruption are subsequently investigated and sanctioned as appropriate. As McCormack (1996, 244) notes, a strong, proactive internal affairs initiative along with consistent implementation of sanctions provides officers with an excuse to be honest. However, Skogan and Meares (2004, 78-79) note the lack of research on internal control processes within the police and the organization, management, and staffing of said units nor their investigation procedures

38 A 2000 survey of U.S. police officers also reinforces the finding of no discernable impact between community policing and corruption; the majority of officers surveyed (57 percent) stated community policing had no impact on corruption, while 36 percent stated it decreased corruption and only 7 percent believed that it increased corruption (Weisburd 2000, 7).
and patterns of discipline. Indeed, the general reluctance of police departments to share information with the public is likely partly to blame for this overall lack of information. Despite these shortcomings, a significant amount of scholarship has nevertheless examined how investigations into allegations of police corruption can effectively be carried out.

The manner in which a department conducts its investigations has a great impact on the informal code of conduct (i.e. police culture) of its employees; officers must perceive the investigation process as fair and impartial (Conditt 2001, 20). Quinton (2003, 29) notes that officers are generally insecure and distrustful of the investigation process, further highlighting the need for openness and fairness so the accused do not feel unfairly targeted. One such measure is to assign the case to an investigator with no supervisory responsibility over the employee and no potential conflict of interest; ensuring the investigation is conducted in a timely manner is another measure to increase perceived impartiality (Conditt 2001, 20). Similarly, disciplinary measures must be well defined and consistently implemented in order for investigations to serve as a deterrent to corruption and sanction those responsible. The generally low incidence of prosecution and conviction of police officers in criminal court proceedings means that the most effective strategy at sanctioning corruption, even for serious forms of corruption, may be through internal processes rather than the courts themselves.

Relatedly, Goldstein (1975, 44) argues that it is unrealistic to expect officers assigned to the internal affairs unit to seriously investigate fellow officers who are their partners or may be their superiors in the future. One solution to this problem is permanent assignments to the internal affairs unit—although the lack of rotation may give way to concerns regarding integrity. To further overcome this potential issue, Goldstein suggests investigations carried out by an external agency as a potential solution to ensure the impartiality and integrity of all parties
involved. A further benefit of an external agency is that it gives honest officers a place to turn if they know that their superiors are corrupt (Goldstein 1975, 48).

Prenzler and Ronken (1999), based on their review of several models of police oversight drawn from empirical examples in several countries, advocate for the “civilian control” model of oversight in which the police are excluded from investigating the police. In essence, the investigation process is carried out by an external agency that independently reviews and processes complaints and other intelligence on police misconduct. The agency does not employ seconded officers or retired officers from the police department in question and minimizes employment of any former police officers from any jurisdiction (166). Another option is the “civilian review” model, in which police themselves conduct investigations with an external agency playing a monitoring role. While an improvement upon the mere “internal affairs” model with no external participation, one weakness of this model is that the external review boards have traditionally consisted of too many police representatives or conservative members to protect police interests, and the boards often have limited powers to conduct their own investigations or overturn police decisions (162).

Scholars have also noted that investigations—whether conducted internally, externally, or a combination thereof—should have certain tools at their disposal in order to increase their investigative capacity and effectiveness. Goldstein (1975, 45) argues that granting immunity to an officer willing to testify against others is a justifiable solution in order to counter the aforementioned “Blue Code of Silence” and better uncover corruption networks. Similarly, plea bargaining has also been proposed as a necessary tool to fight corruption in order to encourage bribe recipients and payers to cooperate with authorities (Rose-Ackerman 2002, 3).
V. External Environment

Any serious attempt to combat police corruption must also take into account external environmental factors for reforms to be lasting and effective. Sherman (1978), for example, discusses in depth the role that scandal plays in mobilizing public support and political will in favor of combating corruption due to a realignment of the power structure towards those favoring an honest police department. While ultimately the success of reform depends upon other factors—such as police leadership and control mechanisms discussed previously—scandal is often the impetus that pressures politicians to act. This relates to Stenning and Shearing’s (2005, 173) point that timing is crucial to knowing when the right conditions will arise for reform; as the authors note, context may not be everything, but it does shape the opportunities, drivers and challenges for reform.

Other strategies to mobilize political support may be necessary, even with or without a highly publicized scandal. External strategies to build public awareness and focusing on building citizen demand for change and, by extension, mobilizing political will are paramount (USAID 2007, 11). Civil society can play a protagonist role in targeting media coverage to politically sensitive issues such as police corruption and mobilizing citizen support for reform. Especially when political support is lacking, projects to support research and awareness through working with NGOs to monitor and denounce police corruption and collusion with politicians can constitute important steps, as can third country exchanges to generate ideas and proposals to be brought forth in the future once politically viable (USAID 2007, 11). Sechrest and Burns (1992, 310) similarly note the important role played by community and political support in fighting police corruption. Building public awareness and educating citizens on corruption through democratic and community-based policing strategies (e.g. through community consultation
forums) can also be an effective means at mobilizing the community in favor of reform, although the success of these later strategies depends on contextual factors such as a conducive political context, support from key actors, and a minimum degree of order (Chêne 2010, 7).

In addition to external oversight through civilian review or civilian control boards (as discussed in the previous section), legislative oversight can also play an important role in combating police corruption (USAID 2007, 15). However, its effectiveness is largely dependent on political will to address police corruption in the first place and the absence of widespread collusion between politicians and the police. The role of prosecutors and the courts is also key to police form; as Chêne (2010, 7) notes, police reform is rarely successful unless accompanied by judicial reforms given that effective law enforcement relies on a functioning judiciary. In this way, addressing police corruption over the long term must be undertaken as part of a comprehensive strategy towards strengthening the rule of law and institutional capacity of the state more generally.

Additional external factors beyond institutions themselves have also been highlighted as relevant to prevent police corruption. One such area is pervasive organized crime. Indeed, police corruption and organized criminal interests create a vicious, mutually enforcing circle that is hard to break. However, addressing organized crime is an important component to anti-corruption strategies in areas in which these criminal interests are pervasive (Rose-Ackerman 2002, 3). Given the opportunities and high payoffs they offer officers, combating corruption while not effectively combating organized crime makes corruption control an (even more) uphill battle. Another external factor mentioned by the literature is unenforceable laws, given that they increase opportunities for corruption via selective non-enforcement (Goldstein 1975, 38; Punch 2000, 320; Rose-Ackerman 2002, 3). Anti-corruption efforts should lobby elected officials to
carefully look at the negative effects of unenforceable laws on police corruption and advocate for their repeal if deemed justified.

**VI. Final Comments**

Decades of literature assessing strategies to effectively combat police corruption has given way to a wealth of solutions that address corruption from a variety of angles. Indeed, one common theme throughout the literature is the need for comprehensive, long-term strategies that go beyond mere investigations and purges of corrupt officers to also include more proactive measures aimed at reducing police discretion and opportunities for corruption while increasing accountability mechanisms through effective human resource management and anti-corruption policies. Furthermore, many scholars have highlighted the central role played by police leadership in implementing reforms. Lastly, given that police corruption does not occur within a vacuum, but, rather, is often a response to factors external to the police agency itself, any serious effort to reign in police corruption must take into account the external environment and mobilize civil society, the public at large, and politicians, as well as address other issues conducive to corruption that are external to the police agency, such as a weak legal system, organized criminal interests, and unenforceable laws.

Yet perhaps the key lesson learned from the global literature has been the importance of designing comprehensive, multi-faceted strategies to control corruption by addressing the problem from a variety of angles. Rather than relying on a single strategy to curb corruption—such as the frequent personnel purges and changes in leadership that are common after scandals surface to public light—any serious attempt to truly reign in corruption must take a multitude of factors into account at the individual, police agency, and external environment levels. By extension, preventive strategies must be based on a careful diagnostic of the problems faced by
the police agency in order to implement reform measures that adequately take into account the local context and intervening elements.
CHAPTER 6
ADDRESSING AND PREVENTING CORRUPTION IN THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE

In addition to looking at the causes of police corruption in the PPBA and at the organization of corruption and corruption networks within the police force, a large amount of literature has also discussed preventive strategies for addressing police corruption in the PPBA. Nearly all of this literature has examined preventive strategies within the context of the department’s reform waves that occurred in 1997-1999 and 2004-2007, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the reforms as well as the factors that led to their untimely end.

