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*Areas of Research:* States and Statebuilding Processes; Cultural Sociology; Urban Studies; Security and Policing; Informal/ Illicit Markets; Mixed Methods; Latin America

*Dissertation Title:* "From Reform to Recoupling: Towards a New Police Culture in Buenos Aires, Argentina"

*Dissertation Committee:* Ann Mische (chair), Erin McDonnell, Lynette Spillman, Guillermo Trejo, Marcelo Bergman

*Dissertation description:*

In contemporary, democratic states, the police occupy a unique role in social and political life. In theory, the police hold a monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force which they must use judiciously to uphold the peace and provide basic public safety. In practice, they often fall short of this ideal, engaging in diverse forms of corruption or violence which undermine state legitimacy and perpetuate urban conflict. In this context, police reforms aimed at democratization, professionalization, and modernization have shown that police misconduct is surprisingly difficult to eradicate. Why? My dissertation examines police reform efforts in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 2008 to 2018 to shed light how the politics of policing shaped organizational changes and how these changes, in turn, modified (or reinforced) extant police practices. Based on a year of intensive fieldwork, my dissertation data includes documents, public information requests, judicial statistics, ethnographic observation of neighborhood security forums, and nearly 75 interviews with police, politicians, analysts, and activists. Drawing on this multi-scalar data, I reconstruct the dramatic organizational changes to policing in Buenos Aires over the past decade, showing how government officials from distinct administrations blended political ideology with electoral instrumentality as a means of reconstructing state legitimacy, particularly among their constituents. I go on to analyze the impacts of organizational reform initiatives on actual police practices, contrasting the parallel processes which led to a tenuous reduction in police violence but left institutionalized police corruption largely untouched. Lastly, I analyze the role of democratic deliberation in urban policing, showing how the acute security demands of middle and upper class neighborhoods fuel government attention to some aspects of professionalization over others, drawing a cautionary tale of how local crime reduction may generate greater socio-spatial inequality. This dissertation contributes to knowledge of police reform in Latin America, while simultaneously engaging with wider sociological debates about state legitimacy, cultural change, and public participation.