Given that understanding preventive strategies for corruption in the PPBA requires knowledge of these reform processes and their contexts, this chapter first proceeds by examining the key aspects of the 1997 and 2004 reforms of the PPBA. The following section consolidates literature on the PPBA that addresses preventive strategies for fighting corruption by examining scholars’ assessments of the reforms and other preventive strategies in place in the PPBA. These discussions are organized based on the five main categories of preventive strategies identified by the global literature: human resource management, police management and leadership, anti-corruption policies, investigations and sanctions, and the external environment. The final section summarizes the main findings of this chapter.

I. The 1997 Reform

Argentina’s failure to bring lasting changes to its police forces stands in stark contrast with their success in reining in the military after democratization in the 1980s. In the aftermath of the dictatorship, the political agenda focused primarily on reining in the military as well as dealing with the country’s exorbitant debt and economic woes (Hinton 2005, 83; Seri and Estévez 2010, 4). The issue of police reform did not surge to the political agenda until a
combination of factors united to create sufficient pressure for politicians to act. First among these factors was the rising violent crime rate, a relatively new phenomenon in Argentina, and the corresponding rise in media coverage of muggings, kidnappings, robberies and the like, fostering an increased sense of public insecurity and lack of confidence in police institutions. Saín (2003, 175) relates this rise in crime to a dramatic increase in social deterioration and inequality, in which higher prevalence of poverty, vulnerability, and the rupture of social linkages within communities were manifested in a decrease in the quality of life and increased marginalization and exclusion for the middle and lower classes.

Interestingly, despite active involvement of the police in human rights violations during the 1976-1983 dictatorship, police institutions such as the PPBA would remain virtually untouched until nearly two decades later. Indeed, it was not until active police participation in violent crime came to light that serious pressure mounted on political actors to take action against police corruption and abuses. As is often the case with anti-corruption reforms, police reform in the province of Buenos Aires has coincided with the coming to light of widely published scandals that have revealed systemic police corruption. The impetus for the 1997 reform in the province of Buenos Aires was revelations in the late 1990s of PPBA police involvement in horrendous acts of violence, and in particular the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy, the 1994 AMIA Jewish Center bombing, and, in January 1997, the killing of photojournalist José Luis Cabezas (Seri and Estévez 2010, 4). This focus on police corruption brought the issue to the forefront of the 1997 elections, forcing then governor Duhalde to characterize the PPBA as the “maldita policía” (the “damn police”), quite a reversal from his previous characterization of the province’s police force as the “best in the world” only a few

See, for example, Kobilanski (2011).
months earlier (Eaton 2008, 15). Duhalde was also undoubtedly motivated by his prospects in the 1999 presidential elections, and therefore addressing the issue of police reform became a political necessity given his future aspirations (Sain 1998, 3).

As Eaton (2008, 11) notes, police reform in Argentina has focused on two principal dimensions: territorial decentralization and the functional separation of preventative and investigative roles. The former aims to demilitarize the police and prevent abusive behaviors, to give municipal authorities more control over the police, and to provide an enabling environment for community policing strategies. The latter works to avoid both investigative and preventative services under the control of a single police chief. Reform in the PPBA clearly followed this pattern. As will be discussed below, reforms also aimed at respecting human rights principles, community participation, instituting clear and effective mechanisms for control of corruption and abuse (Estévez 2008), as well as carrying out extensive purges and improving police training and education.

When the window of opportunity for police reform finally opened, the reform process began abruptly in December 1997. The Police Emergency Law (12.056) was quickly passed, which, along with Decree 4.506, effectively dissolved the PPBA. For the first time, a civilian was placed in the position of police chief and the force was divided into four functional divisions: judicial police, investigation police, security police, and traffic police). Law 12.069 passed during the same month established the Criminal Policy and Security Institute in order to elaborate plans, projects, and policy proposals related to police and security sector reforms (Estévez 2008, 9).

Between December 1997 and April 1998—within which time the PPBA was considered to be under a state of emergency—a series of important institutional changes took place. A new
ministry, the Ministry of Justice and Security, was established, under which the PPBA police force would be directed. The position of a sole police chief of the force—which, as mentioned, had been held by a civilian since December for the first time in its history—was soon thereafter eliminated entirely. In its place were 18 territorial divisions corresponding to the judicial divisions within the province, each under control of its own chief.

In addition to territorial and function decentralization and civilian control of the police, another key aspect of reforms was a central emphasis on increasing community participation. Local, municipal, and departmental security forums were established by Law 12.154 (July 1998) with the goal of changing the focus of the force to a more community-oriented and responsive bureaucracy, as well as to emphasize more preventative policing and crime fighting strategies. This was also a mechanism for coalition-building to harness citizen support for the reform efforts (Serí and Estevez 2010, 17), which faced opposition not only from the PPBA itself, but also from conservative civil society organizations and their followers advocating a mano dura, tough-on-crime approach to law enforcement. This was clearly in stark contrast to the newly-appointed Security Minister Arslanián’s approach focused on anti-corruption, accountability, and human rights. Additional control mechanisms implemented included the creation of municipal ombudsmen (defensores municipales), which were independent from municipal governments, to hear citizen complaints against police, as well as the Corruption Control and Functional Abuses Office, under the control of the Ministry of Justice and Security, to investigate cases of police misconduct. This office consisted of an Auditor of Internal Affairs designated by a bicameral commission and by an Ethics Tribunal (Saín 1998, 26).

Reforms to the investigative division are also worthy of note. The previous Investigation Brigades (14 in total), notoriously corrupt, inefficient, and disconnected from civilian control,
were dissolved by the reform and replaced with 18 Departmental Delegations of Investigations in Judicial Function. This reorganization was aimed at implementing stricter rules, more responsibility, and greater accountability to investigative police and the criminal justice system. By April 1998, over 35,000 cases were transferred from the police to the tribunals, with the goal of putting investigative police under greater judicial control and eliminating the previous practice of widespread impunity for police officers under investigation for corruption or other abuses.

Similarly, purges of corrupt officials were an important component of the reform. In words of Sain (1998, 7), the reform “chopped off the head of the PPBA” by the forced retirement of upper level staff and over 300 general commissioners and majors. Additionally, over the period of this first wave of reform, a total of more than 4,000 police officials implicated in abuses such as corruption or violence were purged from the force (Seri and Estévez 2010, 4). Another important change included the creation of the Undersecretary for Education and Training in April 1998. Classes on human rights were offered and a clear focus on fighting the militaristic culture of the force was addressed; between September of that year and April 1999, over 6,000 officers were retrained (Seri and Estévez 2010, 10-11).

What is clear is that the 1997 reform was a comprehensive attempt to rein in the PPBA. To understand the comprehensive nature of the reform, it is useful to examine Estévez’s (2008, 4) outline of ten essential components for public security reform:

- A systemic and integral approach.
- A police reform through decentralization and specialization
- An improved performance of criminal investigation powers
- The reform of criminal-penal proceedings
- The observance of United Nations principles and related conventions on police practices and respect for human rights
- Citizen/community participation
- Civilian management of the public-security system
- Internal and external control of corruption and police abuses
- Legislative oversight
• The approval of new legislation by the legislative power to support this process

The 1997 reform included all of these components to some degree. It was systemic and integrated within the public security system, promoted decentralization, aimed to promote criminal investigations through restructuring the division and increasing judicial oversight, observed UN principles of human rights as stated in the plan’s definition of public security and emphasis on the community participation, included the creation of civilian posts to preside over the force and its functional divisions, legislative and internal oversight commissions and offices, and ample legislation that solidified ministerial decrees into law. As noted as well, it also included purges and training and education initiatives. Yet, despite apparently solid policy design, reform was abruptly stopped in 1999—not even two years after it initially began—with the resignation of Arslanián upon the arrival of a new governor, Carlos Ruckauf. The latter had campaigned strongly against Arslanián’s reform measures, instead promising “bullets for delinquents” and a clear return to the *mano dura* policies of the past. Meanwhile, crime rates only continued to rise, fostering greater citizen discontent with the reform and greater support for tough-on-crime approach to public security.

With the appointment of Aldo Rico—the former leader of a military faction that had tried to overthrow the country’s nascent democracy in the 1980s—as Minister of Justice and Security, reforms were quickly reversed. Authority was once again centralized within the PPBA by reinstating a single police chief (now called a “superintendent”), community forums were eliminated, the internal affairs office for investigating cases against police was closed, and many previously purged officials were restated to their posts (Eaton 2008, 16). Laws on police reform became mere formalities, replaced by ministerial decrees that contradicted these laws’ objectives. Reforms in the province of Buenos Aires were therefore taken off of the agenda, and
would have to wait for another political opportunity to resurge, which would come only a few years later, in 2004.

II. The 2004 Reform

The 2004 police reform process surged in a remarkably similar political and social context as the 1997 reform. Once again, persistent rising crime rates and revelations of PPBA police complicity in a widely-publicized scandal involving participation with an organized crime group in the murder of an engineering student from a prominent family, Axel Blumberg, in exchange for bribes, led to widespread public pressure on the government to rein in the province’s corrupt police force (Estévez 2008, 16). This pressure culminated in over 150,000 demonstrators coming to the streets to protest systemic corruption in the PPBA, the largest demonstration since Argentina’s return to democracy (Eaton 2008, 6).

An important precursor to the Blumberg scandal in terms of mobilizing public outcry and hence pressure for a new reform was the 2002 assassination of protesters in the city of Avellaneda by PPBA police, caught on film by security cameras. A year later, President Néstor Kirchner had campaigned on his dedication to eradicate corruption in the country, declaring in 2003 that the police were involved in “the great majority of kidnappings for ransom in this country” (Clarín 2003). Largely in response to the pressure generated from the Blumberg debacle, Kirchner vowed to cleanse the Buenos Aires provincial police, describing it as “oozing with pus” (New York Times 2004). Combined with the arrival of the new governor Felipe Solá, the political opportunity window was once again opened for police reform.

Amid the new public security crisis, Solá appointed Arslanián back to his former post of Minister of Justice and Security and a new wave of reform began. Reformers were put into top positions, international consultants were hired, and new legislation was quickly passed (Hinton
2005, 83). By-and-large, the reform was a continuation of the policies and goals of the previous reform wave, but in many respects took on even greater depth. Functional and territorial decentralization were again primary components, but rather than 18 jurisdictional divisions, this number was increased to 32. Similarly, additional forces were created to increase decentralization of functions and territory to a greater extent in an attempt to further demilitarize the police, prevent abusive behaviors, grant municipal authorities more control over the police, and provide an environment to promote community policing strategies. These included district security police for municipalities of greater than 70,000 inhabitants (mostly the Greater Buenos Aires area), communal security police for those smaller than 70,000 inhabitants, and the new Buenos Aires 2 security police force, organizationally separate from the provincial police force (Estévez 2008, 21).

Purges were also a major focus of the reform, perhaps even to a greater extent than in 1997. Over the period of 2004 to 2007, Arslanián purged the force a total of eight times. A new police chief (a former judge) was hired, replacing the former chief who had only recently assumed the position a mere three months earlier. Community participation was again a major focus of the reform; the forums were reinstated as well as the independent municipal ombudsmen to receive citizen complaints. Forums, under Arslanián’s plan, would vote on promotions for police officers, and, as of 2007, were to elect the police chief (although given the premature termination of reform in 2007, this was never achieved).

Even more so than in the 1997 reform, the changes brought about beginning in 2004 took a serious look at reforming the militarized nature of the force and increasing its professionalization. One such aspect was the elimination of hierarchal rankings of officials and sub-officials, replacing it with one sole hierarch consisting of nine ranks. Additionally, education
requirements were increased, requiring a minimum of a high school degree to enter the force as an entry-level officer (Arslanián n.d.). New training and educational opportunities were also pushed through via the reform. Academic decentralization resulted in an increase from two police institutes pre-reform, to a total of 12 schools from which 5,000 officers graduated yearly. Curriculum was changed to reflect a focus on police-community relations, and agreements with national universities to conduct coursework there opened up police education to the civilian world as an attempt to further demilitarize training and open up the traditionally closed institution to the communities it served. Further, nine new tertiary degrees related to police science began being offered and over 20 centers for re-training existing police officers were created throughout the province (ibid).

Related to this focus on education and training was the first serious attempt to change institutional culture in the PPBA. Most notably, the program “Leaders for Change of Institutional Culture,” created by Ministerial Resolution 1350, was a noteworthy attempt to reinforce best practices and consolidate leadership in the force. As part of the program, the internal affairs office developed a list of the principal illegal police practices identified in the PPBA (Estévez 2008, 22):

1. Treatment of people restricted of freedom – detainees
2. Excesses in methods and means employed in the apprehension of persons
3. Extortion, bribes, breaches of police officers’ legal duties
4. Escape of persons deprived of freedom in police stations
5. Breaches of the obligation to curb contraventions
6. Illegal enrichment
7. Sexual offenses
8. Irregular possession of registered goods
9. Irregular provision of surveillance services
10. Embezzlement of public assets: overtime fees, patrol gas vouchers
11. Treatment of objects seized judicially
12. Relationships affecting public image of people and the police institution
13. Irregular use of firearms
14. Demands for monetary contributions from dealers
15. Non-justified absences
16. Relationships with journalists and disclosing information from an ongoing investigation to them

The program strived to address and revert these issues and thereby professionalize the force via workshops aimed at building institutional culture. As Estévez (2008, 22) notes, very valuable information was uncovered as a result of this program, including police officers’ desire to be listened to and to establish dialogue with peers, commanders, and civilian officials, in addition to their desire for greater teamwork, better training, and a more serious dedication to fighting corruption. Participants also noted their desire for better quality information, more coherence between norms and practices, and clearer articulation of the principles of the reforms.

Despite its promise, reform was once again interrupted in 2007 amidst yet another election year and subsequent change in provincial government. Indeed, pressure to dismantle reform came from within the same Justicialist party with large support from mayors from the most populated areas of the province (Seri and Estévez 2010, 15). Since 2007, the government of governor Daniel Scioli has implemented measures that have tended to leave reform legislation without effect (CELS 2011, 69). Arslanián was replaced with a new Security Minister, Carlos Stornelli, an appointment that once again represented a shift in the focus of public security to greater police autonomy. The provincial police were divided into four territorial regions (versus the previous 32 divisions), each managed by a police officer acting as superintendent of security. This shift essentially reversed the previous reform’s decentralization and greatly decreased civilian control over the PPBA. The rigid, hierarchal structure of the force was reinstated in January 2009 amidst further security problems and demands for mano dura (Boruchowicz and Wagner 2011, 28). Similarly, the sole police chief post—the elimination of which was central to
the reforms in large part due to the ease with which the chief’s concentrated power promoted corruption—was once again reinstated (Seri and Estévez 2010, 15).

An additional measure taken since 2007 has been the deactivation of community participation mechanisms, such as the neighborhood forums that were instituted during the reform. Similarly, internal control mechanisms placed under the supervision of a civilian authority during the reform were returned to the police (CELS 2011, 69-70)\(^{40}\). The 2010 reunification of the Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Justice into the Ministry of Justice and Security represented yet another move towards greater police autonomy by reducing oversight capacity over the police and sending a message of abandonment of political control over the PPBA (CELS 2011, 70).

In this way, the current state of the PPBA is remarkably similar to its state prior to the 1997 reform. Despite two separate reform waves that rose out of favorable social and political conditions that presented a window of opportunity for wide-sweeping changes, neither of these windows of opportunity lasted sufficiently long in order to institute permanent, meaningful change over the long term. Questions of political expediency and demands for quick solutions to reduce citizens’ perceptions of rising crime played perhaps the greatest role in the untimely demise of reforms and the reinstitution of greater police autonomy and the discarding of the oversight and accountability mechanisms of the reforms.

\(^{40}\) CELS (2011, 69-70) further notes that during the time internal affairs was composed of civilians who were specialized in administrative investigations there was a notable improvement in internal oversight, with a decrease in occurrences of crimes committed by personnel and the removal from the force of those engaged in corruption and other abuses; this oversight began to have an effect on personnel behavior once officers noted that irregularities would negatively affect their careers.
III. Preventive Strategies: Comparing the Global and PPBA Literatures

The global literature has recommended a variety of strategies aimed at addressing corruption within police agencies. As noted in Chapter 5, these strategies can, roughly, be divided into five categories: human resource management policies, police agency management and leadership, anti-corruption policies, investigations and sanctions, and the external environment. The following sections summarize these areas studied by the global literature and discuss the extent to which they have been addressed by the PPBA literature, making suggestions for future research when relevant. A summary of preventive strategies addressed by the PPBA literature and those that merit further research is provided in Figure 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preventive Category</th>
<th>Preventive Strategy</th>
<th>Addressed by the PPBA Literature</th>
<th>Gaps in Knowledge Warranting Further Research (PPBA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Management</td>
<td>Hiring and Recruitment Policies</td>
<td>Yes (minimally)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wages and Benefits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personnel Rotation</td>
<td>Yes (minimally)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Management and Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-corruption policies</td>
<td>Manuals to deal with ethical dilemmas</td>
<td>Yes (minimally)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transforming institutional culture</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creation of complaint mechanisms</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public engagement to report corruption</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Proactive detection mechanisms</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whistleblower protections</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigations and Sanctions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Environment</td>
<td>Scandal</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Coalition Building and Mobilizing Political Will</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legislative Oversight</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Oversight</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Addressing Organized Crime</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elimination of Unenforceable Laws</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3:** Preventive Strategies and Areas for Future Research

*Please note that this table is meant solely as an organization tool rather than a summary of substantive knowledge. All cited preventive strategies, as well as relevant sources and specific suggestions for future research, are discussed in-depth in their respective section in this chapter. Note also that all preventive strategies listed have been discussed by the global literature; therefore, no column has been included to this effect.*

### i. Human Resource Management

The global literature on preventing police corruption has identified several areas that fall within the category of human resource management:

- Hiring and recruitment
- Promotions
- Training
- Wages and benefits
- Personnel rotation

*Hiring and Recruitment.* With regard to hiring and recruitment, the global literature has emphasized the importance of taking into account ethics, the use of clear and objective employment criteria, transparent hiring mechanisms, recruiting experienced and/or educated officers, and the effective use of probationary periods as a means to weed out recruits who are unfit for police work. However, scholars on the PPBA have generally not been concerned with discussing hiring and recruitment mechanisms in depth beyond certain basic components, such as increasing the required education level for new recruits (the PPBA now requires a high school degree for entry since the 2004 reform). The PPBA also implements psychological testing of applicants, but the content of these exams have not been assessed by the literature, nor has the extent to which the exams aim at targeting those prone to unethical or corrupt behavior. Scholars
have also not discussed what role, if any, probationary periods for new recruits have or could have on increasing professionalism in the PPBA. Similarly, the literature has not discussed the extent to which employment criteria and hiring mechanisms are clear and transparent; that is, while on the hand the PPBA’s website clearly lists the requirements for entry for new recruits, further research is needed with regard to the actual functioning of these mechanisms and the extent to which they are followed in practice. Despite much fieldwork that has interviewed PPBA officers on varying aspects of their work (see, for example, Klipphan 2004, Stanley 2005, and Seri 2012), none of these interviews have inquired about the hiring process of new recruits, the effects this may have on corruption in the PPBA, and specific ways in which the process should be improved. Further analysis of hiring and recruitment mechanisms of the PPBA is clearly warranted.

*Promotions.* Arslanián (2008, 64) has highlighted that promotions have historically been used as a means to promote loyalty to the police chief and supervisors rather than to reward service based on objective merit criteria. Sain (2002, 182) similarly notes that the PPBA’s historically hierarchal and militarized structure heavily influences promotions, which are often based solely on time of service and not having disciplinary actions—or if one does, having connections with an influential decision-maker, thereby serving as mechanism of political and institutional control of the police elite over the rest of the force. In this regard, Sain (2003, 208-209) has emphasized the need for abolishing the parallel hiring and personnel system of commissioned and non-commissioned officers (*oficiales* and *suboficiales*) and replacing it with a unified system to promote greater professionalism in all ranks and reduce hierarchy. This was, in fact, one of the central focuses of the reforms but as ultimately never fully implemented due to
their untimely end. In this way, and in keeping with the global literature, the PPBA literature has noted the need for clear rules regarding promotions that are followed in practice (ibid).

Training. Training has been heavily emphasized by the PPBA literature as an area that received much attention of the reforms but that is in need of future improvements, in particular given the latest counter-reform period since 2007. The reforms instituted new training and educational opportunities and their strong focus on academic decentralization, the establishment of agreements with local universities to provide police education, and new degree programs for police officers signaled their strong commitment to training and to education on human rights and police ethics. Similarly, the previously mentioned “Leaders for Change” program, while not aimed at new recruits but rather mid-level managers, focused on identifying corrupt activities encountered by officers in practice and addressing them with realistic, practical solutions, a strategy that Goldstein (1975, 43) identifies as an important component to any anti-corruption training program. However, the focus on training has not been consistent. Despite new recruit training being extended to an unprecedented two years after the second reform wave, it was subsequently shortened to 12 months due to the “security emergency” declared by Governor Scioli in 2014, with the possibility for being shortened to 6 months in cases of emergencies such as that declared by the governor (CELS 2015, 213). Further research is needed on training programs in the PPBA since the latest reform wave—both for new recruits as well as ongoing training programs for existing officers—in order to better address current deficiencies and the degree to which ethics and anti-corruption efforts are addressed in current programs.

Wages and Benefits. Increasing wages and benefits was one component of the 1997 and 2004 reform waves, and PPBA officers’ historically low waged have received extensive mention—although very little analysis—in the literature (see Neild 2000, 228; Pereira and Ungar
2004, 16; Sain 2008, 38). Nevertheless, in what is perhaps the most in-depth study of PPBA wages, Boruchowicz and Wagner (2011) note that PPBA officers receive wages comparable to other observationally equivalent individuals and note a variety of non-wage benefits available to personnel, such as special credit unions and health care facilities (10-11). As discussed in Chapter 3, it does not appear that wages and benefits have played an important role in corruption in the PPBA. Furthermore, in keeping with the corruption literature more generally, increases in wages are unlikely to have much effect on corruption unless accompanied by a more comprehensive approach aimed at addressing corruption from a variety of angles (Lindner 2013).

Personnel Rotation. Regarding personnel rotation, the PPBA literature is lacking in-depth analysis on this area of research. Boruchowicz and Wagner (2001) note that personnel rotation in the PPBA is very limited when compared with other regional police forces (16). This low level of rotation can be conducive to corruption networks by providing stable principal-agent relationships. However, and in contrast with the global literature, the PPBA literature does not emphasize personnel rotation as a means for fighting corruption, nor do more frequent rotations appear to have been a measure implemented by the reforms. Future research on the possible merits of increased rotation in the PPBA could prove useful.

ii. Police Management and Leadership

The importance of strong leadership in fighting police corruption has been emphasized both by the global and PPBA literatures. The reform-minded Security Minister Arslanián, supported by the provincial government, took a hardline stance against corruption and instituted wide-sweeping changes in the 1997 and 2004 reforms. Indeed, Arslanián was the central figure of reforms and his leadership undoubtedly played a pivotal role in both reform waves. On the other hand, the lack of a systematic response to police misconduct outside of the two reform
waves has also been addressed by the literature as the result of the need for quick solutions due to political expediency in response to scandals rather than a real interest in reining in corruption, and such responses have been the norm in the PPBA outside of Arslanián’s tenure. In this way, a lack of leadership to tackle these problems—both within the police agency as well as the political spectrum—has resulted in the untimely end of reforms prior to their completion as well as a high degree of police autonomy (Saín 2008, 39). Indeed, this tendency of police agencies to resist reform by instituting ad hoc measures in response to scandals has been well-cited by the global literature (Goldstein 1975, 11; Skogan and Meares 2004, 79).

Returning to police reform, an additional mechanism that exemplifies the importance placed on leadership in the PPBA reforms was the aforementioned “Leaders for Change” program. The systematic selection of reform-minded mid-level supervisors to tackle a variety of issues placed by the police agency—namely corruption and police abuses—and to provide training on these issues was a clear move in a positive direction towards building strong leaders and transforming institutional culture. However, the untimely end of the program along with the reform—combined with the fact the fact that this program was not instituted until the last year of the reform—means it has not been possible to adequately measure its impacts.

Further study on the institutional culture of the PPBA and strategies for improving leadership from within is warranted, in large part because of the importance that leadership can play in bringing forth change. For example, in a case study of horizontal and vertical accountability in the Argentine Federal Police assessing fabricated crimes by this police force, Stanley (2005, 86) notes the importance that individuals played in bringing these abuses to light and prosecuting those responsible. Stanley notes that this is promising because it means that,
even in environments where illegal practices are pervasive and tolerated, the commitment of individuals can have a major impact.

Despite the strong leadership displayed by Arslanián and a clear focus on building reform-minded leadership within the institution, one critique by scholars has been that the reforms lacked consistent direction from above (Seri and Estévez 2010, 18). This was due in large part to pressures to address rising crime, which ultimately led to the abandonment of both reforms. However, even before these pressures surfaced, the administration in power made frequent changes in key leaders and frequent adjustments to policies that were often contradictory. This explains why, for example, despite both reforms’ focuses on increased accountability to communities and human rights, policies emerged simultaneously that decreased the age of prosecution and increased police discretion in detaining individuals (González 2005, 72). The simultaneous existence of contradictory paradigms on public security created inconsistency and limited the scope of reforms as envisioned in the initial reform programs (Seri and Estévez 2010).

A notable difference between the global and PPBA literatures has been the extent to which each advocates for a strong police chief to lead reforms. While the global literature clearly advocates for a strong, independent police chief to lead the organization—with some scholars even suggesting tenure for the chief in order to provide a degree of immunity to him or her from any backlash likely to occur as a result of police resistance (Goldstein 1975, 41)—the PPBA literature has taken an opposite stance by instead advocating for the suppression of the police chief and the division of powers through a plural, horizontal model with functional divisions (Arslanián 2008, 65). This disparity is likely due to two factors present in the PPBA that are not present in the cases frequently studied by the global literature. First is the fact that the police
chief has traditionally been a very strong figurehead in the PPBA with highly centralized power; indeed, police chiefs have often been associated with the perpetuation of corruption networks within the police force, rewarding selected officers with promotions and other benefits in exchange for their loyalty. It is therefore a logical recommendation to suppress this position. Secondly, the authoritarian legacies present in the PPBA (see Chapter 3) have been associated with an overall lack of civilian control that, in turn, further strengthens the role of the police chief. Therefore, the division of the chief’s power among many who are in turn accountable to civilian control has been a central focus of PPBA reforms. In fact, during the second reform wave Arslanián planned to institute changes that would make police chiefs elected by the neighborhood forums; while this would have been an important step towards increasing transparency and accountability, this never came to fruition due to the reform’s untimely end.

### iii. Anti-Corruption Policies

The global literature has proposed a variety of mechanisms to address corruption through the institution of specific anti-corruption policies. As discussed in Chapter 5, some of the main solutions proposed have been the following:

- Manuals to deal with ethical dilemmas
- Transforming institutional culture
- Creation of complaint mechanisms (e.g. anonymous tip lines)
- Public engagement to report corruption
- Proactive detection mechanisms (e.g. surveillance, integrity tests)
- Whistleblower protections

The PPBA literature is limited with regard to proposals of specific measures to fight corruption through the above-mentioned strategies. Given the literature’s strong focus on causes of corruption that are external to the PPBA, such as political corruption and public demands for *mano dura* policing, analysis of preventive strategies in terms of anti-corruption policies within the institution are relatively infrequent. However, one conclusion of the literature has been the
need for a protocol for police actions to delimit and regulate discreptional means of command and police autonomy (Saín 2008, 291-295). Saín further notes that ethical guidance is generally lacking and that certain basic prohibitions should be clarified, namely those of:

1. Obeying illegal orders
2. Instigating others to commit a crime
3. Obtaining information only due to one’s race, religion, political ideology, etc.
4. Carrying out any extra-institutional influence over the institution, politics, or other aspects of the country’s affairs

Of all factors in terms of anti-corruption policies, transforming police culture has probably received the greatest attention of the PPBA literature. Scholars have discussed the overall failure of reforms to address the base of the police organization: that is, the police officers who patrol the streets on a daily basis and their direct supervisors. Seri and Estévez (2010) emphasize the importance of addressing the grassroots of an organization to achieve lasting changes. They note the aforementioned Leaders for Change program was a step in the right direction, but it came too late (in 2006) and was never finished due to the reform’s abrupt end. Additionally, while an increased importance on initial and ongoing training and education was clear, more attention was needed, in the words of Seri and Estévez, on the “strategic redesign of communication channels within the institution, in order to transcend their stiff and formal character” (ibid, 22). The Leaders for Change program demonstrated that many officers supported the need to reform the force, but rigid communication channels and hierarchy in practice continued to promote a structure in which patronage and corruption persisted and those at the base of the organization felt excluded.

Similarly, in an analysis of police reform in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, Ward (2001, 198) concludes that police reform must involve the participation multiple ranks, highlighting that breaking the grip of a strong organizational culture can only be achieved by distributing benefits
for all members of the organization being changed and by the involvement of all members of the hierarchy. In 2016, in an interview addressing police corruption in the PPBA, newly elected President Mauricio Macri stated the need to support honest police officers as a means of fighting corruption (La Nación 2016). However, given the “security crisis” that was heavily emphasized during the 2015 presidential campaign, it remains to be seen whether demands for mano dura policing will once again trump any serious interest in addressing police corruption.

Further research is needed to assess the functioning of citizen complaint mechanisms, public engagement initiatives to report corruption, proactive detection mechanisms such as surveillance and integrity tests, and whistleblower protections in the PPBA. The literature has not adequately addressed the mechanisms in place in this regard or their functioning in practice. For example, while the PPBA’s website indicates the means for citizens to report corruption or abuse, and Arslanián (2008, 244) notes an increased ease of access for citizens to report misconduct by phone, email, or in person since the 2004 reform, the literature has not analyzed the functioning of these mechanisms in practice nor the degree to which issues often inherent to these systems and identified by the global literature—such as citizens’ reluctance to report corruption, perceptions of bias, or fear of retaliation—are present in the PPBA. Similarly, informational campaigns to encourage the public to report corruption have not been assessed by the literature. Further research into the nature and extent of any such campaigns could shed additional light on what efforts, if any, have or are being taken in this regard.

The use of surveillance and integrity tests and any impacts they have achieved is nearly absent in the literature. For example, while the 2004 reform instituted an “Abuses Map” to spatially identify police abuses and corruption as a means for analyzing police misconduct (Arslanián 2008, 176-177), the impacts of this initiative have not been discussed, nor has the
issue of whether these or similar technologies are still being used been addressed. An additional
detection mechanism that was implemented during the 2004 reform, which involved recording
police officer’s phone numbers and license plates, reportedly had successes in identifying
officers involved in extortion given the ability to link reports to their cell phone numbers or
license plates (Arslanián 2008, 242). However, further research is clearly needed on the
persistence of detection mechanisms over time, their functioning in practice, and their continued
impacts. Similarly, while Ales et al. (2003) emphasize the selective use of internal control
mechanisms and the arbitrary punishment of officers who report corruption, additional research
is needed on whistleblower protections, their functioning in practice, and any obstacles faced.

iv. Investigations and Sanctions

The global literature has emphasized the need for a strong internal affairs department
with open and fair investigations and well-defined disciplinary measures, as well as the benefits
of investigations being carried out by an external agency. The literature has also suggested
strategies such as granting immunity and plea-bargaining exchange for testifying in corruption
cases. The PPBA literature has also addressed the need for strong investigation and disciplinary
mechanisms. Both reforms focused heavily on strengthening internal affairs and purging corrupt
officers from the force, and the 2004 reform resulted in the creation of a new internal affairs
department (Auditoría General de Asuntos Internos), which, although still under the auspices of
the PPBA, was comprised solely of individuals external to the police force (and mostly lawyers).
Police were involved only in field investigations (Arslanián 2008, 241). Concrete achievements
of these reforms included shortening average investigation times for corruption cases from 3
years to 6 months, increased investigation capacity, and an increase in criteria for the application
of disciplinary measures (Arlsanián 2008, 249-251).
Despite advancements and a notable improvement in the quality of internal investigations and control mechanisms while under civilian control (CELS 2011, 69), this control was once again reversed under Daniel Scioli and returned to the police, as had been the case in the 1999 counter-reform as well. Further research is needed to better assess the current state of investigations and disciplinary mechanisms in the PPBA since the second counter-reform in 2007. Saín (2008, 290) notes the need for an entirely autonomous institution to apply oversight and ensure investigation and punishment that is independent both from politicians and the police, a recommendation that clearly mirrors the “civilian review” model emphasized by the global literature. He further emphasizes that the independent internal affairs auditor should, in addition to investigating reports of corruption, also be responsible for developing preventive strategies (295).

v. External Environment

The global literature has analyzed several aspects of the external environment in terms of addressing police corruption, namely the role of scandals in creating opportunities for reform, the need for building demands for change—especially when political will is lacking, as well as the need for legislative and legal oversight. The role of organized crime and unenforceable laws has also been addressed.

The role of scandal has been widely addressed by the PPBA literature as an impetus for reform. As mentioned previously in this chapter, both reforms were able to gain momentum as a result of the window of opportunity that had opened as a result of scandals revealing widespread police corruption. At the same time, the literature has also emphasized that these windows of opportunity have been generally limited due to concerns about crime rates and citizens’
perceptions of insecurity, which have favored greater police autonomy at the expense of accountability and transparency.

The need for building demands for greater police accountability and anti-corruption reforms has also been emphasized by the PPBA literature. Indeed, one lesson from the failed reforms emphasized by scholars is the need for coalition building. Both reform waves included drastic changes to the police force and provincial public security system, yet a clear consensus on the core components of reform was absent. That is, the climate of rising crime and police scandal made reform politically viable, but any intra-party agreement on these reforms was far from reached. Party politics were prevalent since the beginning of reform in the 1997; in many instances the Justicialist party, with their majority in the legislature, passed their reform plans through without any amendments, despite other proposals by the opposition (Saín 1998). Indeed, the initial consensus on the necessity for action was not enough to materialize reforms (Seri and Estévez 2010, 24). Police reform became a highly politicized issue that would come to be used by the opposition, and even different factions within the Justicialist party, to criticize the administration’s plans. Attempting to build greater coalitions within and between parties would have perhaps resulted in less drastic reforms, but it would also have made less probable the rapid shift to counter-reforms.

Similarly, greater attention to mayors’ interest could have also aided in lessening the volatility of reforms. For example, support garnered from mayors, even those from the same Justicialist party that launched the reforms, was a major factor in Ruckauf’s ability to quickly introduce counter-reform upon taking office in 1999. Similarly, conflict over insecurity, rising crime, and the need mano dura played a central role in the race for the governor of the province in 2007 and thereby suppressed any hopes for the continuation of the 2004 reforms.
Important civil society actors such as the *Centro de Estudios Legales and Sociales* (CELS) have played a central role in mobilizing public support for police reform and publish research and data on issues such as police corruption and abuse in their annual human rights reports. Indeed, Fuentes (2005) argues that civil society organizations favoring police reform and human rights have been much stronger in Argentina than in Chile, where discourse on police abuses is much less prevalent. However, as noted previously, widespread feelings of insecurity and rising crime rates—even though violent crime rates in Argentina has consistently been among the lowest in Latin America—have repeatedly garnered support for greater police autonomy which, in turn, has hampered the ability for civil society to effectively mobilize support in favor of reform. It appears that a common expression used regarding political corruption in Latin America also applies equally to the police: *roban, pero hacen* [they steal, but they accomplish things]. So long as crime is kept under control, citizens appear to tolerate police corruption and therefore mobilizing support for anti-corruption initiatives is difficult.

Additional forms of external oversight to combat corruption in the PPBA have been identified by the literature. One has been the need for legislative oversight of the PPBA. As discussed in Chapter 3, politicians in Argentina have generally been unwilling and uninterested in supporting efforts to address police corruption and to reform the police. The informal “reciprocity pact” as discussed by Saín (2008) has been the persistence of police self-governance in exchange for the guarantee that crime will be kept to acceptable levels so as to not interfere with politicians’ reelection prospects. The result has been autonomy of the PPBA and an overall lack of both executive and legislative branch oversight on the institution.41

41 Relevant literature has analyzed elected officials’ lack of incentives to undertake policy reforms. For a general discussion see Geddes (1994). For a discussion on this topic specific to the Argentine case, see Spiller and Tommasi (2000).
While the reforms represented a departure from this trend, the policies implemented since the latest counter-reform in 2007 have tended to increase police autonomy and eliminate the external oversight mechanisms instituted by the reforms (CELS 2011, 69). Other scholars have discussed the need for reforms of the judicial branch in Argentina, which has historically been weak and ineffective in prosecuting corruption cases. However, reforms of the judiciary did not accompany either of the reform waves, and while the need for judicial reform has been well cited by the PPBA literature (ACIJ 2008; Boruchowicz and Wagner 2011, 20; Sain 2008, 164), further research into specific measures for judicial reform in Argentina and its synergies with police reform are needed.

Lastly, the PPBA corruption literature has not assessed the role of addressing organized crime activity as a means of addressing police corruption nor has it been concerned with proposing solutions related to the elimination of unenforceable laws. In the case of the former, the lack of discourse is not surprising given that organized crime in Argentina remains relatively weak and in a clearly subordinate position to state actors than is the case in other Latin American countries, in particular Central America and Mexico. As Saín (2010) notes, however, this may not always be the case. In this regard, future research should examine the degree to which organized crime in Argentina shows capacity for state capture. In the case of unenforceable laws and their effects of police corruption, research thus far has been virtually non-existent, and future research should assess the implications for elimination of unenforceable laws on corruption in the PPBA.

Therefore, as this chapter has highlighted, while the PPBA literature has contributed a substantial degree of knowledge regarding possible preventive strategies to address corruption in

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42 See Chapter 3; see also ACIJ (2008).
the PPBA, several aspects have received minimal or no attention in the literature and merit further study in order to deepen our knowledge of the application of preventive strategies to the PPBA context. Scholars should focus on these areas in need of future research—which, as summarized in Figure 3, relate especially to human resource management and anti-corruption policies in the PPBA—in order to open new discussions on potential preventive strategies to address corruption in the PPBA.

IV. Final Comments

The experiences with police reform during the 1990s and 2000s in the Province of Buenos Aires have resulted in an extensive amount of literature that assesses the successes and failures of these reforms in terms of tackling corruption. This chapter has provided a review of the PPBA reform waves, summarized scholarly discourse related to strategies aimed at addressing and preventing police corruption in the PPBA, and suggested areas in need of future research, using the global literature as a guide for these discussions.

Despite some aspects of the reforms themselves that could have been improved upon from a technical standpoint—such as a stronger focus on organizational culture from the onset, greater focus on coalition building among and within political parties, and greater controls placed to deepen decentralization—it is clear that the reforms were comprehensive in nature and, indeed, of an unprecedented level not only in Argentina, but also in Latin America. They were in-line with literature on police reform that highlights tactics such as decentralization, the strengthening of oversight and accountability controls, community participation, and human rights-focused education and training. Nevertheless, the lessons learned from these reforms’ failures shed light on the fact that even the most comprehensive or well-designed reforms from a policy standpoint may not be enough on their own.
That is, despite police reform being a key challenge for Argentina to undertake, the literature on preventive strategies in the PPBA suggests that any reform attempts are likely to be unsuccessful in the long-term unless they are complemented by sincere and sustainable efforts on the part of governing officials, and the civil society movements that pressure them, to fight corruption and impunity and promote democratic governance, transparency and a respect for human rights at all levels of government. Otherwise, they are doomed to result in the same failures experienced by the previous two reforms: in general well designed and comprehensive, but incompatible with the short-term horizon that has traditionally, and continues, to plague Argentine politics and policy-making.

These police reform examples highlight the fact that preventive measures aimed at addressing corruption and transforming police agencies must be implemented in an integrated manner, within a context of democratic institution building more generally. That is, while reforms must be tailored to the specific issues they are attempting to resolve, they also must be integrated within a broader framework dedicated to strengthening democracy and the rule of law at all levels of government and in the long term. The absence of serious reform efforts in the PPBA since the end of the 2007 reform has left the force today in a state very similar to where it was a decade and a half ago. Reform is largely a product of the context that surrounds it, and in the case of Argentina, the empirical lessons learned over the past decade and a half clearly illustrate that the short-term, ephemeral, and volatile nature of policymaking in the country, largely a product of its historically weak institutions, will continue to impede reform efforts. In this way, it is clear that any serious attempt to address police corruption in the PPBA must begin with a discussion of structural factors such as democratic institution building, state capacity, and the construction of political will.
CONCLUSION

Pervasive corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police (PPBA) carries serious implications for the future of democratic governance in Argentina. As with political corruption, it undermines the rule of law and the legitimacy of the state (Grabowsky and Larmour 2000, 2).

Police officers are entrusted with significant powers, in particular the use of coercion and force—including lethal force. Due to the fact that these powers can be manipulated for private gain, there are many linkages between police corruption and abuses of human rights, which undermines not only security, but also civil and political rights (Chêne 2010). This becomes particularly evident when one takes into account the violent crimes in which the PPBA has been implicated; in this case, not only do the police become ineffective at maintaining public order, but in addition, they become one of the main factors that threatens public order in the first place. The result is that, instead of security being provided by the state, it becomes a commodity to be bought and sold.

Despite the important implications of police corruption for democratic consolidation and its negative effects on institutions and society more generally, no comprehensive review of existing literature on the PPBA case has existed prior to this thesis. Similarly, the PPBA literature itself only rarely tends to reference scholarly literature on police corruption outside of Argentina, thereby highlighting an opportunity to better synthesis case-specific findings with conclusions reached at the global level. This thesis has attempted to bridge this gap. In this way, this work will hopefully serve as an important tool and source of information for researchers studying the PPBA. Similarly, by proposing suggestions for future research, this thesis has aimed to better guide scholars towards those areas that have received less attention and are in need of further development.
I. Summary of Findings

The central argument of this thesis has been that the global police corruption literature provides an analytical framework for assessing the breadth of the literature specific to the Buenos Aires Provincial Police force. In this way, the organization of discussion has been guided by the global police corruption literature as a means of reviewing and classifying academic production on the PPBA. The principal research question of this thesis has been: based on the global police corruption and case-specific literature, what is known and what do we still need to research in order to further understand corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police?

This thesis has provided answers to this question and has contributed to the global and case-specific literature on police corruption in several respects. First, it has identified the main areas of study that have been addressed by the global police corruption literature and has summarized and synthesized the main arguments and conclusions for each of these areas of research. It has found that the vast majority of the literature has focused on four aspects of police corruption: its definition, its causes, its nature and organization, and possible preventive strategies to effectively fight it. Second, it has used the global literature as a framework for organizing literature that deals with police corruption in the PPBA in order to integrate knowledge on this particular case and summarize key findings. Third, based on these literature reviews at the global and case-specific levels, this thesis has made numerous suggestions for future research dealing with police corruption in the PPBA that are relevant and based on a comprehensive assessment of the breadth and scope of the literature. These contributions are summarized below.
i. Definitions and Typologies of Police Corruption

With regard to definitions and typologies of police corruption, this review has found that while most definitions bear strong resemblance to the frequently used definition of public sector corruption more generally (“the misuse of public office for private gain”) substantially greater discord exists when further refining the question of what constitutes gain, who must gain, as well as boundaries or “grey areas” in distinguishing corruption from other forms of misconduct. Ultimately, this thesis has adopted the use of Sayed and Bruce’s (1998a) definition of police corruption for the purposes of defining police corruption in the PPBA: “Police corruption is any illegal conduct or misconduct involving the use of occupational power for personal, group, or organizational gain.” The benefits of this definition is that it remains succinct and parsimonious while also being sufficiently inclusive of the array of manifestations of questionable police behavior, emphasizing that corruption need not be only illegal conduct but also any misconduct prohibited by the police organization; can include the use of one’s own position as a police officer but also the police occupation and the powers given to officers as a result (e.g. credibility, resources, information); and the fact that gain need not only be personal, but rather of a group or even of the entire police institution—a practice that has been institutionalized in the PPBA (see for example Dewey 2012; Sain 2008).

ii. Causes of Police Corruption

This thesis has found that the causes of police corruption proposed by the literature can be divided into individual, police agency, and external environment factors. A wide array of factors have been cited at these levels of analysis, in particular at the police agency and external environment levels. Some of these factors relate to the nature of police work itself, such as its high levels of discretion and inherent aspects of police culture, while others relate more closely...
to specific policies and guidance that may be lacking in a police agency (e.g. recruitment and screening procedures; certain human resources policies such as pay and benefits; internal accountability systems; training programs; and deficiencies in agency resources and budget). Further, a large amount of this literature has emphasized the central role played by police leadership in either reigning in or perpetuating corruption in a police force. While the global literature has placed a greater focus on police agency factors than on those in the external environment, it has also discussed factors external to the police agency that can contribute to corruption within the police force, namely demands for “iron fist” policing, collusion with the political class, deficient external oversight mechanisms, the prevalence of unenforceable laws, and pervasive organized criminal interests.

The findings of the PPBA literature in this regard have largely mirrored the global literature, although important differences as well as gaps in knowledge remain. In the case of the PPBA, significantly more research focuses on external environment factors than on factors within the police agency. Indeed, while scholars have attributed factors from within the police agency—such as HR policies and anti-corruption policies—to the corruption problem in the PPBA, significant gaps in knowledge remain with regard to the role played by deficiencies in the recruitment and screening processes of new recruits, the state of internal accountability systems within the PPBA, and the role played by aspects of police culture in the institution and the socialization of new police officers into said culture. Additionally, further research is also warranted on the everyday discretion of PPBA officers in the field and its effects on corruption in the force.

By contrast, the causes of police corruption external to the PPBA have been widely studied and developed by scholars. In addition to causes at this level that have been mentioned
by the global literature (see above), the PPBA literature has also raised several others. One such cause has been role played by federalism in perpetuating police corruption insofar as conflicts at different levels of government have historically promoted collusion between the PPBA and politicians for financial benefit as well as through political policing against political adversaries. Another such cause is the historic autonomy of the PPBA from civilian control—largely due to political disinterest in or connivance with the police—which has strengthened its ability to avoid and resist reforms. While most causes at the external environment level have been well developed, several areas at this level of analysis merit further study. One such area is the ambivalent role of the media in revealing police corruption scandals (which can favor reform efforts) while also fostering demands for “tough on crime” approach to policing (which has historically been associated with permitting greater police autonomy). Further study is needed in order to draw more concrete conclusions on the role played by the media as an external factor favoring or inhibiting greater police autonomy and, by extension, corruption. Similarly, research on the role played by civil society in Argentina for deterring police corruption is also warranted. Additional external factors identified by this thesis that merit further research include the effects of unenforceable laws on police corruption in the PPBA and the impact of organized criminal interests—in particular drug trafficking organizations—on fostering pervasive corruption within the PPBA.

iii. Nature and Organization of Police Corruption

Literature examining the nature and organization of corruption within police forces is limited but nevertheless interesting and methodologically diverse. Among its key findings has been the highly organized manner in which pervasive corruption functions within police agencies, with well-defined roles, activities, and procedures for the distribution of graft.
throughout the ranks. Similarly, the literature has also identified the central role played by leaders and decision-makers in using their organizational power to direct and perpetuate these corruption networks.

The PPBA literature has also investigated the nature and organization of corruption within the institution. In keeping with global literature findings, scholars view corruption in the PPBA as systemic and highly organized. Historically, among the most prevalent corrupt practices engaged in by the police force have included the regulation of criminal activities—especially drug trafficking—and the provision of illegal protection to criminals. Research has also examined the organization of corruption networks themselves and has revealed significant details regarding its *modus operandi*, including some (albeit limited) information regarding the highly organized manner in which tasks are assigned throughout the ranks as well as the clearly defined distribution of funds throughout varying levels of the organization. The case-specific literature has also addressed linkages between the PPBA and the political class—from elites to low-level party brokers—and has emphasized their pervasiveness and their importance to police and political actors alike. The inherent difficulty in exposing these clandestine networks, combined with an overall lack of oversight and accountability mechanisms to deter and detect them, favors their continued prevalence.

Despite advancements in knowledge, additional research is warranted in order to shed further light on the nature and organization of corruption in the PPBA. While certainly a difficult task by any measure given the inherent secrecy with which corrupt transactions are conducted, further research will allow scholars and practitioners to better assess how corruption operates within the PPBA and thereby propose more tailored preventive strategies. A greater focus on the different roles played by different ranks within the institution, as well as case studies focused on
one or several corruption scandals and analyzing the means by which corruption was organized in those instances, constitute strategies for future research that could aid in answering additional questions related to the nature and organization of corruption in the PPBA.

*iv. Preventive Strategies*

The global literature has proposed a diverse array of potential preventive strategies aimed at curbing police corruption. At their most general level, these solutions involve addressing issues related to human resource management (e.g. hiring and recruitment, promotions, training, wages and benefits, and personnel rotation); improving police leadership and management; reforms to anti-corruption policies within the institution (e.g. measures to transform institutional culture; improved complaint mechanisms and public engagement; proactive detection and whistleblower protection mechanisms); instituting improvements to the investigation and sanctioning of corrupt practices; and lastly, taking into account the role played by diverse external factors and local context in either aiding or hindering reform efforts. A key finding has been that any serious attempt to reign in corruption must tackle the issue from a variety of angles by employing multiple strategies through an integrated, comprehensive approach based on an accurate diagnostic of the corruption problem.

An extensive amount of the PPBA literature has focused on preventive strategies to address corruption in the police force. These discussions have largely taken place within the framework of analyses of the two failed reform attempts in the PPBA in 1997 and 2004. Most literature has focused on the need to address structural factors outside of the police institution—namely the need to create greater pressures and incentives for political actors to support reforms and greater legislative and legal oversight mechanisms. Some literature, albeit significantly less, has also looked within the police institution to identify areas contributing to corruption in the
Police force and suggest mechanisms to fight these, such as improving certain HR policies, the institution of stronger anti-corruption policies to transform institutional culture, and the need for better investigation and sanctioning mechanisms.

Despite advancements in knowledge, significant gaps remain with regard to research examining the role of HR policies (namely hiring and recruitment, training, and personnel rotation) and anti-corruption policies more generally in curbing corruption in the PPBA. Very little research has examined specific anti-corruption policies, such as the functioning of complaint mechanisms, public engagement efforts, proactive detection mechanisms, or whistleblower protections. While significant research has looked to preventive measures needed at the external environment level, two such areas not widely addressed by the PPBA literature have been the potential benefits of eliminating unenforceable laws, as well as the extent to which addressing organization crime—and drug trafficking organizations in particular—could be expected to have a significant impact on police corruption. Further research in both of these areas is warranted in order to better assess the extent to which they impact corruption in the PPBA.

II. Contributions of this Thesis

The main contribution of this thesis has been the organization and synthesis of literature on corruption in the PPBA so as to identify key arguments as well as areas in need of further research. In this way, this thesis will hopefully serve as an important research tool and source of information for scholars of the PPBA. While this thesis has focused exclusively on the PPBA, many of its conclusions are likely applicable to other Argentine police forces. This is especially true when assessing the external environment factors that are implicated in causing corruption in the PPBA, such as demands for mano dura policing, collusion with politicians, and deficient external oversight mechanisms. These factors are not limited to the Province of Buenos Aires.
and, as such, likely impact police corruption throughout the country. However, causes of police corruption emanating from within the police institution (e.g. recruitment and screening procedures, HR policies, anti-corruption policies, internal oversight, etc.) may present more variation across police forces. Further comparative study through case-studies of different Argentine police forces could prove highly interesting and fruitful in identifying trends and variations in police corruption throughout the country.

This thesis also has resonance beyond Argentina. Police corruption presents a critical problem for most Latin American countries (Cruz 2010, 2) as well as developing countries more generally (Einstein and Amir 2003, 337-344). However, the global literature has tended to draw a disparate amount of its research and conclusions from experiences with police corruption in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This global literature has proven highly valuable as a means for organizing discussion and reaching conclusions about the causes of police corruption, its nature and organization in practice, and preventive strategies even beyond the borders of developed nations. Nevertheless, this thesis has also identified areas that are not widely addressed by the global literature—such as the role played by authoritarian legacies, volatile political environments, and pervasive political corruption—which carry grave implications for police corruption in developing nations such as Argentina and beyond. In this way, this thesis has aimed to further broaden scholarly discussions on police corruption to include factors that are not widely cited in the most frequently studied cases at the global level. Furthermore, as a comprehensive literature review of a particular case, this thesis can serve as a model for scholars interested in integrating and consolidating research on other police forces and determining areas of strengths and weaknesses within their respective case-specific literatures.
III. Final Comments

In terms of strengthening and consolidating democratic governance, reforming its police forces remains one of Argentina’s most daunting challenges in the 21st century. Yet, as has been highlighted throughout the chapters of this thesis, police corruption in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police—which has jurisdiction over 40 percent of the country’s population—shows no indication of letting go. On the contrary, it has demonstrated the resilience to withstand two reform attempts that were among the most comprehensive in Latin America. While the causes of and unsuccessful attempts at reigning in corruption in the PPBA are the result of diverse institutional, political, and societal factors (see section I above), a critical finding worth separate mention is the general consensus that exists among scholars regarding the central role played by the political class in, at best, ignoring or passively accepting police corruption and abuses and, at worst, actively participating in corruption networks between organized criminal interests and the police.

Indeed, a key finding of this literature review is that the passivity and connivance of political actors is of grave significance for the future of police corruption in the PPBA. Efforts to reign in corruption in the force must ultimately come from above, yet the political viability of and interest in doing so has—historically and as of this writing—been weak and ephemeral, motivated largely as a means to quell scandals and soon forgotten when media attention subsides. Political will is certainly not the only component necessary to guarantee successful reform—factors such as the design and implementation of reform policies, transforming institutional culture, and investigating and sanctioning misconduct, among many other aspects, clearly matter—but it does appear to be a prerequisite. Given that the decision to pursue reform ultimately comes from the political class, unless their incentives align with an interest in truly
reforming the PPBA and curbing corruption, the experience of the past two decades in this police force indicates that it is unlikely that any attempt to reign in the police will be sustained over the medium and long term.

Over a decade ago, police scholar Maurice Hinton (2005) wrote of the failures of reform attempts in Argentine police forces and concluded that the idea of democratic policing was a distant reality in the country. In 2016, this thesis concludes the same with regard to combating police corruption. Until sufficient and consistent political will can be successfully mobilized—and persistent pressure remains on elected officials by their constituents and civil society to effectively address corruption, impunity, and abuse—then meaningful, long-lasting reform and an honest police force will continue to remain nothing more than an unsolidified and unlikely prospect.
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